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AN EXAMINATION OF FAMILY SKIING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP  
TO FAMILY FUNCTIONING

by

Peggy L. Philbrick

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership

Brigham Young University

April 2007

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Peggy L. Philbrick

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Peggy L. Philbrick in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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## ABSTRACT

### AN EXAMINATION OF FAMILY SKIING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY FUNCTIONING

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Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership

Master of Science

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between family downhill skiing patterns and family functioning. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES II), was used to measure family functioning. Questions created by the researcher were used to measure the average number of family ski experiences per year (frequency) and how many years the family has skied together (duration). Satisfaction with family ski experiences was measured using the Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale. The sample consisted of 110 family units from throughout the United States. The findings from this study found that frequency and duration of family ski experiences were not significant predictors of family functioning. The data did determine that satisfaction with family ski experiences was a significant predictor of family functioning from the youth, parent, and family perspectives.

**Key Words:** cohesion, adaptability, family functioning, shared family activities, skiing, outdoor recreation, leisure satisfaction.

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Running head: FAMILY SKIING AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING

An Examination of Family Skiing and Its Relationship to Family Functioning

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## 2 Family Skiing and Family Functioning

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between family downhill skiing patterns and family functioning. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES II), was used to measure family functioning. Questions created by the researcher were used to measure the average number of family ski experiences per year (frequency) and how many years the family has skied together (duration). Satisfaction with family ski experiences was measured using the Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale. The sample consisted of 110 family units from throughout the U.S. The findings from this study found that frequency and duration of family ski experiences were not significant predictors of family functioning. The data did determine that satisfaction with family ski experiences was a significant predictor of family functioning from the youth, parent, and family perspectives.

**Key Words:** cohesion, adaptability, family functioning, shared family activities, skiing, outdoor recreation, leisure satisfaction.

## Introduction

Contemporary families of the twenty-first century face new challenges that threaten the quality of family life and family functioning (Doherty, 1997; Elshtain, 1997; Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002; Orthner, 1998). The traditional family of centuries past has changed in purpose and structure (Doherty). There is concern that the family has shifted to a focus of promoting the happiness and achievement of the individual family member, rather than the well being of the family unit (Doherty). Changes in family structure with the formation of single parent and blended families, along with more mothers working outside the home, have created new alignments of family roles, responsibilities, and time spent together (Daly, 1996; Doherty). As a result, family relationships and the rules that guide family behavior are less clear, and the roles of family members have to be negotiated instead of just adopted from parents (Orthner).

Changes in the purpose and structure of the family unit have created somewhat more fragile families than those of earlier generations (Orthner, 1998). This has lead family therapists and recreation professionals to examine family dynamics in an effort to identify family strengths that bind families together in positive, healthy ways (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002; Olson, 2000; Orthner; Stinnett, Sanders, DeFrain, & Parkhurst, 1982; Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985). Family leisure research indicates that shared family leisure and recreational activities help strengthen family relationships and contribute to healthy family functioning (Freeman & Zabriskie; Orthner; Stinnett et al.).

Recent research in the field of leisure and recreation provides evidence that family cohesion, adaptability and communication are positively correlated with family leisure

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participation patterns (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002; Huff, Widmer, McCoy, & Hill, 2003; Orthner, 1998; Wells, Widmer, & McCoy, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

According to Zabriskie and McCormick, everyday activities such as playing board games or playing basketball together provide a consistent, safe, and often positive context in which family members can be brought closer together. In addition, family vacations and outdoor recreational activities have been found to facilitate the development of adaptive skills by providing experiences that require family members to negotiate and change to new environments and experiences that are different from everyday life. Participation in outdoor recreation has also been associated with lower divorce rates (Orthner, Barnett, & Mancini, 1994) and increased family enrichment (Freeman & Zabriskie). Specifically, parent-adolescent communication has improved when families participate in challenging outdoor recreational activities (Huff et al.). Furthermore, challenging recreation has successfully been used to create collective efficacy for families; which can be generalized to other domains of family functioning, such as the ability to resolve conflict (Wells et al.).

Family leisure researchers have recommended that future research focus on the experiences and programs that strengthen families (Freeman, Hill, & Huff, 2002).

Research findings suggest that parents are intentionally seeking leisure and recreation activities that will bring a strong sense of family (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). One such activity that this study will examine is family downhill skiing.

Downhill skiing is a winter sport that is growing in popularity with families (Hartman, Cordell, & Freilich, 1988; Wellner, 1997). A national demographic study by

the National Ski Areas Association (2005) found that 49% of skiers and snowboarders were part of a family with children at home. Downhill skiing provides a natural environment for families to spend time together and have fun. Skiing can be enjoyed by all members of the family, from the three-year-old toddler to the 70-year-old grandparent. It is a lifetime sport that allows families to have a collective experience together, and yet, is also an individual sport. Family downhill skiing may offer families the benefits of outdoor recreation such as increased family cohesion, adaptability, communication, and give family members a sense of identity and belonging.

Specific inquiry on family downhill skiing, as a form of outdoor recreation, and its influence on family functioning will give added insight as to the value of family skiing experiences for families. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between family downhill skiing patterns and family functioning. More specifically, this research explored family ski experiences that are close to home and at a vacation destination (type), days per year the family skis together (frequency), and the number of years the family has been skiing together (duration).

## Review of Literature

### *Family Functioning*

Family therapists have conceptually described family dynamics and behavior using a family systems perspective (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). According to Slife and Williams (1995) the family structure is a system, which as a whole influences the behavior of individual family members within it. The system is largely an unseen entity, lying beneath the surface, yet is very powerful in directing the observed

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phenomena that makes up the family system (Slife & Williams). The family becomes more than parent(s) plus child(ren); the family system becomes the accumulation of family transactional patterns and interfamily processes (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). These family transactional patterns and interfamily processes are viewed as underlying dimensions for family functioning (Olson et al; Orthner, 1998; Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985). One prototype of marital and family systems, which examines the dimensions of family functioning, is The Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems developed by Olsen et al.

The Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems integrates the dimensions of family cohesion, adaptability and communication to explain family functioning. These three dimensions emerged from a conceptual clustering of over 50 concepts developed from the field of family therapy and social sciences to explain marital and family dynamics (Olson, 2000). The Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems has been widely used by clinicians and researchers as a theoretical framework to describe couple and family functioning (Olson & Gorall, 2003).

Family cohesion is described by Olson (2000) as the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another. According to Olson, the construct of cohesion focuses on the family systems balance of separateness versus togetherness. Specific concepts or variables used to measure family cohesion dimensions are emotional bonding, boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision-making, interests and recreation. Olsen noted that the central or balanced levels of cohesion (separated and connected) make for optimal family functioning, whereas the extremes or unbalanced

levels (disengaged or enmeshed) are generally seen as problematic for relationships over the long term.

Family adaptability (flexibility) is described by Olson (2000) as the amount of change in its leadership, role relationships and relationship rules. Flexibility focuses on how systems balance stability versus change. Specific concepts measured include leadership (control, discipline), negotiation styles, role relationships and relationship rules. Functional couples and families can be distinguished from dysfunctional ones according to their ability to change (Olson & Gorall, 2003).

Olson (2000) described family communication as a facilitating dimension that makes possible the healthy formation of family cohesion and family adaptability. As a facilitator, communication is not graphically included in the model with cohesion and adaptability. Olson stated that balanced family systems have good communication skills of listening, speaking, self-disclosure, clarity, continuity tracking, respect, and regard. Unbalanced systems, on the other hand, tend to have poor communication skills.

The theoretical framework of the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems allows for hypotheses related to family functioning to be tested (Olson et al., 1979). This model and the related assessment tool, Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES II), has been used in many studies to measure linear relationships between family functioning and various aspects of family leisure involvement and family recreation (Christenson, Zabriskie, Eggett, & Freeman, 2006; Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Huff et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

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### *Family Leisure Involvement*

The Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning developed by Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) builds upon the theoretical framework of family systems and the context of family leisure patterns with family cohesion and adaptability. Zabriskie and McCormick's model studied two types of family leisure involvement patterns, core and balance. The everyday "core" family leisure patterns include activities such as playing board games, watching television and videos together, or shooting basketballs together in the driveway. These activities provide a consistent, safe, and often a positive context in which family members can be brought closer together. Family vacations, most outdoor recreation, special events, and other activities that require substantial planning are defined as "balance" family activities. Balance activities facilitate the development of adaptive skills and the ability to learn and change. Research specific to intact families with adopted children of color by Freeman and Zabriskie (2003) found that parents' perceptions of family functioning were significantly correlated to participation in both core and balance leisure activities.

Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) suggest that shared family activities create a sense of uniqueness that establishes family identity and bonding in family relationships. This premise is supported by family ritual research (Bossard & Boll, 1950; Doherty, 1997; Fiese & Kline, 1993; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Family leisure activities that are deliberately planned, repeated, and have meaning for family members become family leisure rituals (Doherty; Fiese & Kline). According to Fiese and Kline, weekend family leisure activities and family vacations are two settings where family rituals occur in



family life. Similarly, Wolin and Bennett proposed that ritual life in families reinforces the family identity and gives all members a shared and necessary sense of belonging.

According to Orthner (1998), leisure experiences can be a source of conflict for families; these conflicts, however, are not nearly as influential as the positive benefits of shared family experiences. “Spending time together, learning new activities, and solving problems in less threatening environments can really help families practice skills that can be transferred back into the day-to-day life of the family” (Orthner, p. 90). Shared family activities contribute to the development of collective interest and identities, foster adaptation to new changes, promote the establishment and maintaining of boundaries and are a continuing source of cohesion within the family system (Orthner & Mancini, 1991). Parents have recognized that shared family activities do contribute to healthy family functioning and intentionally seek opportunities for family recreation (Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

A study by Shaw and Dawson (2001) found that the parents’ family recreational choices were based on desired outcome goals for the family. For the parents in their study, family recreation was purposively chosen rather than intrinsically motivated. Two types of purposive recreation goals were identified: Goals related to increased family functioning, such as enhanced family communication, cohesion, and a strong sense of family; and, goals regarding other beneficial outcomes of recreation for their children, such as learning healthy lifestyles and moral values. For these parents, family leisure was clearly based on family togetherness and interaction among family members.

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The parents in Shaw and Dawson's (2001) study were looking for recreation that not only brought the family together in an enjoyable way, but also served as conduit to create a sense of family togetherness and to teach children about values and healthy lifestyles. According to Kelly (1981), outdoor recreation often facilitates relationship building. It provides escape from at-home obligations and offers a variety of activities and environments, which may provide more intense interaction. These unique benefits of outdoor recreation make it an accepted and perhaps desirable choice for family recreation (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002).

### *Outdoor Family Recreation*

Freeman and Zabriskie (2002) examined two studies involving structured outdoor family recreation programming. Those studies found that structured outdoor family recreation programming has a strong positive relationship with family strength. The reported research suggests that certain types of leisure activities, such as outdoor adventure activities being used in the treatment of dysfunctional and maladaptive families, are particularly effective in providing family enrichment experiences.

Challenging recreation has successfully been used to create collective efficacy for families with at-risk adolescents and improved communication between parent and adolescent (Huff et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2004). Families in Wells' et al. study participated in one of three challenging recreation activities, either a survival trek, handcart trek, or a family camp. Family collective efficacy scores significantly increased from participation in all three challenging recreational activities. Their findings indicated that family collective efficacy can then be generalized to other domains of family

functioning such as the ability to resolve conflict. Similarly, a study conducted by Huff et al. examined the influence of different levels of challenging recreation on improving parent-adolescent communication. Results indicated that challenging recreation, regardless of the level, improved communication between parent and adolescent.

Outdoor adventure activities such as canoeing, kayaking, mountaineering, rock climbing, cycling, skiing, and snowshoeing all take place in natural environments, require physical effort, and involve an element of excitement (Kluge, 2005). Outdoor family experiences that are challenging introduce new energy and excitement into the family system and may facilitate change (Huff, 2002). There are many outdoor experiences that can bring adventure and excitement for families; one such experience is family downhill skiing.

#### *Family Downhill Skiing*

The multigenerational appeal of downhill skiing (NSAA, 2005) makes it advantageous for family recreation as it can be enjoyed by family members of all ages. A nationwide survey by Wellner (1997) on the demographics of outdoor recreation and travel reported that downhill skiing is the second-most popular winter sport after sledding. According to a demographic study conducted by the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) 49% of skiers and snowboarders were members of a family with children at home. Respondents to the association's questionnaire were also asked how they first started skiing/snowboarding, and 50% indicated that they started skiing/snowboarding with their family.

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Researchers indicate that skiing may increase self-efficacy (Ferguson & Jones, 2001) and impact emotional wellness (Bunting, 2000). Ferguson and Jones, using Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997), developed a theory based therapeutic recreation intervention program for a 15-year-old female with severe depression and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). Cross-country skiing was used as a modality to increase the young woman's self-confidence. Cross-country skiing aided her in discovering positive ways to manage her anger by helping her make stronger efficacy judgments about herself. These outcomes seemed to generalize to improved relations with family members.

Bunting (2000) examined different types of recreational participation as possible antidepressants for individuals. Her study compared the outcome of the emotional effect on individuals who participated in downhill skiing, challenge courses, volleyball, archery, and running. Skiing and challenge courses had a greater increase in the positive emotional affect of participants than did traditional activities. Bunting hypothesized that challenge courses would have increased positive emotional affect over the other activities and was surprised to find that downhill skiing had a slightly higher or equal impact as challenge courses. These results may be due to the fact that skiing has the capacity to be a very challenging activity that is unique to each individual. Ferguson and Jones' (2001) study as well as Bunting's indicate there are potential benefits to families who ski together, such as improved family relations through increased self-efficacy, along with increased emotional well being of family members.

*Summary and Hypotheses*

In an effort to strengthen family functioning, the field of family studies has focused on family dynamics and behavior using a family systems perspective (Olson et al., 1979). Family leisure research provides evidence that healthy family functioning is strengthened when families spend time together in shared activities (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002; Orthner, 1998; Stinnett et al., 1982). Outdoor recreation provides an environment conducive for challenging family experiences that can engender healthy family functioning (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Huff et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Family leisure researchers and parents are seeking to identify family activities that bring families closer together, promote the ability to adapt and change, enhance communication skills, and give family members a sense of identity and belonging (Freeman, Hill, & Huff, 2002; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). One such activity that merits investigation is family downhill skiing. Research in outdoor family recreation has not specifically investigated the experience of family downhill skiing and its relationship to family functioning. Family downhill skiing patterns: How many days a year the family skis together (frequency); whether the family skis close to home, at a vacation destination, or a combination of both (type); and how many years the family has been skiing together (duration) may influence family functioning outcomes for families that ski together. Therefore, the following hypotheses were tested:

*Hypothesis 1.* There is a relationship between the frequency of family ski experiences that are close to home, at a vacation destination, and the total frequency of family ski experiences, and family functioning.

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*Hypothesis 2.* There is a difference between the types of family ski experiences (close to home, at a vacation destination, or combination of both) and the level of family functioning.

*Hypothesis 3.* There is a difference between the frequency of family ski experiences that are close to home, at a vacation destination, and the combination of both and the level of family functioning.

*Hypothesis 4.* There is a relationship between the duration (years) of family ski experiences and family functioning.

### Methods

#### *Sample*

The sample consisted of 114 paired samples (family units) each consisting of one parent and one youth. These paired samples represented 110 families due to multiple observations of more than one youth and/or more than one parent from a family. Thirty-one families skied close to home, 48 families skied at a vacation destination, and 41 families had ski experiences that were a combination of both close to home and vacation destination ski experiences. The families were from 27 different states in the United States, 2 from Canada, and 2 from other countries. According to the five ski regions as designated by the National Ski Areas Association (2005), 41 families were from the Northeast, with 12 from the Southeast, 7 from the Midwest, 41 from the Rocky Mountains, and 7 from the Pacific West.

The parent sample consisted of 53% males and 47% females. Their ages ranged from 36 to 60 years, with a mean of 46.5 (SD = 5.1) years. Most parents were Caucasian

(97.3%) with less than 3% other ethnicities. Annual household incomes ranged from \$30,000 to over \$150,000. A large percentage had high annual incomes; 60% earned over \$150,000, 29% made between 80,000 and \$150,000 and only 11% made less than \$80,000. The majority of parents were college graduates; 44% with a post-graduate degree, 36% with a college degree, 17% had four years or less of post high school education, leaving only 3% with only a high school diploma or less. The youth sample consisted of 51% males and 49% females. Their ages ranged from 11 to 19 years, with a mean of 14.3 (SD = 1.8) years. Most youth were Caucasian (95.6%), with less than 5% other ethnicities. Almost all (95%) of youth lived at home.

### *Procedures*

A convenience sample of families who skied together were recruited from three different Utah ski resorts: Alta, Sundance, and The Canyons. In addition, participants were recruited from families already known by the researcher, and referrals from friends and other families participating in the survey. Families skiing with youth were approached by the researcher at the ski resorts and asked to participate in the study. In order to obtain a sample of families from different regions of the United States data were collected during different days, weeks, and months of the 2006 ski season. This approach also provided a sample comprised of families who ski close to home as well as at a vacation destination. Participants were given three options to complete the survey: 1) an on site paper-pencil survey, 2) a paper-pencil survey returned through mail service in preaddressed stamped envelopes, or 3) an online link sent to them via email. One or more parent(s) and one or more adolescent(s) 12 to 18 years of age from a family unit were

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asked to complete the survey. Surveys were number coded to link parents to children, but not to identify study participants. Signed consent forms were obtained from parents and assent forms from the youth participants taking the paper-pencil survey. Online participants were informed at the beginning of the survey that online submission of the survey implied consent.

### *Instrumentation*

The primary instruments used to collect the data were the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES II) and the Family Skiing Patterns Questionnaire. FACES II was used to measure the dependent variables of family cohesion, family adaptability and overall family functioning. The Family Skiing Patterns Questionnaire was used to measure the independent variables of the type, frequency, and duration of family ski experiences. To give additional insight into family ski experiences a Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale was used to measure youth and parent satisfaction with family ski experiences, and the Individual Skiing Patterns Scale to determine how often the participant skied with specific family members were also used. Finally, demographic information was collected and included the age, gender, and race of parent and youth, household income, parent education, where the family currently lived, and whether or not the youth lived at home.

*Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale.* FACES II (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, & Wilson, 1992) measures two dimensions of family functioning, cohesion and adaptability. Family cohesion assesses family



togetherness and emotional bonding family members have toward one another.

Family adaptability assesses the extent to which the family system is flexible and able to change in regards to family power structures, role relationships, relationship rules, and negotiation style.

The FACES II (30-item family version scale) consists of 16 cohesion items and 14 adaptability items. Each item is measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Almost Never to 5 = Almost Always. The parent response score and the youth response score for family cohesion and adaptability were calculated utilizing a formula provided by Olson et al. (1992) that adds and subtracts items according to whether or not items are positively or negatively framed.

Calculating the parent family-type (overall family functioning) score and youth family-type score required a two-step process. First, the cohesion and adaptability scores for the youth or the parent were located on the “Linear Scoring Interpretations” guide that gives a corresponding 1 - 8 score for each dimension. A cohesion score of 1 indicates a disengaged family, while a score of 8 indicates a very connected family. An adaptability score of 1 indicates a rigid family, as compared to a score of 8, indicating a very flexible family. Second, the family-type score (1 - 8) was obtained by dividing the sum of the corresponding cohesion and adaptability scores by two, with a score of 1 indicating the family type as extreme and a score of 8 indicating the family type as balanced. The resulting family-type score was used as a general measure of overall family functioning. The mean

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family scores for cohesion, adaptability, and overall family functioning were obtained by dividing the sum of the youth score and the parent score by two.

Internal consistency measures for FACES II were determined from a national survey sample of 2,312 respondents, divided into two equal subgroups. The subgroups had Cronbach Alpha figures of .88 and .86 for cohesion and .78 and .79 for adaptability, with .90 for the total instrument (Olson et al., 1992). The sample for the current study had Cronbach Alpha figures of .78 for cohesion (n = 224) and .80 (n = 222) for adaptability, with .86 (n = 222) for the total instrument.

*Family Skiing Patterns Questionnaire.* This questionnaire consisted of statements and questions created by the researcher to measure family downhill skiing patterns; ski experiences that were close to home and at a vacation destination (type), average days per year the family skied together (frequency), and the number of years the family had skied together (duration). Participants were asked to describe the type of family skiing experiences by selecting “yes” or “no” to statements as to whether or not the family skied close to home or at a vacation destination. If the participant answered yes to either statement they were asked to indicate, on average, how many days per year (frequency). Duration of family ski experiences were measured by a question asking how many years the individual had been skiing together with their current family. This questionnaire described family skiing as two or more family members who skied together. It was not assessed for validity or reliability.

*Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale.* This scale was a modified version of Zabriskie and McCormick’s (2003) Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL), the

words “family skiing experiences” or “family skiing activities” replaced the words “family life.” This scale allowed respondents to agree or disagree with seven statements about family skiing satisfaction on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree. Scoring consisted of summing all items to produce a satisfaction with family skiing experiences score that ranged from 7 to 49. The Satisfaction With Family Life Scale (SWFL) has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties, with evidence of construct validity, internal consistency ( $\alpha = .93$ ), and test-retest reliability ( $r = .89$ ) (Zabriskie & McCormick). Reliability testing of the Satisfaction With Family Skiing Scale in this study using Cronbach’s Alpha demonstrated acceptable internal consistency for parent responses ( $\alpha = .88$ ) and youth responses ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

*Individual Skiing Patterns Questionnaire.* This questionnaire determined with whom the participant skied and how often. It utilized a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Almost Never to 5 = Almost Always, which allowed the individual to describe how often they skied with their spouse, father, mother, siblings, extended family members, friends, and ski school. This questionnaire was not assessed for validity or reliability.

#### *Data Analysis*

Analysis of the data were conducted using the statistical package SPSS. The data were reviewed for missing responses or data entered incorrectly and examined for skewing. Some skewing of data was found for frequency variables (average ski days), cohesion for both parent and youth scores, and parent duration scores. The skewed data were reviewed and outliers that were three standard

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deviations from the mean were replaced with the mean score for the distribution of scores. The parent and youth data were then combined to create the family data set. Any unmatched parent or youth were eliminated from the data set. Family mean scores for independent and dependent variables were then calculated for the family data set using SPSS. Four families consisted of more than one parent or youth. Mean scores for these families were calculated separately, dividing the sum score by the number of family members.

Descriptive statistics of the study variables, including the socio-demographic variables, were used to examine underlying characteristics of the study sample. Pearson Product Moment zero-order correlations between the study variables for youth response, parent response and the mean family scores were examined for multicollinearity as well as to identify possible controlling factors that could be included in subsequent regression equations (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003). Study variables that had significant correlation coefficients with the dependent variables were further examined using blocked multiple regression analyses. Other variables considered as control factors and included in the blocked multiple regression analysis were socio-demographic variables, satisfaction with family ski experiences variable, and how often the individual skied with specific family members variables that also had significant correlation coefficients with the dependent variables or thought to be theoretically related to the dependent variable (Freeman & Zabriskie).

In order to examine the first hypothesis that there was a relationship between the frequency of family ski experiences and family functioning, several multiple regression analyses were conducted. Analyses examined the contribution of the frequency of family ski experiences close to home, the frequency of family ski experiences at a vacation destination, and the total frequency of family ski experiences, to family functioning from a youth perspective, parent perspective, and family perspective. Blocked multiple regression analysis was used. Socio-demographic variables, satisfaction with family ski experiences, and how often the individual skied with specific family members were the variables entered in the first block. The frequency of family ski experiences under examination (close to home, at a vacation destination, or total frequency) followed in the second block. For each blocked multiple regression model the multiple correlation coefficients ( $R^2$ ) were examined at an alpha level .05. The standardized regression coefficients (Beta) determined the relative contribution of each variable in a significant model.

To examine hypothesis two that there was a difference between the types of family ski experiences (close to home, at a vacation destination, or a combination of both) and the level of family functioning, two oneway ANOVA's were conducted. Youth response and parent response were both analyzed. The difference between the types of family ski experiences with cohesion, adaptability, and family functioning, were examined for each model at a .05 alpha level.

The analysis of hypothesis three examined the differences between frequencies of family ski experiences and the level of family functioning. To

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conduct the analyses it was necessary to recode the continuous variables of frequency of family ski experiences close to home, frequency of family ski experiences at a vacation destination, and total frequency of family ski experiences into categorical variables. Each frequency score was categorized into one of three groups: group one (1 to 7 ski days), group two (8 to 14 ski days), and group three (15 or more ski days). Once recoded, several oneway ANOVA's were conducted using Tukey HSD post hoc tests. The differences between these groups, for each type of family ski experience, and family functioning were analyzed from a youth, parent, and family perspective ( $p < .05$ ).

The fourth hypothesis examined the relationship between the duration (years) of family ski experiences and family functioning. This hypothesis was not given further analysis beyond the zero-order correlations.

### Results

The cohesion scores from this sample ranged from 40 to 80, with a youth mean score of 62.79 ( $SD = 8.64$ ), parents' mean score of 65.76 ( $SD = 6.31$ ), and family mean score of 64.11 ( $SD = 6.38$ ). For adaptability scores the sample ranged from 30 to 66, with a youth mean score of 48.30 ( $SD = 7.51$ ), parents' mean score of 49.37 ( $SD = 4.86$ ), and a family mean score of 48.93 ( $SD = 5.72$ ). In this study the overall family functioning scores from the youth, parent, and family perspectives ranged from 3 to 7.50, with a youth mean score of 5.15 ( $SD = 1.44$ ), parents' mean score of 5.51 ( $SD = 1.06$ ), and a mean family score of 5.30 ( $SD = 1.07$ ). According to the Circumplex Model and the FACES II: Linear Scoring

and Interpretation (Olson, 1992) the mean scores for cohesion, adaptability, and overall family functioning from the youth, parent and family perspectives indicated that on average the families in this study were connected, flexible and had a moderately balanced level of family functioning. These results were slightly higher than Olson's (1992) sample.

In Olson's (1992) sample, which consisted of two parents ( $n = 2,082$ ) and one youth ( $n = 416$ ), the cohesion scores ranged from 16 to 80 with a youth mean score of 56.3 ( $SD = 9.2$ ) and a parents' mean score of 64.9 ( $SD = 8.4$ ). The adaptability scores in Olson's sample ranged from 15 -70, with a youth mean score of 45.4 ( $SD = 7.9$ ) and a parents' mean score of 49.9 ( $SD = 6.6$ ). The family-type or overall family functioning mean scores were not reported.

The frequency of family ski experiences close to home for this sample ranged from 1 to 40 days. The youth averaged 12.62 ( $SD = 9.53$ ) close to home ski days, the parents 9.17 ( $SD = 7.03$ ) days, and the family mean was 11.06 ( $SD = 7.93$ ) days. The frequency of family ski experiences at a vacation destination ranged from 1 to 24 days. Youth ski experiences at a vacation destination averaged 7.63 ( $SD = 4.29$ ) days, parents 7.51 ( $SD = 3.94$ ) days, and the family mean was 11.06 ( $SD = 7.93$ ) days. The total frequency of family ski experiences, close to home family ski experiences, vacation destination family ski experiences, or the sum of both, ranged from 1 to 46 days. The total frequency of youth family ski experiences averaged 12.99 ( $SD = 9.23$ ) days, parents 10.65 ( $SD = 6.78$ ) days, and the family mean was 12.03 ( $SD = 7.50$ ) days.

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The number of years the family had skied together (duration) ranged from 1 to 20 years. Youth averaged 8.54 ( $SD = 3.9$ ) years, parents 9.35 ( $SD = 4.24$ ) years, and the family mean was 8.94 ( $SD = 3.79$ ) years.

### *Hypothesis One*

Hypothesis one stated that there is a relationship between the frequency of family ski experiences that are close to home, at a vacation destination, and the total frequency of family ski experiences and family functioning.

*Youth Perspective.* Examination of zero-order correlation coefficients indicated a number of significant relationships among the study variables, from the youth perspective (Table 1). The frequency of the family ski experiences close to home was significantly correlated with family cohesion and total family functioning scores. There were also significant correlations between youth satisfaction with family ski experiences and family cohesion, family adaptability and overall family functioning. In addition, how often youth skied with their father, mother, and siblings, were significantly correlated with family functioning variables.

A blocked multiple regression analysis was used to examine the contribution of the frequency of family ski experiences close to home to family cohesion from a youth perspective. Socio-demographic variables, youth satisfaction with family ski experiences, and how often youth skied with father, mother, and siblings were included in the first block as control variables. Youth satisfaction with family ski experiences was the significant contributor to family



cohesion in the first block of the model ( $R^2 = .450; p < .01$ ). The addition of the study variable, the frequency of family ski experiences close to home, in the second block did not result in a significant change ( $R^2 \Delta = .007; p > .05$ ) in the variance explained in family functioning. Youth satisfaction with family ski experiences remained the significant contributor to family cohesion (Table 2).

The same procedures were used to conduct a second blocked multiple regression analysis (with  $n = 58$ ) to examine the contribution of the frequency of family ski experiences close to home to overall family functioning. In the first block of the model, youth satisfaction with family ski experiences was the significant contributor to overall family functioning ( $R^2 = .452; p < .01$ ). The addition of the study variable in the second block, the frequency of family ski experiences close to home, did not result in a significant change ( $R^2 \Delta = .013; p > .05$ ) in the explained variance. Youth satisfaction with family ski experiences continued to be the significant contributor to overall family functioning ( $\beta = .466; p < .01$ ).

Due to the results of the above blocked multiple regression analyses and the significant zero-order correlations between youth satisfaction with family ski experiences and family cohesion, family adaptability, and overall family functioning scores additional blocked multiple regression analyses were conducted. The same blocked regression procedures described above were used. Youth satisfaction with family ski experiences continued to be the significant contributor to the variance explained in family cohesion, family adaptability, and

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overall family functioning from the youth perspective. As the results of the additional blocked regression models are very similar and repetitive of existing tables, these tables have not been included or discussed.

An additional significant model was found, however, in the blocked multiple regression analysis (with  $n = 99$ ) that was conducted to examine the contribution of the total frequency of family ski experiences (family ski experiences close to home, at a vacation destination or the sum of both) to family cohesion. Socio-demographic variables, youth satisfaction with family ski experiences, and how often youth skied with their father, mother, and siblings were included in the first block as control variables. Parent education, how often youth skied with siblings and youth satisfaction with family ski experiences were significant contributors to family cohesion in the first block of the model ( $R^2 = .523$ ;  $p < .001$ ). The addition of the study variable, total frequency of family ski experiences, in the second block did not result in a significant change ( $R^2 \Delta = .000$ ;  $p > .05$ ) in the variance explained in family functioning. Parent education, how often the youth skied with siblings, and youth satisfaction with family ski experiences were the significant contributors to family cohesion (Table 3).

*Parent Perspective.* Examination of zero-order correlations coefficients from the parent perspective indicated no significant relationships between the frequency of family ski experiences close to home, at a vacation destination, and the total frequency of family ski experiences and family functioning (Table 4). Similar to the youth zero-order correlations, parent satisfaction with family ski

experiences were significantly correlated with family cohesion, family adaptability, and overall family functioning. How often the parent skied with their spouse was significantly correlated with family cohesion and overall family functioning and how often they skied with their children was significantly correlated with family adaptability.

Numerous blocked multiple regression analyses were utilized to examine the contribution of study variables, and parent satisfaction with family ski experiences to family cohesion, family adaptability, and overall family functioning. As with the youth perspective the results of the regression analyses from the parent perspective were very similar and repetitive, and therefore, only three of these analyses are reported.

The first blocked multiple regression analysis examined the contribution of the total frequency of family ski experiences to family cohesion. Socio-demographic variables, parent satisfaction with family ski experiences, and how often the parent skied with their spouse, and how often the parent skied with their children were all entered together in the first block as control variables. Satisfaction with family ski experiences and how often parents skied with their spouse and how often parents skied with their children were significant contributors to family cohesion ( $R^2 = .360; p < .001$ ). The addition of the total frequency of family ski experiences in the second block did not result in a significant change in the variance explained in family cohesion ( $R^2 \Delta = .000; p > .05$ ). Parent satisfaction with family ski experiences, and how often a parent skied with their spouse had a positive influence on family cohesion. How often a parent skied with their children had a negative influence on family cohesion (Table 5).

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A second blocked multiple regression analysis (with  $n = 99$ ) examined the contribution of the total frequency of family ski experiences to family adaptability using the same procedure described above. Parent satisfaction with family ski experiences was a significant contributor to family adaptability in the first block of the model ( $R^2 = .228$ ;  $p < .01$ ). The addition of the total frequency of family ski experiences in the second block did not result in a significant change in the variance explained in family adaptability ( $R^2 \Delta = .005$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Parent satisfaction remained the only significant contributor to family adaptability in this model ( $\beta = .354$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

The third blocked regression analysis (with  $n = 99$ ) examined the contribution of the total frequency of family ski experiences to overall family functioning. Once again, parent satisfaction with family ski experiences was the significant contributor to overall family functioning in the first block of the model ( $R^2 = .281$ ;  $p < .001$ ). The addition of the total frequency of family ski experiences in the second block did not result in a significant change in explained variance ( $R^2 \Delta = .003$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Parent satisfaction with family ski experiences remained the only significant predictor of overall family functioning in this model ( $\beta = .452$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

*Family Perspective.* Examination of zero-order correlation coefficients from the family perspective (Table 6) indicated that the total frequency of family ski experiences (close to home, vacation destination or sum of both) was significantly correlated with the mean family scores for cohesion, adaptability, and overall family functioning. Also, the frequency of family ski experiences close to

home was significantly correlated with the mean family scores for adaptability and overall family functioning.

To analyze data from a family perspective mean family scores were utilized. Three blocked regression analyses were conducted to examine the contribution of the total frequency of family ski experiences to family cohesion, to family adaptability, and to overall family functioning. Socio-demographic variables, and satisfaction with family ski experiences were entered in the first block as control variables. Satisfaction with family ski experiences was the significant contributor to family cohesion ( $R^2 = .422$ ;  $p < .001$ ), family adaptability ( $R^2 = .315$ ;  $p < .001$ ), and overall family functioning ( $R^2 = .438$ ;  $p < .001$ ) in the first block of each model. The addition of the study variable, total frequency of family ski experiences, in the second block did not result in a significant change in the variance explained in family cohesion (Table 7), family adaptability (Table 8), and overall family functioning (Table 9). Satisfaction with family ski experiences remained the significant contributor for the explained variance in each model.

A fourth blocked multiple regression analysis from a family perspective was utilized to examine the contribution of the frequency of family ski experiences close to home to family adaptability and to overall family functioning. Satisfaction with family ski experiences was the significant contributor for family adaptability ( $R^2 = .369$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and overall family functioning ( $R^2 = .559$ ;  $p < .001$ ) in each model for the first block. The addition of the study variable, frequency of family ski experiences close to home, in the second block did not result in a significant

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change in variance explained in family adaptability ( $R^2 \Delta = .000; p > .05$ ) and in overall family functioning ( $R^2 \Delta = .000; p > .05$ ). Once again, satisfaction with family ski experiences remained the significant contributor for the explained variance in family adaptability ( $\beta = .551; p < .001$ ) and family functioning ( $\beta = .681; p < .001$ ) in each model.

#### *Hypothesis Two*

Hypothesis two stated that there is a difference between the types of family ski experiences (close to home, at a vacation destination, or combination of both) and the level of family functioning. Two oneway ANOVA's were conducted to individually analyze youth responses and parent responses. There were no significant differences in levels of family functioning among the types of family ski experiences from both the youth and parent perspective.

#### *Hypothesis Three*

Hypothesis three stated that there is a difference between the frequency of family ski experiences (close to home, at a vacation destination, or combination of both) and the level of family functioning. Analysis of variance, with Tukey HSD post hoc tests, was used to examine the differences between group one (1 to 7 ski days), group two (8 to 14 ski days), and group three (15 or more ski days), for each type of family ski experience and the level of family functioning from the youth, parent, and family perspective. From the youth perspective (Table 10), there was a significant difference in family functioning among the frequency of family ski experiences close to home between group one (1 to 7 ski days) and group three (15

or more ski days). There were no significant differences, however, from the parent perspective or family perspective.

#### *Hypothesis Four*

Hypothesis four stated that there is a relationship between the number of years that the family had skied together (duration) and family functioning. There was no indication of a significant relationship between the duration of family ski experiences and family functioning with the zero-order correlations from the youth perspective, parent perspective, and family perspective. Therefore, this hypothesis was not given further analysis beyond the zero-order correlations.

#### Discussion

This study was non-random and consisted of a convenience sample. Therefore, the results only apply to those families and family members who participated in the study. Furthermore, some of the outcomes of this study may be a result of the nature of the study sample. The study sample was somewhat homogeneous in socio-demographic characteristics. The majority of participants in the study came from homes with relatively high annual incomes. There were also limitations in data collection, as the researcher was restricted to families with youth 12 to 18 years of age. One strong point of this study, however, was the almost equal distribution of fathers and mothers who participated in the study and the almost equal distribution of male and female youth who participated in the study. Also, this study provided data from a youth, parent, and family perspective as recommended by Freeman and Zabriskie (2003). Finally, many of the families who participated in this study completed the survey during shared participation in a family ski

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experience. Orthner and Mancini (1991) suggested that assessments of family recreation participation outcomes are more constructive during participation in the activity under investigation.

The findings from this study did not support three of the four hypotheses examined. Study findings did not provide support for the hypothesized relationships between the frequency of family ski experiences close to home, at a vacation destination, or the total frequency of family ski experiences, and family functioning. This was true from youth, parent, and family perspectives. Similarly, the hypothesized differences between the types of family ski experiences and the level of family functioning were not supported in this study. Furthermore, hypothesized differences between the frequency of family ski experiences and the level of family functioning from the parent and family perspectives were not supported in this study. From the youth perspective there was a difference in the level of overall family functioning between those families who skied close to home 1 to 7 days a year and those families who skied close to home 15 or more days a year. Finally, the hypothesized relationship between the numbers of years the family had skied together (duration) and family functioning was not supported.

The lack of significant findings notwithstanding, one finding that was consistent across all three perspectives was the statistically significant relationship between the satisfaction with family ski experiences and family functioning variables. This finding is similar to Johnson, Zabriskie, and Hill's (2006) study that found a positive relationship between marital satisfaction and satisfaction with couple leisure involvement. According to Johnson et al. couples indicated that it



was not the level or amount of couple leisure involvement or the satisfaction with the amount of time spent together, but the satisfaction with the couple's core leisure involvement that significantly predicted marital satisfaction.

From the youth, parent, and family perspectives, satisfaction with family ski experiences was a primary predictor of family cohesion, family adaptability and overall family functioning. The lack of significant evidence that frequency of family ski experiences is a significant contributor to family functioning suggests that it is the quality of family ski experiences and not the quantity that has the most impact on family functioning. These results may also reflect that the family members' satisfaction with the family ski experience may be affected by the frequency of these experiences. For example, excessive participation in family ski experiences may cause some family members to lose interest in the activity or cause conflict, having a detrimental impact on a family members enjoyment of the family ski experience (Fiese, 1992; Orthner, 1998; Wolin & Bennett 1984).

It is of interest to note that how often youth skied with siblings and how often a parent skied with their spouse were positive predictors of family cohesion, whereas, how often a parent skied with their child was a negative predictor of family cohesion. Furthermore, youth response to how often family ski experiences involved skiing with their father were significantly correlated with their perceptions of family cohesion, family adaptability and overall family functioning. This may be the result of the unique role that family vacations and leisure time plays in facilitating a connection and bonding of children to their parents,

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especially fathers (Dollahite & Hawkins, 1998; Shaw, Havitz & Delamere, 2006).

“Family vacations give the family an opportunity to bond in a context where things are designed to be more fun” (Shaw et al., p. 5). Skiing provides an exciting, fun, natural environment that can promote change and stimulate energy into the family system (Orthner & Mancini, 1991). It has the potential to create memories that promote a positive sense of family for family members in the immediate and the distant future (Shaw et al., 1998).

Whether or not families skied close to home on the weekend, during family ski vacations, or a combination of both did not make a significant difference in their level of family cohesion, family adaptability and overall family functioning. The Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning developed by Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) explains that there are two basic patterns of family leisure, core and balance, and that families utilize these to meet needs of stability and change. The model suggests that core family leisure patterns are usually home-based or everyday activities that are relatively accessible and relatively inexpensive. These core activities foster predictable family experiences that create stability and promote family cohesion. Balance activities, on the other hand, are not usually home-based are, less frequent, and more out of the ordinary. These balance activities require families to negotiate and adapt to new input and experiences. Zabriskie and McCormick suggest that vacation and most outdoor activities, such as family ski experiences, are a balance activity that meets the need

for change, novelty and challenge for family members, thereby promoting family adaptability.

Family skiing inherently provides experiences that require change and adaptation from family members as they plan and carryout the activity. Yet for families who ski together often, whether it is during the weekend or for the annual ski vacation, it may become a family leisure ritual that has meaning, bringing a sense of belonging and closeness to family members (Fiese & Kline 1993); thereby, creating stability and familiarity in the family structure, promoting family cohesion. Perhaps for some families in this study, family ski experiences are actually more of a core activity, or a blending of both core and balance leisure patterns, which may help explain the findings of no difference between the types of family ski experiences and the level of family functioning.

Since both types of family ski experiences (close to home and vacation destination) may promote comparable levels of cohesion and adaptability.

#### *Recommendations For Further Research*

It has been recommended that future family leisure research investigate specific programs and recreational activities that may strengthen families (Freeman et al., 2002). This study attempted to investigate the influence of family ski experiences on family functioning through examining the frequency, type, and duration of family ski experiences. Findings from this study indicate that future investigation of one form of family recreation may require careful selection of variables investigated and research

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methods used in order to determine how and why this activity contributes to healthy family functioning.

When investigating a specific activity or one form of family recreation experience Holman and Epperson (1984) recommend that the amount of time, or in the case of this study the number of days (frequency), and how many years (duration) are best conceptualized as a contingency variable rather than an independent variable. “A contingency variable specifies conditions under which the relationship between (the independent variable) and (the dependent variable) is altered, and is often thought of as an interacting variable” (Burr, Hill, Nye, & Reiss, 1979 as cited in Holman & Epperson, 1984, p. 284). For example, the frequency of family ski experiences may affect family members learned skills and skiing ability. In turn, a family member’s skiing ability will have an effect on their satisfaction with family ski experiences and alter family functioning outcomes. “Thus, the effect that a specific activity form or activity pattern has on a marriage or a family is ‘contingent’ on the amount of time given to that activity form or pattern” (Holman & Epperson, 1984, p. 284).

The frequency of family ski experiences, a contingency variable in this study, may have positive or negative impact on family skiing satisfaction. This may explain why the frequency of family ski experiences close to home, at a vacation destination, and total frequency of family ski experiences were not significant predictors of family functioning. It appears that these variables operate within the construct of family skiing satisfaction since the frequency of family ski experiences have a significant zero-order correlations with satisfaction with family ski experiences (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003).

Likewise, the frequency of family ski experiences have significant zero-order correlations with family cohesion, family adaptability, and overall family functioning, helping to recognize the possible role that frequency of family ski experiences played in the level of family functioning.

Another inherent concern with investigation of only one form of family leisure activity is the other shared leisure activities the family participates in that are not directly measured. Other family leisure involvement is likely to be a contributing influence to the perceived functioning of the family by the family members (Johnson & Bhattacharyya, 2001). Finding a method to measure and control for the effect that other family leisure involvement has, as a lurking variable, on family functioning may help to explain any outliers and bias in the data. Perhaps measurement of the family leisure involvement patterns through instrumentation such as the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) (Zabriskie & McCormick), may help data analysis to isolate the unique contribution of one form of shared family activity to family functioning. Also, qualitative inquiry may give insight as to why family members enjoy a particular family activity and how they perceive it benefits family functioning.

Finally, further research aimed at understanding why and how satisfaction with family leisure experiences influences cohesion and adaptability is needed. Investigation of the unique characteristics of different forms of family leisure participation and the levels of family satisfaction experienced may give added insight as to which types of activities are most beneficial for families. For example, it may be helpful to find out if the family leisure experience is something that all members of the family can participate in

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together. The context or the environment in which this activity takes place may influence satisfaction. Other characteristics that influence family leisure satisfaction may include the level of fun, excitement and challenge of the activity for family members, skill development of family members, opportunities for increased communication, and the level of teamwork required of family members. Furthermore, it may be important to find out if the activity is planned, repeated, and has meaning for family members, making it a family leisure ritual.

Other considerations for future investigation of family satisfaction with family leisure experiences include expanding the ethnic, economic, and education of families (Orthner, 1998). More research is needed that includes the perspective of different family members (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). Qualitative research would allow the researcher to gather information from families with younger children as well as teens, since, younger children may not be able to comprehend and complete written surveys. Orthner and Mancini (1990) recommended a combination of qualitative and quantitative research to provide depth and diversity of inquiry.

### *Implications*

The significant contribution of satisfaction with family ski experiences to family functioning has specific implications regarding the direction of family leisure programming. The level of satisfaction of shared family leisure activities is likely a critical factor as to whether or not the activity builds family cohesion and adaptability. Providers and facilitators of family leisure and recreation activities

need to focus on program development that facilitates shared family activities which in turn may provide satisfying experiences for all members of the family.

The ski industry has long recognized the importance of customer satisfaction to continued participation of clientele. They have focused on the quality of facilities and services offered. In recent years, they have targeted families by providing discount incentives, and family centered programs and services to encourage and accommodate family skiing opportunities. Nevertheless, family satisfaction with family ski experiences may go much deeper than the quality of facilities and services offered. Family ski experiences that are fun, bring a sense of closeness and belonging to family members, and create meaningful memories may provide a deeper satisfaction with the shared experience.

Parents are seeking family leisure experiences that bring the family closer together (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). According to the parents in the current study, how often they skied with their spouse was positively associated with their assessment of family cohesion. It was also related to how many years the family had skied together and satisfaction with family ski experiences. The ski industry may want to consider how to maintain and create more opportunities for shared skiing experiences for couples. This may include finding out why skiing is not a shared activity for some couples and considering ways to promote future joint participation. On the other hand, as the parents in this study skied more often with their children their assessment of family cohesion decreased. This could be for numerous reasons not answered in this study, such as differences in skiing ability

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and conflicts that may arise because of these differences. A family ski day requires a lot of effort from the parent. The process of making decisions and solving problems during the ski day could bring about stressed interaction. The ski industry may want to identify which aspects of family skiing are negatively related with family interaction and consider ways to help families minimize negative experiences during the ski day.

Finally, it would be beneficial to identify and focus on the aspects of family skiing that enhance family skiing satisfaction and promote the healthy functioning of the family. If used properly, recreation leisure theories can strengthen the ski industry in providing programs and services that help families to have increased fun skiing together, create feelings of closeness, and help them successfully adapt through the challenges of the ski day. This may help families to feel a deeper satisfaction with family ski experiences and create meaningful memories. As they continue to plan and repeat these family ski experiences it can become a family leisure ritual that strengthens the healthy functioning of the family.



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Table 1

*Zero Order Correlations Among Study Variables (Youth Perspective)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Parent age	1	-.120	.249**	.044	.338**	.102	-.039	.037	-.362**	-.010	-.085	.158	-.088	.218*	-.034	-.018	-.058
2. Parent gender		1	-.114	-.102	.158	.089	-.236*	.333**	-.112	-.006	-.020	.177	.064	.151	-.090	-.109	-.112
3. Parent education			1	.332**	.136	-.023	.141	.127	-.063	.058	-.078	.184	-.132	.023	-.112	-.079	-.087
4. Household income				1	-.114	-.001	.179	.060	.083	.002	-.059	.260*	-.064	.121	-.086	-.073	-.059
5. Youth age					1	.014	-.037	-.025	-.086	.013	-.184	.047	-.194*	.377**	-.028	-.027	-.015
6. Youth gender						1	-.056	.029	.049	.098	-.036	.005	-.006	.055	.125	.070	.104
7. Ski with father							1	.045	.377**	.326**	.035	.048	.060	.214*	.194*	.235*	.259**
8. Ski with mother								1	.174	.208*	.310*	.169	.172	.193*	.184*	.156	.171
9. Ski with siblings									1	.309**	.183	.072	.193*	.166	.344*	.077	.246**
10. SWFSS										1	.255*	.325**	.247*	.250**	.674**	.498**	.643**
11. Close, ski days											1	.178	.896**	.190	.250*	.243	.275*
12. Vacation, ski days												1	.463**	.306**	.142	.014	.089
13. Total, ski days													1	.204*	.179	.123	.179
14. Duration (years)														1	.098	-.002	.064
15. Cohesion															1	.569**	.869**
16. Adaptability																1	.872**
17. Family Functioning																	1

Note. \* $p < .05$  (2-tailed); \*\* $p < .001$  (2-tailed); SWFSS = Satisfaction With Family Skiing Scale

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Table 2  
*Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Family Cohesion (Youth Perspective - Frequency of Family Ski Experiences Close to Home)*

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Block 1 ( $R^2 = .523; p < .001$ )			
Income	-.022	.488	-.005
Parent education	-1.269	.841	-.189
Parent age	.256	.257	.142
Parent gender	.201	2.657	.012
Youth age	-.411	.647	-.082
Youth gender	.435	1.921	.025
Youth ski with father	-.465	.933	-.069
Youth ski with mother	.590	.938	.102
Youth ski with siblings	1.953	1.106	.286
SWFSS	5.231	1.436	.466**
Block 2 ( $R^2 \Delta = .007; p > .05$ )			
Income	.017	.493	-.004
Parent education	-1.179	.853	-.175
Parent age	.263	.258	.145
Parent gender	.799	2.780	.046
Youth age	-.334	.658	-.066
Youth gender	.684	1.957	.039
Youth ski with father	-.368	.946	-.055
Youth ski with mother	.315	1.008	.054
Youth ski with siblings	1.996	1.112	.292
SWFSS	4.954	1.487	.591**
Youth close ski days	-.005	.073	-.005

*Note* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ;  $n = 59$ ; SWFSS = Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale; Youth close ski days = Family ski experiences close to home



Table 3  
 Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Family Cohesion (Youth Perspective - Total Frequency of Family Ski Experiences)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Block 1 ( $R^2 = .523$ ; $p < .001$ )			
Income	-.169	.363	-.037
Parent education	-1.466	.610	-.200*
Parent age	.150	.155	.086
Parent gender	-1.268	1.509	.075
Youth age	-.281	.384	-.059
Youth gender	1.592	1.263	.094
Youth ski with father	-.313	.580	-.047
Youth ski with mother	.358	.489	.064
Youth ski with siblings	1.262	.597	.204*
SWFSS	6.481	.898	.589**
Block 2 ( $R^2 \Delta = .000$ ; $p > .05$ )			
Income	-.171	.366	-.038
Parent education	-1.471	.618	-.201*
Parent age	.151	.156	.087
Parent gender	-1.270	1.517	-.075
Youth age	-.286	.394	-.060
Youth gender	1.583	1.277	.094
Youth ski with father	-.314	.584	-.047
Youth ski with mother	.362	.496	.065
Youth ski with siblings	1.265	.602	.205*
SWFSS	6.497	.937	.591**
Total freq ski days	-.005	.073	-.005

Note \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ ;  $n = 102$ ; SWFSS = Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale; Total freq ski days = Total frequency of family ski experiences

Table 4

*Zero Order Correlations Among Study Variables (Parent Perspective)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Parent age	1	-.120	.249**	.044	.338*	.102	-.053	-.135	-.159	-.014	.168	-.015	.182	-.119	.074	-.050
2. Parent gender		1	-.114	-.102	.158	.089	.355**	.127	-.147	-.096	.068	-.021	.096	.027	.162	.132
3. Parent education			1	.332**	.136	-.023	.173	.001	.164	-.242	.114	-.147	.004	-.051	-.098	-.073
4. Household income				1	-.114	-.001	.060	.144	.236*	-.075	-.382**	.019	-.021	.046	-.140	-.023
5. Youth age					1	.014	.118	-.111	-.031	-.048	-.078	-.104	.171	-.071	.100	.019
6. Youth gender						1	-.035	-.105	.031	.050	.068	.038	.105	.204*	.120	.157
7. Ski with spouse							1	.414**	.287**	.060	.110	.088	.332**	.269**	.126	.240*
8. Ski with children								1	.254**	.048	.256*	.216*	-.048	.079	.186*	.116
9. SWFSS									1	.268*	.076	.194	.001	.444**	.316**	.445**
10. Close, ski days										1	.098	.833**	.296**	.233	.182	.240
11. Vacations, ski days											1	.409**	.137	.043	.049	.051
12. Total, ski days												1	.177	.116	.169	.158
13. Duration (years)													1	.123	-.018	.077
14. Cohesion														1	.512**	.875**
15. Adaptability															1	.816**
16. Family Functioning																1

Note. \* $p < .05$  (2-tailed); \*\* $p < .001$  (2-tailed); SWFSS = Satisfaction With Family Skiing Scale

Table 5  
*Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Family Cohesion (Parent Perspective - Total Frequency of Family Ski Experiences)*

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Block 1 ( $R^2 = .360; p < .001$ )			
Income	-.114	.323	-.034
Parent education	-.784	.529	-.147
Parent gender	-1.172	1.189	-.094
Parent age	-.144	.122	-.117
Youth age	.095	.320	-.028
Youth gender	2.907	1.077	.234
Parent ski with spouse	1.103	.433	.265*
Parent ski with child	-1.784	.806	-.212*
SWFSS	3.821	.778	.463**
Block 2 ( $R^2 \Delta = .000; p > .05$ )			
Income	-.114	.325	-.034
Parent education	-.760	.542	-.143
Parent gender	-1.145	1.201	-.092
Parent age	-.147	.124	-.119
Youth age	-.088	.323	-.026
Youth gender	2.898	1.084	.233
Parent ski with spouse	1.096	.436	.263*
Parent ski with child	-1.814	.821	-.212*
SWFSS	3.789	.794	.459**
Total freq ski days	.019	.083	.021

Note \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ ;  $n = 99$ ; SWFSS = Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale; Total freq ski days = Total frequency of family ski experiences

Table 6

*Zero Order Correlations Among Study Variables (Family Perspective)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Parent age	1	-.120	.249**	.044	.338**	.102	-.100	-.056	.194	-.055	.209*	-.092	.037	-.071
2. Parent gender		1	-.114	-.102	.158	.089	.091	-.115	.149	.013	.141	-.033	-.020	-.001
3. Parent educations			1	.332**	.136	-.023	.128	-.176	.158	-.159	.014	-.112	-.083	-.106
4. Household income				1	-.114	-.001	.146	-.101	.318**	-.060	.115	-.027	-.151	-.050
5. Youth age					1	.014	-.009	-.194	.033	-.164	.270**	-.047	.057	.011
6. Youth gender						1	.090	.022	.037	.042	.105	.201*	.134	.171
7. SWFSS							1	.362*	.295*	.311**	.157	.580**	.472**	.602**
8. Close, ski days								1	.067	.861**	.265	.262	.286*	.318*
9. Vacation, ski days									1	.461**	.229	.117	.079	.083
10. Total, ski days										1	.172	.204*	.227*	.247*
11. Duration (years)											1	.108	.014	.072
12. Cohesion												1	.591**	.893**
13. Adaptability													1	.841**
14. Family Functioning														1

Note. \* $p < .05$  (2-tailed); \*\* $p < .001$  (2-tailed); SWFSS = Satisfaction With Family Skiing Scale

Table 7  
 Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Family Cohesion (Family Perspective – Total Frequency of Family Ski Experiences)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Block 1 ( $R^2 = .422$ ; $p < .001$ )			
Income	-.235	.304	-.071
Parent education	-1.032	.501	-.193*
Parent gender	-1.027	1.073	-.086
Parent age	-.070	-.115	-.056
Youth gender	2.375	1.038	.192*
Youth age	-.081	.313	-.023
SWFSS	5.436	.808	.578**
Block 2 ( $R^2 \Delta = .000$ ; $p > .05$ )			
Income	-.237	.306	-.072
Parent education	-1.038	.511	-.194*
Parent gender	-1.030	1.081	-.083
Parent age	.070	.116	-.056
Youth gender	2.374	1.044	.192
Youth age	-.085	.319	-.024
SWFSS	5.457	.874	.580**
Total freq ski days	-.005	.075	-.006

Note \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ ;  $n = 93$ ; SWFSS = Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale; Total freq ski days = Total frequency of family ski experiences.

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Table 8  
*Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Family Adaptability (Family Perspective - Total Frequency of Family Ski Experiences)*

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Block 1 ( $R^2 = .315; p < .001$ )			
Income	-.653	.304	-.216*
Parent education	-.500	.502	-.102
Parent gender	-1.540	1.079	-.136
Parent age	.070	.115	-.061
Youth gender	.894	1.047	.079
Youth age	.003	.316	-.001
SWFSS	4.560	.811	.530**
Block 2 ( $R^2 \Delta = .002; p > .05$ )			
Income	-.643	.306	-.212*
Parent education	-.458	.512	-.093
Parent gender	-1.512	1.086	-.133
Parent age	.066	.116	-.058
Youth gender	.914	1.052	.081
Youth age	.029	.322	-.009
SWFSS	4.408	.875	.512**
Total freq ski days	.035	.075	.047

*Note* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ ;  $n = 92$ ; SWFSS = Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale; Total freq ski days = Total frequency of family ski experiences.

Table 9

*Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Overall Family Functioning (Family Perspective - Total Frequency of Family Ski Experiences)*

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Block 1 ( $R^2 = .438; p < .001$ )			
Income	-.057	.051	-.101
Parent education	-.161	.084	-.177
Parent gender	-.192	.181	-.091
Parent age	.010	.019	-.046
Youth gender	.281	.176	.134
Youth age	.000	.053	-.000
SWFSS	.991	.136	.622**
Block 2 ( $R^2 \Delta = .001; p > .05$ )			
Income	-.056	.052	-.099
Parent education	-.157	.086	-.172
Parent gender	-.189	.183	-.090
Parent age	.010	.020	-.048
Youth gender	.283	.177	.135
Youth age	.003	.054	.005
SWFSS	.974	.147	.611**
Total freq ski days	.004	.013	.029

*Note* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ ;  $n = 92$ ; SWFSS = Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale; Total freq ski days = Total frequency of family ski experiences.

Table 10

*Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test Multiple Comparisons (Youth Perspective)*

Dependent Variable	(1) close ski days	(j) close ski days	Mean Difference (1-J)	Sig.
Cohesion	1.00	2.00	.4396	.981
		3.00	-6.3545	.126
	2.00	1.00	-.4396	.076
		3.00	-6.7942 <sup>**</sup>	.126
	3.00	1.00	6.3545	.076
		2.00	6.7942	.076
Adaptability	1.00	2.00	-.2346	.992
		3.00	-5.4636	.104
	2.00	1.00	.2346	.992
		3.00	-5.2290	.102
	3.00	1.00	5.4636	.104
		2.00	5.2290	.102
Overall Family Functioning	1.00	2.00	-.1129	.955
		3.00	-1.3000*	.046
	2.00	1.00	.1129	.955
		3.00	-1.1871	.059
	3.00	1.00	1.3000*	.046
		2.00	1.1871	.059

Based on observed means.

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

1.00 = 1 to 7 family ski experiences close to home

2.00 = 8 to 14 family ski experiences close to home.

3.00 = 15 or more family ski experiences close to home.



Running head: FAMILY SKIING AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING

AN EXAMINATION OF FAMILY SKIING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP  
TO FAMILY FUNCTIONING

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In an effort to strengthen family functioning, the field of family studies has focused on family dynamics and behavior using a family systems perspective (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). One of the most researched models of marital and family systems is the Circumplex Model (Kouneski, 2001, as cited in Olson & Gorall, 2003). The Circumplex Model integrates the dimensions of family cohesion, adaptability and communication to explain family functioning. This model has been widely used in the field of family leisure research to examine the influence of family leisure involvement on family functioning.

Recent research in the field of leisure and recreation provides evidence that family cohesion, adaptability and communication are positively correlated with family leisure participation patterns (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002; Huff, Widmer, McCoy, & Hill, 2003; Orthner, 1998; Wells, Widmer, & McCoy, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). According to Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) everyday activities such as playing board games or playing basketball together provides a consistent, safe, and often a positive context in which family members can be brought closer together. In addition, family vacations and outdoor recreational activities have been found to facilitate the development of adaptive skills by providing experiences that require family members to negotiate and change with new environments and experiences that are different from everyday life (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Participation in outdoor recreation has also been associated with lower divorce rates (Orthner, Barnett, & Mancini, 1994) and

increased family enrichment (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002). Specifically, parent-adolescent communication improved when families participated in challenging outdoor recreational activities (Huff et al., 2003). Furthermore, challenging recreation has successfully been used to create collective efficacy for families, which can be generalized to other domains of family functioning, such as the ability to resolve conflict (Wells et al., 2004).

Shared family leisure and recreational activities are a valuable resource for families in building healthy family functioning and strengthening relationships (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002; Orthner, 1998; Stinnett, Sanders, DeFrain & Parkhurst, 1982). The old adage “the family that plays together stays together” is an accepted belief of parents and leisure professionals (Holman & Epperson, 1984; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Researchers indicate that spending time with family is an important objective of American adults (Orthner, et al., 1994). A study by Shaw and Dawson (2001) indicated that many parents purposively seek family activities that enhance family communication, cohesion and bring a strong sense of family. Parents recognize the value of shared family recreational experiences and its affect on family outcomes such as cohesion, adaptability, and communication.

Downhill skiing is a growing, popular winter sport for families (Hartman, Cordell, & Freilich, 1988; Wellner, 1997; NSAA,2005). A national demographic study by the National Ski Areas Association (2005) found that 49% of skiers and snowboarders were part of a family with children at home. Furthermore, 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they started skiing or snowboarding with their family.

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Although many individuals begin skiing or snowboarding with their family, current research regarding downhill skiing has focused on the developmental outcomes of individual skiing experiences. A case study by Ferguson and Jones (2001) used cross-country skiing as a modality to increase individual self-confidence. They found that cross-country skiing also had a positive influence on anger management and increased efficacy judgments for the participant. Furthermore, these changes in anger management and efficacy judgments of the participant seemed to generalize to improved relations with family members. Bunting (2000) found that downhill skiing increased an individual's self-efficacy and positive emotion affect considerably more than other recreational activities such as volleyball, archery, and running. These studies suggest that family downhill skiing patterns may correlate with increased family functioning. Research in outdoor family recreation, however, has not specifically investigated the experience of family downhill skiing and its influence on family functioning.

### *Statement of the Problem*

In order to understand if there is a relationship between the type, frequency, and duration of family downhill skiing experiences with family functioning, this study will examine the relationship between family downhill skiing patterns and family functioning. More specifically, this research will explore family ski experiences that are close to home and at a vacation destination (type); total days per year the family skis together (frequency); and the number of years the family has been skiing together (duration).

*Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study is to provide further inquiry into the contribution of family leisure involvement to increased family functioning. More specifically, this research will investigate family downhill skiing patterns. Specific inquiry on family downhill skiing, as a form of outdoor recreation, and its influence on family functioning will give added insight as to the value of family skiing experiences for families.

*Need for the Study*

The family unit, the most basic unit of society, has undergone notable change during the last four decades of the twentieth century (Daly, 1996; Doherty, 1997; Elshtain, 1997). The traditional family of centuries past has changed in structure and purpose. Doherty (1997) observed that the contemporary family has shifted to a focus of promoting the happiness and achievement of the individual family member, rather than the well being of the family unit. Emphasis on personal satisfaction has created a “Me generation” and the perceived absence of happiness in marriage is a widely acceptable reason to divorce (Doherty, 1997). The formation of single parent and blended families has caused confusion in family structure and functioning (Doherty, 1997). Also, more women are working outside the home, creating new alignments of family roles, responsibilities, and time spent together (Daly, 1996). According to Elshtain (1997) some of these changes have caused the family to be deinstitutionalized and endangered. For example, increase in divorce and non-marital births have created a society in which many children are fatherless and living in poverty. Elshtain stated that the evidence of family

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breakdown and its effect on communities and society as a whole is seen in the violence, and child neglect in homes and neighborhoods.

Due to these changes in family structure and the negative impact on family functioning, families and society are proactively seeking solutions to strengthen marital and familial relationships. Psychologists and family therapists have examined the family structure and its functioning in an effort to understand the cause of marital dissatisfaction and family dysfunction. This has led family therapists and recreation professionals to look beyond the symptoms of dysfunctional families to examination of the characteristics that bind families together in positive, healthy ways (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002; Olson, 2000; Orthner, 1998; Stinnett et al., 1982; Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985). Family leisure research indicates that shared family leisure and recreational activities are a valuable resource for families in building healthy family functioning and strengthening relationships (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002; Orthner, 1998; Stinnett et al., 1982).

Family leisure research professionals have recommended that future research focus on experiences and programs that strengthen families (Freeman, Hill & Huff, 2002). Research findings suggest that parents are purposively seeking leisure and recreation activities that bring a strong sense of family (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Currently, research in outdoor family recreation has not specifically investigated the experience of family downhill skiing and its relationship to family functioning. This research will further the goals of family leisure research to focus on experiences and programs that strengthen families. Furthermore, this research will explore the

relationships between family leisure participation patterns (type, frequency and duration) with family functioning.

*Delimitations*

The scope of the study will be delimited to the following:

1. A convenience sample of 100 families (250-300 participants) who ski at Sundance, The Canyons, and Alta ski resorts between December 2005 and March 2006.
2. Families of one or two parents and one or more adolescent family members between the ages of 12 to 18.
3. The socio-demographic composition of the sample population, that is obtainable, when data is collected.
4. The use of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES II) to measure family cohesion and adaptability (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, & Wilson, 1992).
5. The use of the questions created by the researcher to measure family skiing patterns (the type of family skiing experiences, frequency of family skiing experiences, and duration of family skiing experiences).

*Limitations*

The study will be limited by the following:

1. The correlational nature of the study prevents determination of causation.

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2. This study is comprised of convenience sampling and is not representative of the entire skiing population. Therefore, results cannot be generalized to a larger population.
3. This study is limited to families with a child over the age of 12. Therefore, families with only children under the age of 12 are eliminated from the sample population.
4. The ability of the researcher to administer the questionnaire to participants accurately and consistently.

### *Assumptions*

The research design of this study is structured under the following assumptions:

1. Family skiing experiences, as a form of outdoor family recreation, do have a positive relationship with family functioning.
2. Participant responses to the questionnaire will not be influenced by other family member responses.
3. Participants will be able to understand and respond appropriately to the questions.
4. The instruments used are valid and reliable.

### *Hypotheses*

The study is designed to investigate the following working hypotheses, and test the following null hypotheses:

- H1 There is a positive relationship between the type of family skiing experiences and family functioning.



- H0 There is no relationship between the type of family skiing experiences and family functioning.
- H2 There is a positive relationship between the frequency of family skiing experiences and family functioning.
- H0 There is no relationship between the frequency of family skiing experiences and family functioning.
- H3 There is a positive relationship between the duration of family skiing experiences and family functioning.
- H0 There is no relationship between the duration of family skiing experiences and family functioning.

*Definition of Terms*

*Duration of family skiing experiences.* Describes how many years the family has been skiing together.

*Family adaptability.* The ability of a family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress (Olson et al., 1992).

*Family cohesion.* The emotional bonding that family members have toward one another (Olson et al., 1992).

*Family downhill skiing.* Describes downhill skiing in which two or more family members participate together.

*Family functioning.* The compilation of the dimensions of family adaptability and cohesion to describe family dynamics (Olson et al., 1992).

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*Family recreation.* Describes leisure activities in which two or more family members participate together.

*Family skiing patterns.* Describes the compilation of the type of family skiing experiences, the frequency of family skiing experiences, and the duration of family skiing experiences.

*Frequency of family skiing experiences.* Describes how many days a year the family skis together.

*Type of family skiing experiences.* Describes whether the family members ski together close to home as a weekday activity, as a family vacation around a skiing destination, or both.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

In order to understand if there is a relationship between the type, frequency, and duration of family downhill skiing experiences with family functioning, this study will examine the relationship between family downhill skiing patterns and family functioning. More specifically, this research will explore family ski experiences that are close to home and at a vacation destination (type); total days per year the family skis together (frequency); and the number of years the family has been skiing together (duration). This chapter will discuss the literature related to the topics of family functioning, family rituals, family leisure involvement, outdoor family recreation and family downhill skiing.

#### *Family Functioning*

The field of family therapy has conceptually described family dynamics and behavior using a family systems perspective (Olson et al, 1979). According to Slife and Williams (1995) the family structure is a system, which as a whole, influences the behavior of individual family members within it. The system is largely an unseen entity, lying beneath the surface, yet is very powerful in directing the observed phenomena that makes up the family system (Slife & Williams, 1995). The family becomes more than parent(s) plus child(ren); the family system becomes the accumulation of family transactional patterns and interfamily processes (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). These family transactional patterns and interfamily processes are considered underlying components for family functioning (Olson et al., 1979; Orthner, 1998; Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985). One of the most researched models of functioning within marital and

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family systems is the Circumplex Model (Kouneski, 2001, as cited in Olson & Gorall, 2003).

The Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems integrates the dimensions of family cohesion, adaptability and communication to explain family functioning. These three dimensions emerged from a conceptual clustering of over fifty concepts developed from the field of family therapy and social sciences to explain marital and family dynamics (Olson, 2000). The Circumplex Model of Marital & Family Systems developed by Olson et al. (1979) has been widely used by clinicians and researchers as a theoretical framework to describe and map couple and family functioning (Olson & Gorall, 2003).

Family cohesion is defined by Olson (2000) as the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another. According to Olson, the construct of cohesion focuses on the family systems balance of separateness versus togetherness. Specific concepts or variables used to measure family cohesion dimensions are emotional bonding, boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision-making, interests and recreation. Olsen noted that the central or balanced levels of cohesion (separated and connected) make for optimal family functioning, with the extremes or unbalanced levels (disengaged or enmeshed) are generally seen as problematic for relationships over the long term.

Family adaptability (flexibility) is defined by Olson (2000) as the amount of change in its leadership, role relationships and relationship rules. Flexibility focuses on how systems balance stability versus change. Specific concepts measured include leadership (control, discipline), negotiation styles, role relationships and relationship

rules (Olson, 2000). Functional couples and families can be distinguished from dysfunctional ones according to their ability to change (Olson, & Gorall, 2003).

Olson (2000) described family communication as a facilitating dimension that makes possible the healthy formation of family cohesion and family adaptability. As a facilitator, communication is not graphically included in the model along with cohesion and adaptability. Olson stated that balanced family systems have good communication skills of listening, speaking, self-disclosure, clarity, continuity tracking, respect, and regard. Unbalanced systems, on the other hand, tend to have poor communication skills.

The theoretical framework of the Circumplex Model allows for hypotheses related to family functioning to be tested (Olson et al., 1979). The Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems and the related assessment tool of Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES) has been developed and refined over 25 years of research and application (Olson & Gorall, 2003). The latest scales developed being FACES III and IV. Researchers continue to choose FACES II, however, to assess family cohesion and adaptability due to its reliability and validity in numerous studies (Christenson, 2004; Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Huff, et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). FACES II has been used in many studies to measure linear relationships between family functioning and various aspects of family leisure involvement and family recreation (Christenson, 2004; Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Huff, et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). These studies indicated there is a positive relationship between family functioning and family leisure involvement. It has been suggested that family leisure involvement is an important aspect

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of family rituals (Doherty, 1997; Fiese & Kline, 1993; Homer, 2006). These family interactions and processes created through family leisure rituals perform an important role in healthy family functioning (Bossard & Boll, 1950; Viere, 2001; Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

### *Family Rituals*

Bossard and Boll (1950) described family life as a social process and determined that family rituals develop in connection with many aspects of family life. Bossard and Boll explained two kinds of family rituals. First, there are traditional rituals such as church and holiday ceremonies that have been handed down from preceding generations. These include such things as trimming the Christmas tree or having turkey for Thanksgiving dinner. Second, spontaneous rites arising out of immediate family interaction in a specific situation, such as going to bed, getting up, eating meals, weekend leisure, household chores, and vacations are also considered rituals (Bossard & Boll, 1950).

Wolin and Bennett (1984) proposed that ritual life in families reinforces the family identity and gives all members a shared and necessary sense of belonging. In their research they examined how the family's most widely practiced rituals were affected by parental alcohol abuse. Family change and disruption was measured through structured interviews with multiple family members. Researchers asked families to describe in detail their behaviors during holidays, mealtimes, vacations, and etc., prior to and following the period of heaviest parental drinking (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). They found that children in ritual-protected families made the transition to adulthood with better success, as

compared to those ritual-disrupted counterparts. Ritual protected families were also associated with less transmission of alcoholism, whereas, extreme ritual disruptions was related to greater intergenerational reoccurrence of alcoholism (Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

Wolin and Bennett (1984) described family rituals through three categories: (a) family celebrations, (b) family traditions, and (c) patterned family interactions. Family celebrations include events such as holidays, religious celebrations, and special occasions. They stated that these rituals were widely practiced throughout the culture and are generally special in the minds of the family. "As individuals, family members may have more or less positive feelings about the celebrations in their family, but there is little dispute about the emotional significance" (Wolin & Bennett, 1984, p. 404). They further indicate that there are specific attributes of rituals. For example, rites of passage such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals help to define the membership list of the family. Similarly, bar and bat mitzvahs, confirmations, and graduations signify the family's development.

Family traditions according to Wolin and Bennett (1984) are more idiosyncratic for each family. The family chooses the events and occasions it will embrace or emphasize as traditions. Vacations, visits to extended family, birthdays, participation in annual community events, and regular activities with kin, such as family reunions, are examples of family events that become traditions. "Family traditions seem to say, 'this is the way we are; this is our family'" (Wolin & Bennett, 1984, p. 405). These events require planning and involve choice, and generally have a high degree of meaning for family members.

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Patterned family interactions are the least deliberate, yet are the most frequent family ritual that is performed. For some, routine family activities such as dinnertime, bedtime routines for children, leisure activities on weekends or evenings, or greetings and goodbyes become family rituals (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). These ritualized routines organize daily life and help to define the family members' roles and responsibilities (Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

Wolin and Bennett (1984) determined that each category of ritual enhances different aspects of family identity: (a) family celebrations give the family a group identity as a member of the larger culture, (b) family traditions accommodate the family's need for uniqueness, promoting internal continuity and cohesiveness of the family, and (c) patterned interaction allows individual identity to grow out of the family identity. They conclude from their research that family rituals are vital to the life of the healthy family. Family rituals facilitate the smooth continuity of family roles, provide a safe haven for its members, protect members against a sense of loneliness, shelter family members from the uncertainty in daily living encountered outside the home, and transmit the shared beliefs of the family group across generations.

Family leisure activities that are deliberately planned, repeated, and have meaning for family members become family leisure rituals (Doherty, 1997; Fiese & Kline, 1993). According to Fiese and Kline (1993), weekend family leisure activities and family vacations are two settings where family rituals occur in family life. To better understand family dynamics they identified behaviors involved in the performance of family rituals. These included how often the activity occurs, assignment of roles and duties during the



activity, regularity in how the activity is conducted (frequency), expectations about whether attendance is mandatory, emotional investment in the activity, attachment of meaning to the activity, perseverance of the activity across generations (duration), and the advance preparation and planning associated with the activity.

As the identified behaviors mentioned above are incorporated into family leisure involvement, shared family activities become meaningful family leisure rituals. Family ritual research suggests that family leisure rituals influence family functioning in many ways. According to Viere (2001) such rituals provide family members with a sense of identity that creates feelings of belonging and facilitates social interaction among family members. Viere stated that it is through family social interaction that cultural and normative information is transmitted, thereby transmitting beliefs and values across generations. Furthermore, these beliefs and values provide stability during times of crisis or stress. Family leisure research provides supportive evidence that affirms these and other findings from the field of family ritual research (Orthner, 1998; Orthner & Mancini, 1991).

#### *Family Leisure Involvement*

Research in the field of leisure and recreation provides evidence that family cohesion, adaptability and communication are positively correlated with family leisure and recreation participation (Christenson, 2004; Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Huff et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001;). According to Orthner (1998), leisure experiences can be a source of conflict for families; however, these conflicts are

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not nearly as influential as the positive benefits of shared family experiences. These benefits include

the meeting of relational needs, developing problem-solving skills, building parent-child bonds, and improving social support. Spending time together, learning new activities, and solving problems in less threatening environments can really help families practice skills that can be transferred back into the day-to-day life of the family. (Orthner, 1998, p. 90)

Shared family activities contribute to the development of collective interest and identities, foster adaptation to new changes, promote the establishment and maintaining of boundaries and are a continuing source of cohesion within the family system (Orthner & Mancini, 1991).

The Core and Balance Model of Family Functioning developed by Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) builds upon the theoretical framework of family systems and the context of family leisure patterns with family cohesion and adaptability. Zabriskie and McCormick's model studied two types of family leisure participation patterns, core and balance. The everyday "core" family leisure patterns include activities such as playing board games, watching television and videos together or shooting basketballs together in the driveway. These activities provide a consistent, safe, and often a positive context in which family members can be brought closer together, strengthening family relationships (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Family vacations, most outdoor recreation, special events, and other activities that require substantial planning are defined as "balance" family activities. According to Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) "balance" activities

facilitate the development of adaptive skills and the ability to learn and change. “The adaptive skills that are developed and practiced in this context of family leisure may be readily transferred to other areas of family life” (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 284). Research specific to intact families with adopted children of color by Freeman and Zabriskie (2003) found that parents’ perceptions of family functioning were significantly correlated to both core and balance leisure activities.

A study by Shaw and Dawson (2001) found that the parents’ family recreational choices were based on desired family participation outcome goals. For the parents in this study, family recreation was purposively chosen rather than intrinsically motivated. Two types of purposive recreation goals were identified: First, goals related to increased family functioning, such as enhanced family communication, cohesion, and a strong sense of family. Second, goals regarding the beneficial outcomes of a recreation for children, such as learning healthy lifestyles and learning moral values. Family recreation provides an avenue for parents to teach values and create family identity and cohesion (Orthner, Barnett, & Mancini, 1994). Family members may identify themselves as skiers, nature enthusiast, horseshoe champions, or musicians. Shared positive experiences in these activities create a sense of uniqueness that establishes family identity and bonding in family relationships (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

#### *Outdoor Family Recreation*

Outdoor recreation provides an environment conducive for challenging family experiences that can facilitate healthy family functioning (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Huff et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). The role of

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structured outdoor recreation in family enrichment was examined by Freeman and Zabriskie (2002). They found evidence from previous studies that structured outdoor family recreation programming has a strong positive relationship with family strength. Their research findings suggest that certain types of leisure activities, such as outdoor adventure activities being used in the treatment of dysfunctional and maladaptive families, are particularly effective in providing family enrichment experiences (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002).

Outdoor adventure activities such as canoeing, kayaking, mountaineering, rock climbing, cycling, skiing, and snowshoeing all take place in natural environments, require physical effort, and involve an element of excitement (Kluge, 2005). “Energetic Action” is created, which requires participants to stretch themselves and “dig deeply into their resources of strength and will” (Horwood, 1999, pp. 9-12). Challenging outdoor family experiences introduce new energy and excitement into the family system that may facilitate change (Huff, 2002). When families members experience successful participation in challenging activities there is an increase in self-efficacy, a person’s beliefs about whether one can produce certain actions (Bandura, 1997).

Challenging recreation has successfully been used to create collective efficacy for families with at-risk adolescents (Wells et al., 2004). Families in this study by Wells et al. participated in one of three challenging recreation activities, either a survival trek, handcart trek, or a family camp. Family collective efficacy scores significantly increased from participation in all three challenging recreational activities. The findings of this study suggest that family collective efficacy can then be generalized to other domains of

family functioning such as the ability to resolve conflict. Similarly, recent research indicated that communication between parents and adolescents is also improved when families participate in challenging outdoor recreation (Huff et al., 2003; Kugarth, 1997).

A recent study conducted by Huff et al. (2003) examined the influence of challenging recreation in improving parent-adolescent communication. This study examined differing levels of challenging family recreation, high (survival trek), medium (handcart trek), low (family camp), along with a control group. Results indicated that challenging recreation, regardless the level of intensity, improves communication between parent and adolescent. Qualitative analysis suggested that improved family communication was the product of more time spent together focusing on family interactions; the effect of a new environment and positive influences of camp staff; opportunity to show affection and kindness to family members; new perceptions of family members; reduced conflict; and feelings of closeness and unity from working together to accomplish the tasks involved. This research supports the premise that outdoor recreation provides positive outcomes for families. There are many outdoor experiences a family can share together, one such experience is family downhill skiing.

#### *Family Downhill Skiing*

A nationwide survey by Wellner (1997) on the demographics of outdoor recreation and travel reported that downhill skiing is the second-most popular winter sport after sledding. Approximately 12% of people in households with over \$50,000 and 21% of people in households with incomes of \$100,000 or more participated in downhill skiing during 1994-1995. Downhill skiing was more popular in larger households and did

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not vary by the presence of preschoolers in the home. These percentages were for persons aged 16 or older who participated in downhill skiing at least once during 1994-1995.

Younger members of households were not included in this survey; leaving unreported a large group of Americans who also participate in skiing as a family or individual sport. These statistics were drawn from a nationwide population, many of which live distances of at least three hours from ski resorts. Individual and family participation percentages may be different for persons and families with relatively easy access to resorts. For these individuals and families, downhill skiing is often participated in as weekday or weekend recreation.

According to Charlie Leocha, author of the guidebooks *Ski America* and *Ski Europe* (as cited by Wellner, 1997), the trend in the ski industry is toward family-oriented resorts that promote family ski vacations. Skiing competes with other vacation options, like going to Europe or Disney World. Television coverage of the winter Olympics has brought the sport of downhill skiing to the attention of American families as a challenging and exciting sport.

*Family Downhill Skiing and Family Functioning.* Downhill skiing provides a natural environment for families to spend time together and have fun. Skiing can be enjoyed by all members of the family, from the three-year-old toddler to the 70-year-old grandparent. Skiing can be a lifetime sport that allows families to have collective experiences, yet, it is also a very individual sport.

Research indicates that skiing may increase an individual's self-efficacy and positive emotional affect, considerably more than other recreational activities (Bunting,

2000). Bunting conducted pre-and posttests using the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) to examine different types of recreational participation, as an antidepressant for individuals. This study compared the emotional affect outcome of individuals who participated in downhill skiing, challenge courses, volleyball, archery, and running. Skiing and challenge courses had a greater increase in the positive emotional affect of participants than did traditional activities. Bunting hypothesized that challenge courses would have increased positive emotional affect over the other activities and was surprised to find that downhill skiing had a slightly higher or equal impact as challenge courses. These results may be due to the fact that skiing has the capacity to be a very challenging activity that is unique to each individual.

Ferguson and Jones (2001), using Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997), developed a theory based therapeutic recreation intervention program for a 15-year-old female with severe depression and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). Cross-country skiing was used as a modality to increase the young woman's self-confidence. Cross-country skiing aided her in discovering positive ways to manage her anger by helping her make stronger efficacy judgments about herself. These outcomes seemed to generalize to improved relations with family members.

Downhill skiing, as a form of outdoor recreation, is conducive to the benefits that outdoor recreation has to offer families, such as increased family cohesion, adaptability, communication, and collective efficacy. Skiing together as a family requires cooperation and teamwork. The families' shared experiences of fun, adventure, and overcoming fears or challenges on the ski hill brings a sense of belonging and togetherness. The family

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must communicate and plan how the day will evolve: from which run to be skied, to where and when to eat lunch. Time spent sitting on the chairlift together provides opportunity for parents and children to share their thoughts and open lines of communication. Further benefit may be incurred as these family ski experiences are repeated, thus helping to create a family leisure ritual.

*Family Skiing as a Family Leisure Ritual.* When families are deliberate in planning weekend family ski experiences and family ski vacations and these activities are repeated and have meaning for family members, family skiing becomes a family leisure ritual (Doherty, 1997; Fiese & Kline, 1993). The family ski weekend or vacation becomes a routine in which each family member knows what needs to take place in preparation and fulfillment of the activity. Rituals of a ski day begin with planning and preparation of equipment and clothing. It continues with the family interactions on the ski hill and the procedures of the day, all of which are automatically orchestrated by the family. The family not only identifies themselves as skiers, but as a particular style of skiers. If a family member is not present, there is likely a sense of missed interaction or performance of certain aspects of the event. As the ritual becomes more established, emotional investment and meaning is attached, which leads to effort across generations to continue the experience.

*Family Skiing as an Intergenerational Activity.* Children are now learning to ski as young as 3 years old and older adults are continuing to ski into their 70s (Jensen, 1985). Families are returning year after year for family ski vacations or weekend skiing as a family recreational choice. According to reports, downhill skiing is one of the fastest



growing recreational choices of Americans (Hartman, Cordell, & Freilich, 1988).

Today's generation of adults increasingly choose more active recreational participation than previous generations (Hartman et al., 1988). Skiing is becoming a generational sport as parents and grandparents continue the family ritual of skiing with their children and grandchildren.

### *Summary*

Families are strengthened with increased family functioning when they spend time together in shared activities. When family leisure involvement become purposefully planned, repetitive, and has meaning for family members these shared activities become family leisure rituals. As family leisure rituals become intergenerational in nature the family support system is expanded and enhanced. Families who participate together in outdoor recreation benefit from increased family togetherness and opportunities to negotiate change in family roles, responsibility, and the decision making process as they overcome obstacles of challenging recreation. Additionally, families are strengthened with increased communication skills, coping skills, problem solving skills, collective efficacy, and familial support.

There has been an appeal from researchers and parents to identify purposive leisure experiences for families. However, there has not been research specific to family downhill skiing and the unique benefits it may offer in strengthening families. Research is needed to investigate the relationship between family functioning and family skiing patterns. Family ritual research includes family weekend leisure experiences and family vacations as two settings in which family rituals occurs. Therefore, it is important that

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both family “close to home” skiing patterns and family “vacation destination” skiing patterns are considered. Furthermore, it is important to determine if how many days per year the family skis together (frequency) and how many years the family has been skiing together (duration) are correlated with family functioning outcomes. The frequency and duration of family leisure involvement may be a contributing factor in the development of family leisure rituals and influence family functioning outcomes.

## Chapter 3

### Methods

In order to understand if there is a relationship between the type, frequency, and duration of family downhill skiing experiences with family functioning, this study will examine the relationship between family downhill skiing patterns and family functioning. More specifically, this research will explore family ski experiences that are close to home and at a vacation destination (type); total days per year the family skis together (frequency); and the number of years the family has been skiing together (duration). The conduct of the study will include the following organizational steps: sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

#### *Sample Selection*

The sample will be comprised of at least 100 family units who ski together. The family units will be made up of one or both parents and one or more adolescent family members between the ages of 12 to 18 years of age. Family units will be recruited during the 2006 ski season. A convenience sample will be obtained from three different Utah ski resorts: Alta, Sundance, and The Canyons. Other family units will be selected from families already known to the researcher and referrals.

#### *Instrumentation*

The following instruments will be used in this study: (a) Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES II) (Olson et al., 1992), (b) Family Skiing Patterns Questionnaire, created by the researcher to measure the type, frequency, and duration of family ski experiences, (c) Individual Skiing

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Patterns Scale, created by researcher to measure the degree of skiing with current family members and family intergenerational skiing, and (d) Satisfaction With Family Skiing Scale, a modified version of the Satisfaction With Family Life Scale (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). Relevant socio-demographic questions will also be included. The researcher has added the Individual Skiing Patterns Scale, Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale, and one open-ended question at the end of the survey as extra data collection that may be of interest for further research and as additional data collection for the ski industry.

*Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale. FACES II* (Olson et al., 1992) will be used to measure the family functioning (cohesion and adaptability) of the family units in this study. FACES II measures two dimensions of family behavior, family cohesion and family adaptability. Family cohesion assesses family togetherness and emotional bonding family members have toward one another. Family adaptability assesses the extent to which the family system is flexible and able to change in regards to family power structures, role relationships, relationship rules, and negotiation style.

According to Olson et al. (1992) the FACES II instrument was designed with simple sentences so it could be used with children and those with limited reading ability. Through factor analysis and reliability (alpha) analysis the initial scale of 90 items was reduced to fifty items. The 50-item FACES II was later reduced to 30 items after further factor and reliability analysis. Internal consistency measures were determined from a national survey sample of 2,312 respondents,

divided into two equal subgroups. The subgroups had Cronbach Alpha figures of .88 and .86 for cohesion and .78 and .79 for adaptability, with .90 for the total instrument (Olson et al., 1992).

The FACES II, Family Version, consists of 16 cohesion items and 14 adaptability items. Each item is measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Almost Never to 5 = Almost Always. Family cohesion and adaptability scores are calculated utilizing a specific formula provided by Olson et al. (1992) that adds and subtracts items according to whether or not items are positively or negatively framed. The total cohesion and adaptability scores are then located on the "Linear Scoring Interpretations" guide, which gives a corresponding 1-8 score for each dimension. A family cohesion score of 1 indicates a disengaged family, while a score of 8 indicates a very connected family. A family adaptability score of 1 indicates a rigid family, as compared to a score of 8, indicating a very flexible family. The total family-type score (1-8) is obtained by dividing the sum of the cohesion and adaptability scores by two, with a score of 1 indicating the family type is extreme and a score of 8 indicating the family type is balanced. The resulting family-type score is used as a general measure of overall family functioning.

*Family Skiing Patterns Questionnaire.* This instrument consists of statements and questions created by the researcher to measure the type, frequency, and duration of family ski experiences. The individual is asked to describe the type of family skiing experiences by selecting yes or no to statements as to whether or

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not the family skis close to home and at a vacation destination. If the participant answers yes to either statement they are asked to indicate on average how many days per year (frequency). Duration of family ski experiences are measured by a question asking how many years the individual has been skiing together with their current family. This instrument describes family skiing as two or more family members who ski together. This instrument has not been assessed for validity or reliability.

*Individual Skiing Patterns Scale.* To measure the frequency of skiing with current family members and family intergenerational skiing the researcher created this scale. This five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Almost Never to 5 = Almost Always, allows the individual to describe how often they ski with current and extended family members, friends, and ski school instruction. This instrument has not been assessed for validity or reliability.

*Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale.* This scale is a modified version of Zabriskie and McCormick's (2003) Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL). In this scale the words "family skiing experiences" or "family skiing activities" replace the word "family life." This scale allows respondents to agree or disagree with seven statements about family skiing satisfaction on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree. Scoring consists of summing all items to produce a satisfaction with family skiing experiences score that ranges from 5 to 35. The Satisfaction With Family Life Scale (SWFL) has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties, with evidence of construct validity, internal consistency ( $\alpha = .93$ ), and test-

retest reliability ( $r = .89$ ) (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). The internal consistency and test-retest reliability of the Satisfaction With Family Skiing Scale has not been determined.

### *Data Collection*

The data will be collected during the 2006 ski season. With permission from selected ski resorts (Alta, Sundance, The Canyons) the researcher will approach families at these resorts and ask them to participate in the study. Families will be approached throughout the ski day at congregating locations such as lift lines, ticket offices, restaurants, shops, and parking areas.

A convenience sample will be obtained during different days, weeks and months of the ski season to obtain a sample of families from different regions of the United States and Utah. In addition, participants will also be selected through families already known by the researcher and referrals from friends and other families participating in the survey. This approach should provide a sample comprised of families who ski close to home as well as at a vacation destination.

Parents and adolescents will be given adequate information to allow them to make an informed voluntary decision whether or not to participate in the research. Signed consent forms will be obtained from parents for themselves and for their child(ren). A brief description of the research study will be given along with instructions on how to complete the survey. Participants will be given the option of completing the survey on site at a local ski resort, through an online link sent to them via email, or by sending back the completed survey in preaddressed stamped envelopes. One or more parent(s) and one

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or more adolescent(s) (between the ages of 12 to 18) from a family unit will be asked to complete the survey. Surveys will be number coded to link parents to children but will not be used to identify study participants.

### *Data Analysis*

The data will first be cleaned to check for errors in data entry. A descriptive analysis of socio-demographic data will then be conducted. Three Analyses of Covariance ( $p < .05$ ) will be used to test hypotheses I, II and III with the dependent variables of family cohesion, family adaptability, and overall family functioning. Continuous variables tested will include frequency of family skiing patterns, duration of family skiing patterns, and income. Class variables tested will include the type of family skiing patterns and other socio-demographic variables. Analysis will first adjust for the effect of socio-demographic (control) variables, then the variables under investigation: frequency, duration, and type of family skiing patterns will be tested. Each model will be analyzed using the mean score and/or the discrepancy score for the parent, child, and family for cohesion, adaptability, and overall family functioning.



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Appendix A-la  
Informed Consent

Consent to be a Research Subject

An Examination of Family Skiing and its Relationship to Family Skiing

**Introduction**

My name is Peggy Philbrick, and I am a graduate student at Brigham Young University. I am examining downhill skiing as a form of family recreation to see if there is a relationship between family skiing patterns and family functioning. I will be asking the help of parent(s) and youth, ages 12-18, of families who ski together. I am inviting your family to help in this study.

**Procedures**

The parent(s) and adolescents from your family who participate in this study will be asked to complete a 20-minute survey. This survey may be completed on site (now) or via an online link at a later date.

**Risks/Discomforts**

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. However, you might feel some emotional discomfort when answering questions related to family activities and family relationships.

**Benefits**

There are no direct benefits for participation in this study. It is hoped however, that the knowledge gained from this study will advance the benefits of family skiing as a form of family outdoor recreation.

**Confidentiality**

All information will remain completely confidential and will only be reported in general numbers with no identifying information.

**Participation**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You are free at anytime to discontinue this study or not to participate.

**Questions about the Research**

For questions regarding the study, you can contact Peggy Philbrick at (801) 224-5003; misspeggy@iglide.net.

**Questions about your Rights as Research Participants**

If you have questions and you not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. Renea Beckstrand, IRB Chair, (801) 422-3873, 422 SWKT, [renea\\_beckstrand@byu.edu](mailto:renea_beckstrand@byu.edu).

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and agree to participate in this research. I also give consent for my child(ren) to participate in this research. Completion of the online survey is regarded as implied consent to participate in this research.

Signature

Date

**Adolescent Assent to be a Research Participant**  
**An Examination of Family Skiing and its Relationship to Family Skiing**

I understand that a graduate student from Brigham Young University is studying family skiing experiences to see if there is a relationship between family skiing patterns and family functioning. My parents have agreed to have our family help with this research study. I have my parent(s) permission to answer the questions in the survey.

I understand that I do not have to participate in this study. If I change my mind, I can quit the study at any time. I understand that my answers will be kept confidential.

Signature

Date



Appendix A-1b

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales

**Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale**

David H. Olson, Joyce Portner & Richard Bell (1982)

Please answer the following questions in reference to your family currently. Use the following scale

---

1	2	3	4	5
Almost Never	Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always

---

**Describe Your Family:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Family members are supportive of each other during difficult times.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In our family, it is easy for everyone to express his/her opinion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. It is easier to discuss problems with people outside the family than with other family members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Each family member has input regarding major family decisions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Our family gathers together in the same room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Children have a say in their discipline.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Our family does things together.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Family members discuss problems and feel good about the solutions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In our family, everyone goes his/her own way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. We shift household responsibilities from person to person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Family members know each other's close friends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. It is hard to know what the rules are in our family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Family members consult other family members on personal decisions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Family members say what they want.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. We have difficulty thinking of things to do as a family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Family members feel very close to each other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Discipline is fair in our family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Family members feel closer to people outside the family than to other family members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Our family tries new ways of dealing with problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Family members go along with what the family decides to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. In our family, everyone shares responsibilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Family members like to spend their free time with each other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. It is difficult to get a rule changed in our family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Family members avoid each other at home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. When problems arise, we compromise.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. We approve of each other's friends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Family members are afraid to say what is on their minds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Family members pair up rather than do things as a total family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Family members share interests and hobbies with each other.

Appendix A-1c

Family Skiing Patterns Questionnaire

**Family Skiing Patterns Questionnaire**

Select yes or no for the following statements to best describe your **current** family skiing patterns? Family skiing refers to two or more family members who ski together.

1. We ski somewhere close to home and ski single days during the week or weekend (no overnight stay). YES NO

If Yes,

On average how many days per year \_\_\_\_\_

2. We plan a family vacation around a skiing destination. YES NO

If Yes,

On average how many family ski vacations do you take per year \_\_\_\_\_

On average how many days per year \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many years have you been skiing together with your current family \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix A-1d

Individual Skiing Patterns Scale

### Individual Skiing Patterns Scale

Please use the scale below to describe yourself through the following statements.

---

1	2	3	4	5
Almost Never	Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost
Always				

---

PARENTS: (Only the parent(s) answer these questions)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. As a child I skied with the family I grew up in.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I ski with my mother.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I ski with my father.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I ski with my brother(s) or sister(s).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I ski with my spouse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I ski with my children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I ski with a ski instructor or ski school group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I ski with friends.

CHILDREN: (Only the Child(ren) answer these questions)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I ski with my grandparent(s).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I ski with my father.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I ski with my mother.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I ski with my brother(s) or sisters(s).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I ski with a ski instructor or ski school group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I ski with friend

Appendix A-le

Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale

**Satisfaction with Family Skiing Scale**  
 Modified Version of Satisfaction With Family Life Scale  
 Zabriskie and McCormick, 2003

Below are seven statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by circling the appropriate number on the line following that item. Please be open and honest in responding.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	neither agree nor disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree

1. In most ways my family ski experiences are close to ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The conditions of my family ski experiences are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am satisfied with my family ski experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want from my family ski experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If I could live my family ski experiences over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Family skiing activities are an important part of our family life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Family skiing activities add to the quality of my family life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I see family skiing experiences as part of my future family recreation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**In the space below or on the back of the questionnaire please write your answer to this final question.**

What would you tell another family about family skiing, that you have learned through your family ski experiences?



Appendix A-1f

Socio-demographic Questions

**Socio-demographic Questions**

The following section asks some general questions about you and your family.

Please complete the following on your **current** family. In addition, please indicate your relationship to each child in your family.

	Age	Sex	Ethnic Background	Lives in your home	Your relationship to Child
	In Years	M or F	A=Asian P=Pacific Islander B= Black not Hispanic H=Hispanic N=Native American W=White, not Hispanic	Yes or No	B =Birth Parent A= Adoptive Parent S= Step-Parent F= Foster Parent P= Partner of child's birth, adoptive, or step-parent L= Legal Guardian
YOU					
Child					
Child					
Child					
Child					
Child					
Child					

Please indicate the highest level of education obtained.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Less than High School
- \_\_\_\_\_ High School
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 years of college
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3-4 years of college
- \_\_\_\_\_ College degree
- \_\_\_\_\_ Post-graduate degree

Please indicate the estimated annual income for your family.

- |                          |                       |                         |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ Less than \$10,000 | _____ 40,000 – 49,999 | _____ 80,000 – 99,999   |
| _____ 10,000 – 19,999    | _____ 50,000 – 59,999 | _____ 100,000 – 124,999 |
| _____ 20,000 – 29,999    | _____ 60,000 – 69,999 | _____ 125,000 – 150,000 |
| _____ 30,000 – 39,999    | _____ 70,000 – 79,999 | _____ Over \$150,000    |

State currently living in\_\_\_\_\_

Population of your place of residency: *Please circle one*  
**Urban/Suburban (> 50,000)** or **Rural (<50,000)**

Appendix B

Response to Open-ended Question

Response to Open-ended Question

Response from parents and youth to the open-ended question at the end of the survey:  
What would you tell another family about your family ski experiences? (P = Parent  
response; Y = Youth response)

P149 The winter is a time where my family looks forward to the weekends so we all can get up at the crack of dawn to head to the slope to spend a day of fun times. I hope my son will look back after some years and realize this is a special time of their life!

P64 It is fun, definitely something you should do.

Y98 Skiing is a lot of fun. I enjoy going with my family because we all know how to, but it is a lot of fun to learn how to also. I enjoy skiing with others than all by myself. Going skiing as a family is a fun activity and you would probably enjoy doing it.

P98 Skiing is not a big part of our family activities, but when we have done it together we have had a lot of fun. Our most memorable family skiing experiences was a week long vacation in Canada. The best parts were having other activities to choose from, sledding, ice skating and skiing. We went with a large group of friends. Just having the time together to do something fun was great. The other parts were a wonderful bonus.

Y57 I would highly recommend skiing as a family! It is a great way to grow closer together as a family and to have fun. It also creates memories that you will have throughout the years. It is a great example of wholesome family recreation. I have learned to appreciate the beauty of nature, and my family members are my best friends because of the time we spend together.

P57 It is a great sport. We have enjoyed learning to ski together and having fun!

Y62 Skiing is really fun and it brings family/friends closer together. It is a fun activity and is a good social forum to allow me and my father/family and my friends to bond and have a good time.

P62 No comments

Y50 No comment

P50 No comment

Y140 No comment

P140 Excellent activity to do together, especially with teenagers, with whom it is difficult to find shared activities to do.

Y8459 I would tell another family to compromise and try new things frequently when skiing together.

P8459 Do it and enjoy! Attitude is everything.

Y142 bring extra food and sunscreen.

P142 no comment

Y143 It's fun if you go with another family that you are close with or if you know someone in the area that skis.

P143 no comment

Y7621 Family Skiing is a good wholesome recreational activity in which members of a family can spend the hours of the day enjoying each other's presence, learning more about their family members, and bonding as a family unit. Personally, I've told and confided in many a siblings secrets because of the opportunity of spending a few hours with them with out many distractions. Skiing is a great way to get to know a person.

Y5967 I would tell them that family skiing is really fun, because you learn about their interests while riding on the ski lift. And you know that your taking someone that you know is about the some level of skier as you. Like if you took a friend you wouldn't know if they were better than you or that they were worse than you. So I like someone that I can keep up with or someone that can keep up with me.

P5967 I would say we have learned to enjoy and appreciate good snow, we get excited together anticipating a powder day. My husband and I have worked hard teaching our 4 boys to ski, our oldest is 18 and our youngest is 6, and we can actually ski together as a family. We trade off easier runs with our 6 year old. We have learned to be patient, sort of. It's amazing to share something we both loved so much with our children and we are so happy they love skiing also. They snowboard also, but love skiing more. Some things skiing has taught our kids would be, it's not all about you. We usually trade off choosing runs. When they were smaller we used to have great games of tag, which encouraged them to ski faster. We have also learned to tough it out, if you get in a tight spot you can't just quit skiing, you have to get down one way or another. If the run is steeper than we expected, or if the snow is icy or chunky, we say ok lets get down. We encourage them, and we don't tolerate whining. We may be too tough on them but they have turned out to be amazing skiers. They say they still like to ski with us, but we will have to stay in shape so we can keep up with them. One thing I've always done is to take each child on a ski day, and spend some one on one time with them. It started out rocky sometimes we

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would argue, but after being together all day we really got a chance to talk to each other. It turned out to be a really good experience for all of us.

Y87 It's an awesome way to spend time with your family. My mother doesn't ski with us often but skiing with my brother, sister, dad or friends is an interesting and fun experience. When you ski with your family you can learn many new things. You can also learn things from one another.

P87 I think Family ski vacations are a chance to spend quality time with my children. I also thoroughly enjoy showing them how to ski and watching their skill grow to the point where they can ski any run at the Canyons, Deer Valley and Park City.

Y187 They're an awesome way to get away from stress at home and a good way to be together.

P147 no comment

Y21 It's really fun and enjoyable. Its important to give encouragement to those who are newer or just everyone.

P21 Spend enough time for all family members to get to know what they are doing. This allows everyone to be at the same level (or close to it). Do it together, stick together, eat together, etc. So that it feels like a family outing.

Y33 It brings you together to see the beauty of nature... except for an occasional snowball fight.

P33 Skiing is a activity that crosses generational boundaries. From my 78 yr old uncle to my 6 yr old daughter, we can all spend time together enjoying and truly appreciating the true beauty of the world!

Y7686 It is a great way to get to know each other even better, and also to help each other out on becoming better at doing things. It also just gives you a chance to talk and enjoy life together! It is very fun and enjoyable!

P7686 A great physical activity that keeps us close together.

Y180 I like going with my parents and siblings and my grandparents and cousins skiing. Sometimes we get to bring friends.

P180 Skiing is a fun activity, that everyone can participate in.

Y9979 I would probably tell them to ski in pairs not large groups or maybe even alone. To ski with people about your age and possibly about one your level.

P9979 Send the kids to ski school, parents make bad ski instructors.

Y46 Working together, compromise

P46 Great way to share quality time and experiences with your kids and spouse.

Y2129 Just to have fun and just go with the flow and ski!! It is good to ski with other family and friends.

P2129 Just have fun-Relax. Ski with friends. Enjoy Nature.

Y5832 It's cool! Yay us!

Y181 To let every family member make decisions throughout the ski day and to be patient with each other. Ski as much as you can together!

P181 Spending time together outside, in the mountains is very important.

Y47 That it is fun. Exhausting, but fun. We always switch around the ski resorts. We each learn something from the trip. Whether it be a new ski move, that wind make's mommy grouchy or to push off of the ski lift at the end, while making sure your poles don't hook on the seat.

P47 It's a great way to have fun together and teach children the value of staying physically active throughout life.

Y3936 It brings us together more as a family and keeps us all in good shape.

Y114 Skiing together as a family is really fun, and you learn a lot from each other too.

P114 What a great place to spend together time, help and learn from each other and relax together after a satisfying, exhilarating day!!!

P165 Being together as a family is much easier on ski trips.

Y165 It is a great way to get to know each other better and spend time together.

Y10 It's more fun than sitting on your butt at a friend's house

P10 Skiing is a great way to enjoy the outdoors during winter and spend time together

Y107 Ski together, have fun, meet up for lunch if you are separated, go out to dinner at night.

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P107 Family skiing is a great bonding experience. It is one of the family activities we can always be sure that everyone will want to do together.

P5533 It is a lot of work and expensive but fun.

P130 Skiing is an interest that can be shared and appreciated by all generations in a family. It is an interest that can be developed throughout a lifetime.

P100 skiing as a family is worth the expense; it is something you can do as a family whereby different ability levels contributes to the entire experience.

Y8225 It is a great to experience other sports than just sun and surf. Great meeting different people of the world.

Y162 It is a great to experience other sports than just sun and surf. Great meeting different people of the world.

Y159 Be daring and don't be afraid because your family should love you.

P159 We have found that over the years our skiing family friends are far more adaptable and their kids are far more can do, helping out with not only their equipment but others as well. Also we find that those children that regularly ski rarely complain about cold, wet or icy (New England) conditions. We also have found that those same families have children return home during college and beyond on a more regular basis to ski, hike...together. These qualities are undoubtedly wonderful selling points to families considering regular skiing commitments.

Y119 Do it

Y7 I would do it because it's a great way to have fun with the family. We laugh a lot and we help each other when we crash. When someone does something good we're all happy.

P7 Great family experience - builds skills, confidence and is just plain fun!

Y36 Skiing is a great way to get the family together. Also, it is a good way of getting away from things stressful at home. I've learned from my family ski experiences to try new things, don't let anything hold you back from having a good time, and work together.

P36 It's the one activity that all 3 kids agree upon and always have the best vacations going skiing. The children always look forward to next years ski vacation, which we usually start planning after getting back from our last vacation.

Y53 You would have a fun time.



P53 It builds friendship and trust. A wonderful outdoor experience. A lifetime skill and recreational experience. A great way for people (children) to socialize and meet new people.

P41 Skiing is one of our family's strongest bonding experiences we have. I think it is one of the few activities that we can do all together as a family.

Y42 I enjoy family skiing. WE go every year and it is an important part of my life.

P42 Family skiing could be a great experience. We ski at all different levels and still manage to ski together. Skiing could be a lot better, but first WE need to work on family relationships.

Y39 It brings your family together and you get to know one another better. You learn your family members strengths and weaknesses and you encourage them when they need it. Family skiing is relaxing and makes you enjoy the time spent with your family.

P39 For me, it has been a great way to spend quality time together as a family enjoying the outdoors and exercise. Everyone enjoys each other's company when we ski together. We bond so much during these times. What more could you ask for.

Y23 Our ski trips provide challenging and enjoyable vacations. We bond through our experiences. We have been able to overcome obstacles, become physically and emotionally stronger, and learn about ourselves through our ski vacations.

P23 From my love of skiing, I wanted my family to share in all the benefits I have gained from skiing. My children are excellent, experienced skiers from a young age, so they can enjoy it for a long time into adulthood. We have shared tremendous family bonding times through our skiing experiences.

Y26 Don't push them to do hard runs just let them do runs they're comfortable with.

P26 Have your children take the ski program in school to learn. This makes the few times we go very fun. Everyone is at the same level and can ski together.

Y64 It's fun and it helps you work together as in when someone falls.

P64 It's a great medium for interaction with your kids.

Y44 It makes the family closer and is a good way to enjoy and exercise with people you love. It is an experience I wouldn't change.

P44 It is an excellent way to spend time with your children. We always plan family ski vacations with our friends who have children the same age as our daughter. Our group

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stays together and the ages vary from age 80+ to 4 or 5 yrs old. The families take responsibility for each other's children. It happens once a year and we are one huge family for that week.

Y71 If you enjoy skiing its still fun or funner with your family.

P71 Skiing is 'cozy', food and lodging, unlike other family sports.

P161 It is a great way to be outdoors and exercising together. However, it is skill-dependent and before long, your kids will be better skiers than you and want to do difficult trails and will ski very fast. This makes it a little hard to continue to ski together as a family.

Y5505 I would say that it is a great way to spend time with family members, but can be exclusive if some members don't ski. It's important for children to do activities like this with their family before its "too late".

P5505 Skiing is a great family activity but problems can arise when some family members are not physically comfortable with skiing.

P31 These are terrific vacations when we can celebrate learning a new skill and enjoy the company of friends and family. Ski vacations are a favorite of our family.

P35 We started as a couple. Then the children joined us as soon they could join a ski school for a 1/2 day and then 1/2 day with us. We ski with aunts, uncles and cousins. It's been a family affair. We also invite friends to join us. Its something we all look forward to. Our children are in college and they love to come home and ski, share time with the family. We talk on the lifts, over dinners. It's great.

Y37 I would tell them that it strengthens family relationships.

P37 One of the aspects of family skiing that is so great is that all ages are participating in the same wonderful activity. On a ski vacation there is no arguing about what the day's activity will be. Everyone is happy and every one is exercising and getting fresh air.

Y8459 I would tell another family to compromise and try new things frequently when skiing together.

Y61 I would tell them that I have learned to cooperate better with my mother and have learned a lot from her. I have learned how to go further in something I enjoy and have learned to relax more around my family.

P61 My daughter and I ski together often with friends. My husband does not ski. He often feels left out which is bad. But skiing gives my daughter and me the opportunity to

get together with old friends we would probably not see as often. It also makes me feel young (even though getting organized can be a lot of work.)

Y60 I would tell another family that I have learned to work with my family as a team to improve both of our skiing techniques and stamina.

P60 It is wonderful to do a sport with your child, especially a non-competitive one. Skiing also is often an opportunity for the children to be better at something than their parents are! Plus being outdoors is a spiritual experience, which can only help families be happier people.

P30 We have a wonderful time together and have created great memories. I wish we skied together more often because the times we do are very special. But they are few and far between.

Y54 I would tell the other family that you should always wear helmets and be extremely careful in glades. (we learned that the hard way!) Dress for the weather. And most importantly stay on the areas designed to ski on and go on trails at your own risk.

P54 It's a great way to spend family time and to get exercise. It also makes us appreciate water in NJ more because we like to ski. It has also provided my daughter a sport in which she can excel and keep up with her brothers.

Y136 It is fun and I would do it.

P136 Sharing mutual hobbies with your family away from the stresses of home is a great way to connect.

Y144 Stay safe and have fun. Go to Utah! It is the best. Don't go to ski school. Ski together.

Y145 It is fun and you get to know one another. I love it.

P145 Start the tradition when they are young. When they are older friends pull them in other directions.

Y171 That skiing is a lot more fun with people you know, and it's easier to improve when somebody who you spend time with is able to give you advice or show you around. Not to mention it beats watching TV with a microwave dinner any day of the week.

P171 For my son and I it started out as a time in days where we are connected without other distractions and can get to know each other more subtly. I now include one of his

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18-year-old friends and it allows us to discuss a wide variety of topics; girls, sex, future, college, politics, drugs, smoking and much more. Having a friend there allows my son to take a position on these issues without implication and allows me to assess where he is in his attitudes and his friends attitudes. I consider it one of the most valuable parenting times of the year and I tend to accumulate subjects to discuss over the ski trip either directly with my son or with his friend or with the group. More recently I have also included one of my friends; this creates a male group (older men and young men) that can discuss all kinds of issues openly and freely. It has been a great addition to the activity and we all look out for each other on the ski slope. My spouse passed away last year and my son and I spent Christmas and spring break skiing with family and friends; I believe it has helped us through these difficult months.

Y174 Brings the family together.

P174 You can still ski together with your kids, even if you ski at different levels. It is fun to compare how you skied different runs. I always look forward to the midday lunch break to hangout with the kids and friends!

Y152 It's a ton of fun, and it is very relaxing.

P152 Wonderful experience. Great family time.

Y148 It is fun and you spend quality time with your family.

P148 Family ski trips are an important family bonding experience. Being from Florida, it is especially important for our family to have "winter experiences" together. We always recommend these types of trips to our friends back home.

Y137 I would tell them that we always have fun, it's a great experience, and our family loves it.

P137 Great family time with close family and long-time family friends.

Y133 It's a great bonding experience.

P133 Watch out for the 3 scariest words on a ski mountain: "Follow me Dad."

Y150 You get closer to your family, and you have a great time together.

P159 Family skiing can be bonding. It teaches patience when skiers in the family are at different skill levels. When skiing is a family vacation, destination the accommodations can create new opportunities to share as usually the sq. footage is smaller than home environment.

Y78 It is a great activity that every member of the family can participate in. It helped me to learn the value of working together.

P78 A great opportunity to spend quality time with your kids, free of the common distractions of phones, computers, and the competition of the kid's friends for their time.

Y81 It's a great way to spend time with the family and it's a good way to get to know each other better.

Y85 bring a lot of money- bring a phone (just incase), camera, index card- with condo #, parents/guardians phone #, bring your favorite people with you, have fun and enjoy yourself.

P85 There are very few family experiences that one can enjoy throughout so many phases of life. Skiing, Golfing, etc. - these are 4+ hours of quality time with your family. Where else and when else can you enjoy so much time regardless of age.

Y82 That it is great and they should have the same I have.

P82 It is wonderful to share this challenging, exhilarating, outdoor experience with my children.

Y151 It is a lot of fun and good for family bonding.

Y89 It is very fun and can be an excellent bonding experience, but can tend to be expensive, and definitely doesn't have to be important.

P89 It can be great recreation together - a fun, relaxing experience in the beauty of nature and the lift time provides for good discussions.

Y77 It is fun.

P77 A family that skis together stays together.

Y80 Have Fun. Ski at your own ability.

P80 It costs a lot - maybe you should try and do cross-country or backcountry!

Y84 Skiing with my family has made me a more confident skier.

P84 Family skiing is both challenging and rewarding. Years to come the experience will be remembered as a rich one. Family skiing brings the family closer. It challenges the family to cooperate with one another. The experience also challenges each person to

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stretch themselves in getting along plus abilities. We highly recommend this type of vacation for families of all ages. We have been richly blessed by family ski vacations.

Y90 I would tell another family that it is really important to spend time together and family skiing is a fun way to do it. It is also a relaxed environment where everyone can enjoy themselves. This is great because it lets people be comfortable and able to speak their minds, because there is less stress. For example, I am able to get along with my parents and brother when we are skiing because there isn't the stress factor of work and school.

P90 It's the perfect time to talk with your children about everything from serious to silly. It's a great way to relax and bond with your family.

Y88 Its not always gonna be fun, but enjoy the experience while it lasts.

P88 We enjoy skiing together. When the kids were little it was difficult but we kept at it and now it's something we enjoy doing together.

Y138 It is still fun to ski even without the family but it is more enjoyable with the family because of the competition.

P138 Its good wholesome adventurous fun. Expensive, but fun. I feel good about helping my kids have a high degree of skill in such a healthy (mind, body, spirit) endeavor.

Y141 Even when family members have different skiing abilities, it is easy to work out a way to ski together. It is also very enjoyable to ski with people who have seen you progress and have witnessed your evolution as a skier.

P141 Take lessons and get better before your kids take you extreme skiing!

Y146 It is a lot of fun!!

P146 Good way to reinforce togetherness and cooperation.

Y139 Make sure that you have fun.

P139 How beautiful it is to be surrounded by nature instead of the modernized ways of daily life. It is great to be together enjoying nature and talking about our experiences

P8489 Do it and enjoy! Attitude is everything.

Y173 The skiing really brings our family together and makes us really feel like we can trust each other.

P173 It is a great bonding experience even when the skill levels differ because we can re-group with each other at different points throughout the day, and it's a lot of fun all around for everyone.

P164 Family skiing is like any other family activity: if you enjoy it and have the means, go for it! The learning possibilities are numerous: include the whole family in the logistics (getting there, where to stay, what to eat, equipment needed etc.); each member experiences the need for perseverance, having fun falling and seeing others fall, dealing with fatigue, getting over some level of fear to make progress; in the evenings, set up other family activities (games etc.) in a different environment (different food, different organization around food). If repeated regularly, everyone enjoys the activity, which becomes a "tradition".

P184 It is a wonderful way for the entire family to enjoy a healthy activity together. You spend quality time together without the outside influences such as TV, Nintendo etc.

P157 It's never too late to learn. We started skiing in our forties at the request of our daughter. What a delightful idea and one that has provided us an opportunity to become closer and have great family memories!

P5821 It's an enjoyable time to enjoy the outdoors and challenge us to improve our skills. Riding the lift together gives us an opportunity to talk that we might not get to otherwise. Everyone enjoys the time and looks forward to it the next time.

P8885 great bonding experience where everyone can have fun

Y108 I like it when my dad takes me and my sister skiing. I think it is a great way for a family to do something together. I wish we were able to go more often. It is good exercise and lots of fun.

Y4942 It's no different than going out and playing a game with you family, I would say it's a lot of fun with a little fighting.

P4942 Patience

Y3911 Family skiing is something that every family should try. You grow much closer to your family members and learn more about them as well as yourself. it is time to open up to your family and have a good time and get a lot of laughs in. If you are more experienced skier than one of your family members this also give you a time to teach them and bond.

P3911 It takes patience and work to make a family ski experience work, especially with younger children.

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Y915 It is fun if everyone is happy and optimistic, but if you don't get along you have to find a way to just spend more time with each other.

P915 That it is a great family activity

Y6464 It is fun and athletic

P6464 It is great to have an athletic activity that everyone likes to do together as well as with friends.

Y1630 I would tell them that it's very fun. It's nice to have a vacation where you don't have to go to museums. You just get to ski the whole time. I would also recommend Alta, because it has such great snow. Also, I would recommend if they didn't know how to ski, and neither did their family that they take a lesson as a family, and learn all together, so that they can support each other.

P1630 I recommend it.

Y40 Family skiing is a great way to be together unless the skill levels vary a lot.

P40 Don't over protect - let her do for herself. Sometimes skiing with another adult helps her get to a new level. Skiing with friends gets her going too.

Y9407 I believe it is one of the greatest things a child can experience growing up.

P9407 Family ski days make a world of difference to our family. For a few years Hebrew school got in the way on Sundays, but we have those days back. Our girls look forward to skiing as a family. When I was growing up I loved skiing with my 7 brothers and sisters and my parents. We always had so much fun together. I'm so happy when my siblings come out to visit us and ski together. My parents don't ski anymore but my stepmother still does. The fresh air and being outdoors also make everyone feel better.

Y4476 I look forward to the weekend so I can go skiing with my family. I usually prefer skiing with them rather than friends because they know my strengths and weaknesses really well and they can help me improve. I also like it because I don't feel embarrassed when I fall; I laugh at myself and with every one else. I like to go with my siblings because sometimes I like to race and they are pretty close to my same level. Skiing is a great way to relieve stress and get to know my family better, all in all skiing is fun especially with my family.

P4476 Skiing allows my children to gain confidence in themselves and their ability to overcome challenges. The memory it provides gives us common ground and memories that build bonds between us.



Y6 I really like it and can't wait to go again.

P6330 It is an enjoyable experience and builds family bonds.

P106 We have so much fun skiing together. We all wish skiing were less expensive so we could ski more often. Some big, overnight ski trips taken by a parent and one or two kids have provided important and very special bonding time...even with teens. Skiing has been an important part of our family value of physical activity and wellness.

Y128 Yes, I would tell other families about family skiing. I think skiing is one of the things that we can do all together as a family. It gives us a sense of togetherness.

P128 That skiing is a great family experience, Something that the entire family can do together that will create lasting memories.

P8 Have a lot of patience and let the kids learn at their own pace on their own.

Y6108 I wouldn't say I've learned anything of moral importance so to speak, but I love skiing with my father its a great bonding experience.

P6108 It's great bonding experience! Make sure people who need lessons get them.

Y9793 You don't have to always have to ski the same trails but you should ride the lift together.

Y2 It is a very fun experience and you should try it and should always do it, it really brings the family together.

P2 There are few activities that families have the ability to do together that, involves physical recreation.

Y125 That it is an enriching experience, that everyone should try.

P108 It is a great way to share your time with another family member and have fun at the same time. Skiing has so many different levels of enjoyment. One can ski a few runs or one can ski hard all day and both would share the same great experience. Skiing is a great way to bring families together. Even if the family members aren't skiing side by side they will still have stories to share with one another.

P118 relax

Y8149 It's kind of cool

P8149 That it is a sport you can do together for many years

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P125 Helps family members learn tolerance and patience.

Y110 You can make lifelong friends when you go skiing. I go skiing with my dad and sister and we always meet kids and ski together and have a great time.

P110 Family skiing requires preparation and families that have a daily routine with their children requires less structure when at a resort location.

P123 Take it easy, don't get too uptight if things don't go as expected the first couple of times. Make it fun by relaxing and just enjoying being with each other.

P126 I would tell them that it an incredible way to spend time with your family, especially if everyone is around the same skiing level. On most trips, my dad who works and is sometimes very stressed does not seem stressed anymore and we have an amazing time. We also have gotten closer as a family through these ski trips, especially the time when my mom broke her leg skiing. We all learned about how much we depend on each other's love and how we all work together very well as a family.

P126 That skiing is a fun and relaxing way to spend quality time in a nice environment with family.

Y113 I am lucky to have a Dad that likes to take me skiing. He lets me go off with my friends during the day on the slopes so I can have fun.

P113 Family skiing is a good way to stay in touch with my teenage son.

Y112 it is very fun. You don't learn anything about being a family or anything but you do have a fun time skiing.

P8225 It's a lot of fun to watch your child progress in a sport that we are able to go to only once a year.

Y111 It is a great experience if everyone enjoys skiing but it does not solve other problems that a family might have. Skiing can be just as stressful as doing something else but usually it helps take the stress away by requiring the excess energy. Again this only works if everyone you're skiing with finds exercising a relaxing experience. Overall I enjoy my skiing trips; I go back every year.

P111 It is a wonderful way to spend "quality time" in beautiful places, doing something fun. There are stresses (weather, travel, expenses) but it is worth it.

P112 We very much enjoyed our family vacation skiing in Utah. It was a blast. The biggest issue was that it was expensive and I am not sure that we can do this that often. My parents live in Vermont, so it is cheaper for us to ski there -- but not as much fun.

Y115 It can be an enriching experience and can allow you time to get to know a certain family member better.

P115 It is one of the greatest ways to spend quality time with your children. You can learn more about your children in 3 days of skiing than you can in weeks at home.

Y14 Skiing is really fun! You should try it! It's really cool, and when you're riding on the lifts, you get to talk to each other in a not stressed-out surrounding.

P0504 It is a very enjoyable way to spend time together, and you get a lot of quality time as a family.

Y5 I would say that it's fun unless you argue or quarrel. Keep it happy and fun, that what it's supposed to be.

Y5 Skiing is fun and is something that we all enjoy doing.

P5 Put children in lesson at an early age - Don't start children until five, unless they are in lessons.

YA That it is a fun way to spend time with your family.

P4 I would tell them to make sure it is enjoyable, prepare ahead of time, include everyone and try not to get too uptight about the time it takes to get there! It is sometimes a long process. Also, make sure it stays fun, don't yell at the kids on the hill, and stay positive. And lastly enjoy. In our modern times there are far too few of the "ski" days!

Y4 To not get frustrated with each other because it makes skiing awful! and to be ready with all of YOUR ski stuff before you go skiing, so no one else is responsible for your stuff, but you. And not to get too upright, just to have fun!

P4 Skiing creates a great feeling in our family. The joy felt by my children when they improve is infectious. I have had to become more patient and understanding through helping each family member. It is a different kind of skiing with children than with friends. Sipping hot chocolate at the end of a great ski day with kids is the best.

Y3 That it is so fun and brings the family together.

P3 Skiing creates strong memories, helps with organization and commitment, it can go on for years and new family additions are always welcome.

P17 Skiing is easy to learn. As a primarily non-competitive sport it offers a family an opportunity to spend fun time together and draw close to one another. It is good for a parent to teach a child at first but some ski lessons around ages 6-12 can be very helpful.

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I spent a lot of time skiing with my parents and siblings and these remain very happy memories from my childhood and teen years.

Y16 Family skiing is very fun, but I recommend bringing cell phones so no one gets lost.

P16 That family can help you get to the top of the mountain even if you aren't a good skier. It builds family unity. Great experience.

Y18 Its fun when not too crowded, not too bright, and you bring your own food

P18 It's fun. The food is too expensive. Don't ski every second so that you are worn out

Y12 I think it is a good way of competition or just to hang out.

P12 It is easier to get your kids ski lessons. They listen to the ski instructor better than me.

Y8797 That each person should at least be paired up or with all of the family and have fun and eat a good lunch with each other.

Y8797 It's very fun and you'll learn a lot about your family. It's also a good way for your family to get together.

P8797 Because everyone from 4 years on up can do this, we find that skiing is one of the few activities we can truly all do together. It gives our family something to look forward to in the wintertime.

P8797 Everyone should experience it. It's not often that the kids do something on their parents level: vice versa. It is very bonding.

P3936 Costs don't need to be high if you are creative and aware of the options. Use the ski swaps, hunt for bargains. Some of our most happy experiences occur during or as a result of resort skiing, as well as during our Nordic and back-country skiing events and adventures. Our children have gained so much confidence learning to ski and having a "home" resort (Alta, Utah), and we all truly love skiing. I cannot imagine not skiing together with my family in the future, even when I am old and decrepit. I never thought this would be the case when we first started.

P207 It is a great time to spend together a lot of fun.

P3961 A family that ski's together stays together.

P7201 I would relate how much I enjoy riding on the lift with my children and having a great conversation and then how much fun we have coming down the hill. It is great and would highly recommend skiing with your children.

Y9819 A family that skis together, stays together.

P9819 It's wonderful to be in the mountains learning a challenging skill and enjoying the thrill of skiing down a mountain. At the same time, doing it together.

P5677 Skiing together as a family contributes to family bonding and communication. We challenge each other and laugh with each other. We push each other, encourage each other and talk about our life and goals while riding on the lift.

Y733 Skiing as a family can be a lot of fun, although I think it would be a lot more fun with friends.

P733 it is a fun, healthy, challenging activity that all of us can do together and enjoy

Y288 I think families should ski together

P288 It's a great way to spend time together, playing sports, fresh environment, quality time, relaxing, talking, and laughing together, no stress situations.

P1622 It is fun and a lifelong skill that you can use now and for the rest of your life.

Y5003 I enjoy skiing with my family, I find that skiing with my family is more fun than skiing with my friends. This family activity has increased our friendship with each other. My family are my best friends.

Y5003 Family skiing can be loads of fun. Its fun just to forget about everything and just have a good time with your family. You don't have to make yourself look better than you really are, because when you are with your family they don't care. It is a time when you can truly be yourself and have lots of fun with the ones you love.

P5003 Chair lift rides are a great time to find out what is happening with my children.