Adolescents' Use of Discretionary Time: A Time Use Study of the Central Utah Area

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Adolescents’ Use of Discretionary Time

A Time Use Study of the Central Utah Area

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Rebecca Hirschi

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This thesis, by Rebecca Hirschi, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Burton K. Olsen, Committee Chair

Thomas S. Catherall, Committee Member

S. Harold Smith, Committee Member

S. Harold Smith, Department Chair

4/5/95

Date
Acknowledgments

I would like to first and foremost thank my husband David for his complete and unwavering support in all my endeavors.

My father, mother, and other family members have encouraged me all of my life. I will always be indebted to them.

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School to Life - Youth Development

Adolescents’ Use of Discretionary Time

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Recently a teacher was approached by one of her 15-year-old health education students who revealed to her the following:

"After a year of health ed and everything Mom told me, I thought I could write a book about sex and boys. The only thing I didn’t learn is how do you tell your mother you’re pregnant? ...I can hear her now. ’Why weren’t you in school? Why weren’t you doing your homework? Didn’t you have enough chores? I thought you were at the mall. When did you have time?’ That one’s easy. I had all kinds of time” (Carnegie, 1992 p 35).

The teacher listened and felt confused. How could this girl have been in this situation after participating in health classes that explained the importance of wise sexual behavior. What went wrong? Why didn’t this girl spend her time in some other way? Didn’t she understand the connection between the things taught in the classroom and real life?

Classroom knowledge should prepare a student for real life, but unfortunately the ideal is often far from reality. Teachers frequently hear statements from students like “When am I ever going to use this in real life? How will this benefit me?”

How can teachers and youth service providers help youth see that there is a link between what they are taught and how they live? In order to tackle this question professionals in schools and recreation centers must understand what youth do when they are not in school.

It is no secret that adolescent time use has an impact on adulthood. During adolescence many important behavioral patterns are established and values are acquired
and refined (Best, 1988). Free time is the likely time to develop and practice these patterns. "How adolescents use free time is important not only because they gain feelings of immediate pleasure, but also because early leisure pursuits form a foundation for adult leisure activities" (Smith, 1989, p. 154).

Because the use of discretionary time is so vital, youth service providers at many levels have attempted to determine how adolescents spend these leisure hours.

A group of educators comprising the Carnegie task force (1992), was commissioned to critically appraise prior youth research in an effort to determine opportunities for youth in non-school hours. The majority of their conclusions were based on a study conducted in Michigan by Timmer, Eccles, and O’Brien (1976-1982). The Timmer et al. study was the most comprehensive data available to the task force at the time. It declared that a full 40% of adolescents' time was found to be discretionary. Discretionary time was defined as hours which are not committed to other activities such as eating, school, homework, chores, or working for pay (Timmer, 1985). Television, playing, and hobbies consumed part of that discretionary time, but 11% or 9.6 hours of non-school time were spent in other non-identifiable "miscellaneous activities" (Timmer et al., 1985).

The Carnegie task force determined that this "miscellaneous activity" time could be put to use by local communities. They purported that many problems which face adolescents could be solved if communities plan activities that youth will regard as a good use of their discretionary time.
“Many organizations that offer programs for youth know little about the characteristics of the youth they currently serve, and therefore find it difficult to plan effective outreach strategies” (Carnegie, 1992 p. 70). The Carnegie study concluded that a priority for teachers and national youth organizations was to improve data about the populations they are currently serving and provide programs that train youth in valuable life skills (Carnegie, 1992). It is important to understand youth needs on a local level rather than attempt to make connections with national data that may not be related. The Carnegie council drew conclusions from “national” data but conceded that effective program development comes from understanding local youth needs (Carnegie, 1992).

In an attempt to determine the benefits of community specific data for school and community recreation leaders, a study was conducted in Central Utah in 1994. The cities of Nephi, Spanish Fork, and Provo were selected on the basis of convenience and rural classification. The population base was a random selection of 449 youth between the ages of 12 and 17.

A leisure time diary was developed to determine adolescents’ use of time for a period of one week. Each day was separated into 24 hour segments and activities were divided into 18 categories. Adolescents marked the dominate activity for each hour. For example, if “Joe” spent an hour eating, reading, and listening to the radio he would write down the main activity. Was he mainly eating? Did he read with a nibble here and there? Was the book opened, the food untouched, and the radio cranked? The diary included space for the participants to write comments, or to include other activities not covered in the 18 categories. The diary was given to students in coordination with recreation and
school leaders. After the data were collected, a comparison was made between the findings of the Timmer and Central Utah studies.

A major finding of the Central Utah (CU) study was that the CU and Timmer study were statistically different. Similarities were found in the amount of time spent in television viewing, attending school, and doing homework. Differences were found in the areas of church attendance, reading, and visiting friends. This is important because the Carnegie study generalized the Timmer study for all communities when in reality CU communities have distinct needs not addressed by the Carnegie task force. Figure 1 presents the discretionary activity comparisons between the two groups.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Other discretionary activities which were not explored in the Timmer study but researched in CU are shown in Figure 2. These are the areas that are specific to CU communities.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The differences between the two studies indicate that the youth in the CU may be strongly influenced by the predominantly religious community, high level of community educational attainment, and other community characteristics. Another cause for differences could be that adolescents in CU are not exposed to the level of recreational
opportunities as are youth in other areas. For example, in urban areas Boys and Girls Clubs, gyms, drop-in centers, and other organizations are readily accessible for adolescents, but in rural areas many of these opportunities are not available. The fact that CU communities are so different from the community studied in the Timmer study indicates that adolescent statistics from one community cannot be applied to other communities without serious qualifications.

Specific community data can help teachers and youth service providers understand youth needs and tailor curriculum to prepare youth for life. The following are some ways that CU can now use their data to help youth realize that discretionary time activities are tied directly their schooling, and future habits. Figure 3 shows charts that can aid CU leaders in programming activities that will attract youth.

Insert Figure 3 about here

The computer games chart indicates that CU male adolescents spend a large portion of their time playing computer games. Teachers and recreation coordinators in CU communities could note that computers are a popular activity and arrange a computer game night at a local school. In conjunction with the games adolescents could be shown how to access the Internet and other computer activities. Such an activity would foster friendships with other computer minded youth and adults and could lead to a permanent community computer club. This club could train youth in marketable computer skills and may even develop a partnership with a local computer company (i.e., WordPerfect) to
provide tours, part-time jobs, and internships. The students from these programs who choose a career in the computer field will be prepared to contribute to society upon graduation.

The television viewing chart indicates that T.V. merits an average of 20 hours of week for CU youth. The popularity of this activity could be utilized by CU parents, school and recreation leaders as well. Educators in CU could host a movie night where teens join together to watch favorite films. Video recorders could be provided for the youth to create their own movie or television show. Teachers could arrange for a free visit to a nearby television station. The CU television station may even provide volunteer opportunities for the youth so they could determine if television would be the career of their choice. Parents could foster critical thinking and wise viewing habits by posing moral questions about different shows.

Teachers and youth leaders in CU will note from the charts the popularity of visiting with friends and could plan “munch and mingle” times during non-school hours. Munch and mingle could be a casual gathering or a structured social games time focused on making new friendships and strengthening the old. The social games could be focused on vital relationship skills such as listening, communicating clearly, and restating. These new found abilities could be an asset to youth as they develop life-long relationships with parents, girl/boy friends, and others. Teachers in CU now have a better understanding of the youth in their areas and can plan specific activities that will help them make the transition from school to life.
Teachers and youth leaders in other areas can benefit from doing similar studies. The Carnegie study strongly advocated that communities obtain current research about adolescent activity in order to tailor programs to present needs (Carnegie, 1992).

When data on a local community are available, teachers and recreation leaders of that area can study the data and note the activities which adolescents in their city enjoy. A teacher could then tie these activities to designated curriculum. A youth leader may choose to develop a program around the activity. To illustrate, Star Trek may be a popular television show in a given community, and a teacher could come to class dressed as an Klingon or other Star Trek creature. This would attract adolescents’ attention and allow the teacher to integrate space themes into teaching. A science fiction short story could be read for English, math could focus on Newton’s laws in relation to space, history may look at the steps man has taken in space travel, and physical education could involve exercises in which astronauts participate. Discussions could center around how gravity affects day to day living. The same type of idea can be applied to other activities in which adolescents are interested.

The answers to the question, “How can teachers help students to see that there is a link between classroom activities and free-time experiences?” come easy when current community data are available. The link is formed when favorite adolescent free-time activities are incorporated into the classroom or into after-school programs.

Each community should make a concerted effort to obtain data on the needs of youth in their area. The CU study revealed that local data are needed in order for
community leaders to program effectively. Furthermore, the researchers found that local data on adolescent time use can be gathered quickly and inexpensively.

The CU study provided fascinating findings; however, more work needs to be done in researching adolescent time use. Adolescents should be asked to evaluate local recreation facilities and programs. Schools and recreation centers can benefit from open communication with adolescents about curriculum, activities, and facilities. Data collecting methods can be perfected to provide ready information for leaders. These recommendations are simply a beginning to the changes that must occur in order to meet the needs of adolescents.

If adolescents such as the 15-year-old girl are to successfully pass into adulthood they must have the opportunity to fill their free time with activities that provide growth. Teachers and other leaders are fully capable of providing these opportunities if community specific data are available. An old adage states that “time is of the essence”, and it is time to provide adolescents with a healthy choice of activities in discretionary hours.
References


Figure Captions

**Figure 1.** Hours:minutes adolescents from Central Utah (CU) and Timmer (T) spent in discretionary activities.

**Figure 2.** Hours:minutes Central Utah (CU) adolescents spent in discretionary activities not included in Timmer.

**Figure 3.** Charts showing the hours that males/females spend in various activities on any given day of the week.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Weekdays**</th>
<th></th>
<th>Weekends</th>
<th></th>
<th>Weekly Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours spent doing:</td>
<td>*T Boys</td>
<td>*CU Boys</td>
<td>T Girls</td>
<td>CU Girls</td>
<td>T Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Friends</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>2:03</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>1:54</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = T: Timmer; CU: Central Utah

** Weekdays are Monday through Friday. Weekends include Saturday and Sunday.

Note - The numbers represent the hours and minutes spent in a certain activity each day. For example:

Timmer boys spent 2 hours and 23 minutes viewing television on weekdays.
Figure 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Weekdays**</th>
<th>Weekend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours spent in:</strong></td>
<td>*CU Boys</td>
<td>CU Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Computer Games</em></td>
<td>1:31</td>
<td>:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Listening to Radio</em></td>
<td>1:21</td>
<td>1:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Family Activities</em></td>
<td>1:49</td>
<td>1:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Organized Activities: sports, etc.</em></td>
<td>1:52</td>
<td>1:14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* CU= Central Utah

** Weekdays are Monday through Friday. Weekends include Saturday and Sunday.

Note - The numbers represent the hours and minutes spent in a certain activity. For example: Central Utah boys spent 1 hour and 31 minutes playing computer games on weekdays.
Figure 3

Hours spent watching television

Hours spent visiting friends

Hours spent playing computer games
Appendix A

Prospectus
Chapter 1

Introduction

Time is of the essence, an old adage states. Yet, where is the essence of time being spent in the lives of America’s adolescents?

Adolescence has always been a challenging period of life, but youth today face far greater risks and challenges than ever before. Adolescents confront boredom, drugs, alcohol, sexual activities, lack of adult guidance, and other challenges. Many of these activities are far more hazardous and addictive than those experienced by their parents or grandparents (Carnegie, 1992).

Approximately 30% of young adolescents report having had sexual intercourse by age 15, with nearly 6 in 10 reporting that they did not use any contraception at first intercourse. Seventy-seven percent of eighth graders (most of them aged 14 and 15) report having used alcohol. Twenty-six percent say they have had five or more drinks on at least one occasion within the past 2 weeks (Owings, 1988).

The above statistics and the headlines of the daily papers cause alarm. Parents and other adults may well ask, “What do teenagers do when they are not in school? Where do they go? How do they spend their time?”

Recent research states that discovering what adolescents do in the period of time when they are not in school or work is vital, especially for the development of recreation programs. “We need to know more about time use among populations studied infrequently (poor children, children of color, children living in rural areas)” (Medrich, 1991, p. 14).
From 1975-1981, Timmer, Eccles, and O'Brien (1985) did a study to determine what youth, ages 3 through 17, did with their time. Three hundred and thirty-five individuals were sampled. The results of this study indicated that 40% of children's waking hours are discretionary—not committed to other activities such as eating, school, homework, chores, or working for pay.

In 1990 the Carnegie Council conducted further research based on the study by Timmer et al. (1985). The Carnegie Council study determined how well national youth organizations were filling the 40% discretionary time reported by adolescents. After 2 years of research, the council concluded that national programs fail to significantly reach youth. Many programs are available to youth only 1 or 2 hours a week. In fact, 29% of young adolescents are not affected by any programs at all.

The Carnegie committee indicated that “communities must build networks of affordable, accessible, safe, and challenging youth programs that appeal and respond to the diverse interests of young adolescents” (Carnegie, 1992, p.12). Responding to the challenges facing adolescents is difficult. Local programming can be more successful if there are local data to provide recreation officials with information as to how best fulfill these needs in their community.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to provide Central Utah school and recreation leaders with local data on which to base their program development by collecting and analyzing data on adolescents’ use of time.
Subproblem

Compare the use of time by Central Utah adolescents to the urban statistics compiled by the 1975-81 study conducted by Timmer et al. (1985).

Delimitations

The participants in this study will be adolescents from Central Utah. The original study by Timmer et al. (1985) studied youth ages 3-17. The results of their study were separated into five groups. The groups include 3 to 5 year olds, 6 to 8 year olds, 9 to 11 year olds, 12 to 14 year olds, and 15 to 17 year olds. These researchers reported that the data gathered from younger age groups were not as accurate as older age groups. Furthermore, the Carnegie Council based their study on Timmer et al. (1985) data from ages 10-15. This study will be limited to adolescents between the ages of 10-17.

The time diary was developed and extensively used in counties outside of Utah County by the Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership at Brigham Young University.

Definitions

Adolescent - Male or female between the ages of 10 and 17.

Time - “System of those sequential relations that any event has to any other, as past, present, or future; indefinite and continuous” (Random House Dictionary, 1973, p. 1485).

Recreation - “A personal response to fulfilling, regenerative, enjoyable activities that can be enjoyed during free time.” (World Recreation and Leisure Association, 1981, p. 1)
Leisure - "Freedom from the demands of work or duty" (Random House Dictionary, 1973, p. 819).

Leisure Time Diary - Diary in which adolescents record the hours that they devote to various activities.

Discretionary Time - Hours which are not committed to other activities such as eating, school, homework, chores, or working for pay.

Central Utah - Includes the following schools: Nephi Middle and High Schools, Spanish Fork Intermediate, Timpanogas High, Dixon Intermediate, and Farrer Junior High.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study is to provide Utah recreation leaders with local data on which to base their program development, by collecting and analyzing data on Central Utah adolescents’ use of time and comparing the data for statistical significance to the national studies used in the Carnegie report “It’s a Matter of Time.”

This review of literature will discuss the general characteristics of adolescents, their use of discretionary hours, and studies similar to this proposed research.

Background

Adolescence is one of the most challenging periods of life (Dryfoos, 1990). Joy Dryfoos reports that this period of life is a transitional era in which youth struggle to form their identity. The formation of the adolescent identity relies largely on peer associations. “...Peer groups are the primary means by which teenagers share and validate personal and social growth...” (Ianni, 1989, p. 50). American youth especially face challenges as the peer culture dominates the fads and fashion of the day.

Alarmingly, the fads and fashion of the American adolescent are drugs, sex, and crime. A 1986 study reported that 17% of all arrests in the United States were of people under the age of 18. Approximately 7.9 million young people ages 10 to 17 have had sexual intercourse. Sixty-nine percent of adolescents said they used cigarettes, 92% used alcohol, and 54% used marijuana. Furthermore, 7 million adolescents are behind in school and 14% of each class does not graduate (Dryfoos, 1990).
Most agree that the way adolescents utilize their out of school hours has an impact upon adulthood. Jay B. Nash (1953, p. 187) stated that “Skills in youth are basic to recreation patterns of later life.”

Adolescence is a particularly important time to understand the relationship of leisure and health. During adolescence many important behavioral patterns are establish, values are acquired and refined, many patterns of living become routinized that will be carried over into adult life (Best, 1988). Adolescent leisure time is a likely time in which these patterns and values are developed and practiced. “How adolescents use free time is important not only because they gain feelings of immediate pleasure, but also because early leisure pursuits form a foundation for adult leisure activities and attitudes towards leisure” (Smith, 1989, p. 154). Because the use of discretionary time is vital, researchers have attempted to determine the way adolescents spend these hours.

Similar Studies

In 1988, the National Education Longitudinal Study Team conducted research to determine the characteristics of the American adolescent. A thousand schools in the United States were used as the sample population. Eight-hundred of the schools were public, 200 private. A total of 25,000 participants were administered questionnaires and cognitive tests which gathered data regarding school experiences, activities, attitudes, plans, selected background characteristics, and language proficiency. One parent of each student was surveyed as well. The results indicated that the typical eighth grader spends 4 times as many hours watching television per week as on homework. The average number of hours per week spent watching television was 21.4. Eighteen percent of students
reported they repeated at least on grade. Fifty-five percent of all adolescents spent anywhere from 2 to 3 hours at home alone each day.

In spite of these findings, the study concluded that, "...relatively little is known about how young adolescents spend their time outside of school and how the activities they are engaged in affect their academic achievement and social development" (Owings, 1988, p. 47).

Czikszentminaly, Kleiber, and Larson (1986) piloted a study to find how the discretionary hours of adolescents are being spent. Seventy-five adolescents provided 4,489 self-reports on various dimensions of experience during their daily lives. The 75 participants carried pagers which beeped randomly from a central signal source. One signal was given every 2 hours. When the student was signaled, they completed two pages in a self-report booklet, taking about 2 minutes each time to do so. The form included open ended items asking about what one was doing at the time, where and with whom, and Likert scales to assess effect, activation and motivation, and perception of freedom, challenge, skill, concentration and self-consciousness. The average student responded to 69% of the signals.

From the 4,489 self-reports, activities were grouped into three conventional categories: productive, maintenance, and leisure. Productive activities included class work (12%), studying (12.7%), and jobs and other productive activities (4.3%). Maintenance activities included eating (5.6%), personal care (3%), transportation (4.9%), chores and errands (13.3%), and rest and napping (3.2%). In the category of leisure, which accounted for 40% of all occurrences, were socializing (16%), sports and games (3.4%),
watching T.V. (7.2%), non-school reading (3.5%), arts and hobbies (1.5%), thinking (2.4%), and other leisure (4.6%) (Kleiber, 1986, p. 172).

The researchers summarized that adolescents experience two types of leisure. One was called relaxed leisure and entailed those activities of socializing, television viewing, reading, listening to music, eating, and resting. Csikszentmihalyi (1986, p. 175) declared, “This type of leisure provides pleasure without high personal demands.” The other type of leisure activities included sports, games, hobbies, and art work. It was proposed that these activities “provide an important developmental link in the acquisition of a capacity for enjoyment in serious and demanding adult activities”.

An earlier study by Medrich, Roizen, Rubin, and Buckley (1982) from 1976-1982, also determined how youth use their time out of school. Seven hundred and sixty-four sixth grade students in Oakland, CA participated in intensive interviews lasting about one hour. Parents were also interviewed. The results were broken down into five domains:

1. Children’s activities on their own with significant adult supervision or involvement (2-3 hours per day).

2. Children’s activities with parents (less than 1-1.5 hours per day).

3. Children’s in-home and out-of-home chores, jobs, responsibilities (less than 1 hour per day).

4. Organized activities including participation in recreational cultural programs sponsored by adults (4-5 hours per week).

5. Television viewing (3-4 hours per day) (Medrich, 1982, p. 12).
Timmer, Eccles, and O'Brien (1985) performed research from 1976-1982 which also interviewed children. Time diaries and questionnaires were administered to 389 children between the ages of 3 and 17. The subjects were asked to record sequentially what they did beginning at 12:00 a.m. the previous night, when each activity was finished, where they were at the time, whether they were with anyone, and whether they were doing anything else at the same time. Each child interview covered a wide range of questions. Parents were interviewed as well. The results indicated that adolescents used their time in the following ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Work</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing, Hobbies, Art</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; Outdr. Activ.</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Carnegie Study

The results of the previously cited studies prompted a 1992 study by the Carnegie Council. The Council used the statistics of the earlier studies to state that communities should find ways to provide more for the needs of youth. National programs do not meet the needs of adolescents. The council proposed that needs of local communities can be met by utilizing youth. In 1992 the council stated that many of the problems that face adolescents can be eliminated if the community will unite with effective programs.

Needs in the community - opportunities to contribute by cleaning up a polluted stream, reading to the elderly in a retirement home, tutoring younger children, or teaching
them to resist negative peer pressure - currently exceed community service programs organized for young adolescents.

Communities that respond to their teenagers' need can expect a remarkable gift in return: an outpouring of youthful energy, enthusiasm, and idealism that will benefit both the young people themselves and the community as a whole.

Current social science theory strongly suggests the great potential of community based youth development programs.

Planning viable community programs is a key in curbing the problems that face today's adolescent. Local communities can be a great source of good in the lives of adolescents. However, these communities need data in order to program effectively.

Specific Studies on Thesis Topic

After searching ERIC, UMI, and University of Utah data bases, no evidence has been found to indicate that current studies are being conducted in this field of research. However, community leaders report that there is a need for understanding how youth utilize discretionary hours. Robinson (1994, personal interview), East Juab professional, declares, "If we can determine what our youth are doing with their time then we can know which programs to fund and promote." Current data are needed so that local community leaders can plan programs that fit the needs of youth.

Summary

Adolescence is a challenging period of life. Today's society is particularly difficult for youth as the pressures from peers are immense. Social norms for adolescents include immorality, alcohol use, drug use, delinquency at school, and gang activity. Society at
large questions what adolescents are doing with their time that causes them to get in such
trouble. Researchers have piloted studies in attempts to discern the manner in which
adolescents utilize discretionary hours. Studies have been conducted in the years from
1972 to 1988. These studies have related what youth in various communities are doing
with their time. Recent studies are nonexistent, and yet the demand for such data is at an
all time high. Communities need data in order to provide programming that meets the
needs of adolescents in today’s society.

The rise of gangs in the Los Angeles area can be tied to insufficient programming. The 1986 Carnegie study noted that researchers have “correlated the rise of gang activity
with the dismantling of social programs available to youth...For example, the city of Los
Angeles sponsored 130 inner-city Teen Posts in the late 1970s and only five such centers
remain in the 1990s (p. 86).

Youth programs can make a difference if they meet the demands of local youth. A
positive example of youth programming tailored to locals needs is the Juvenile Welfare
Board (JWB) of Pinellas County, Florida. The board meets with youth and adults from
the community in order to plan and deliver the 91 programs it supervises. In 1989 and
1990 JWB agencies served 75,866 adolescents. “Research and evaluation are essential
components of all JWB activities, which sets JWB apart from many community youth
initiatives. Research staff members analyze local, state, and national data on children’s
needs, outcomes, and services” (Carnegie, 1986, p. 105).
Carnegie researchers (1986, p. 77) further stated, “Improving the quality of programs and services and increasing adolescents’ participation, therefore, require input from the young people who will be served.”

This study proposes to provide local recreation leaders with data so that programming on a local level is beneficial to adolescents.
Chapter 3

Methods

Methods and Procedures

In order to provide Central Utah school and recreation leaders with local data on which to base their program development this study collected and analyzed data on Central Utah adolescents’ use of time. The study also considered the following subproblem:

Compare the use of time by Central Utah adolescents to the urban statistics compiled by the 1975-81 study conducted by Timmer et al. (1985).

Selection of Participants

Subjects for this study were participants from the Central Utah area. School personnel provided the randomly selected participants.

Instrumentation

The leisure time diary (Appendix A) developed by the Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership at Brigham Young University, was the means chosen for the testing of the hypotheses. The participants recorded their daily activities on the diary for a period of one week. Activities were divided into 18 categories. Each day was separated into 24 hour segments. Adolescents marked the amount of time spent on each activity. The diary included space for the participants to write comments, or include other activities not covered in the 18 categories.
Administration of Leisure Time Diary

The diary was distributed to the participants in the following manner: An initial meeting was scheduled with the participants provided by the school personnel. The participants were in the local school districts. Teachers had given previous consent for the research to be conducted through the classroom. A parental consent form was given to the students prior to the initial meeting. The researchers took about 10-15 minutes at the beginning of class to explain the study and the diary. The researchers distributed diaries to those adolescents who had received parental consent. The student’s teacher collected the diary the first day and every subsequent day for the next 7 days until the students had completed 7 days of daily activities. At the end of the 7 day period the research team returned to the school to collect the leisure time diary. Each student was rewarded with a non-monetary prize.

Analysis of the Data

Evaluators’ inputted the data into the program Statview 4.0. The data was compiled using a coding system relating to the various activities. The coding system included numerical values for teachers, schools, age, and sex. An initial analysis was performed using Abacus Concepts, Inc., Berkeley, CA., 1992. The analysis graphed the results of each of the 18 activities and provided percentages to be compared with the Timmer study (1985). Cell line graphs were plotted using age, day of the week, sex, and the activity as variables.

The actual analysis was completed by using chi-squares. Mark Ricard, research consultant, advised the chi-square method over the t-test.
The Timmer study separated the results into weekdays, weekends and compared boys versus girls. The chi-square analysis allowed the researchers to group the data as the Timmer study had done and compare discretionary activities. Some activities in the Timmer study were not applicable and were thus eliminated from the comparison.

Distribution of the Data

Local recreation and school leaders in Central Utah were provided with a copy of the data analysis coupled with a brief summary and recommendations.
References


Appendix B

Human Rights Committee Correspondence
May 5, 1994

Dr. Burton Olsen
Recreation Mgt/YL
273-J RB

Dear Dr. Olsen:

Your research proposal, "Youth at Risk and Opportunity in the Non-School Hours," was reviewed by Expedited Board Review. The research poses minimal risk to human subjects and meets the Federal guidelines. It is determined that the research as outlined provides adequate protection for human subjects and the consent form will provide the necessary information. Any changes in the consent form, data collection instruments or procedures will need to be reviewed by the Human Subjects Committee.

Enclosed you will find a signed copy of the approval form for your records. Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Millene F. Murphy, Chair
Human Subjects Review Committee

MFM/sq

Enclosure
Appendix C

School and Recreation Leaders Correspondence
November 22, 1994

Dear Parent,

Provo School District, Provo Recreation Department, and the Recreation Management and Youth Leadership Department at Brigham Young University are jointly doing a survey to determine what youth are doing with their time. We would like your cooperation. The attached survey form will be used. We will have teachers at each school administer the survey. Each day for a week students will be given a survey sheet to fill out as to what they did the day before. On Monday they will be given three sheets to cover Friday through Sunday.

Information acquired will greatly help our recreation program, cities, and school district in helping plan, conduct, and assist with various program and activities for our youth.

Upon completing and turning in the seven daily surveys, students will be given a candy bar and McDonalds certificate for their efforts.

Please sign if you are willing to allow your child to participate in this study.

Sincerely Yours,

Micheal G. Jacobsen, Superintendent Provo School District
Rod Crockett, Vocational Director
Allen Moore, Provo Recreation Department
LeRoy Dennis, Provo Recreation Department
Peggy Roland, Dixon Jr. High Administrator
Linda Goldsten, Sarrr Jr. High Teacher
Mark Lowe, Provo High Teacher
Brian Kuhiman, Timpview High Teacher
Burton Olsen, Ph.D., Recreation Management and Youth Leadership Department, BYU

Please cut off and return to the school
I will allow my child ________________________________ to fill out the Leisure Time Survey.

_________________________________________  ________________________________
Parent's Signature  Date

This permission slip is for a study conducted by BYU, Provo School District, and Provo Recreation Center to determine the activities youth are participating in during leisure hours.
(sample letter to recreation directors)

(Date)

Jack Swensen, Director
Community Education & City Recreation
Spanish Fork High School
99 North 300 West
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660

Dear Jack,

This is to verify our cooperation with you on the "Leisure Time Survey." As we have discussed we will do all the computing, Xeroxing, and whatever else is needed. We need you to make contact with the principals and/or teachers of each class we are to survey. It is necessary to have the parents signature before the students participate. Therefore, see the "letter to Parent" form.

Attached find the "Leisure Time Survey," letter to parent, and General Information Sheet. We also need a copy of your letterhead so we can duplicate the necessary letters to send home.

If there are any questions call me.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Burton Olsen

BKO:s
Dear Parent,

Spanish Fork Intermediate School, Community School/Spanish Fork City Recreation Department, and Brigham Young University Recreation Management and Youth Leadership Department are jointly doing a study as to what youth are doing with their time. We would like your cooperation. The attached diary form will be used. We will have teachers at the school administer the diary. Each day for a week students will be given a sheet to fill out as to what they did the day before. On Monday they will be given three sheets to cover Friday through Sunday.

Information acquired will greatly help our schools, city, and recreation program in helping plan, conduct, and assist with various program and activities for our youth.

Please sign if you are willing to allow your child to participate in this study.

Sincerely Yours,

Jack J. Swenson

Mark H. Koyle, Spanish Fork Intermediate School Principal
T. Page Harrison, Spanish Fork Intermediate School Assistant Principal
Jack Swenson, Community School/Spanish Fork City Recreation Director
Burton Olsen, Ph.D., Recreation Management and Youth Leadership Department, BYU
Rebecca Hirschi, Research Coordinator

Please cut off and return to the school

I will allow my child _______________________________ to fill out the Leisure Time Diary.

________________________   ____________________
Parent’s Signature         Date
May 14, 1994

Dear Parent,

Juab School District, East Juab Recreation Program, and the Recreation Management and Youth Leadership Department at Brigham Young University are jointly doing a survey as to what youth are doing with their time. We would like your cooperation. The attached survey form will be used. We will have teachers at each school administer the survey. Each day for a week students will be given a sheet to fill out as to what they did the day before. On Monday they will be given three sheets to cover Friday through Sunday.

Information acquired will greatly help our recreation program, cities, and school district in helping plan, conduct, and assist with various program and activities for our youth.

Upon completing and turning in the seven daily surveys, students will be given a drink and candy bars for their efforts.

Please sign if you are willing to allow your child to participate in this study.

Sincerely Yours,

Burton Olsen, Ph.D., Recreation Management and Youth Leadership Department, BYU
Nyle Robinson, East Juab Recreation Program
Lynn Hansen, East Juab Recreation Program
Kent Park, Circle C
Chad Brough, City Councilman
Steve Olsen, Juab Middle School
Andy Cindrech, Juab High School

Please cut off and return to the school

I will allow my child ________________________ to fill out the Leisure Time Survey.

________________________________________  ____________
Parent's Signature                        Date
Appendix D

Leisure Time Diary
# Leisure Time Diary

Read this:

The purpose of this study is to see how youth use their time. You don’t have to participate in this study if you don’t want to. If you have any questions regarding this study you may contact Dr. Burton Olsen, 271 KB, Bingham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602, phone (801) 378-4981. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, contact Dr. Michelle F. Murphy, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, 200 SWKT, Bingham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602, phone (801) 378-3360.

Day: ____________________ Gender: (Check one) Male ______ Female ______ Age: ______ Code: ______

Please draw a bar through appropriate time you spend doing the following activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12</th>
<th>Noon</th>
<th>PM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care &amp; grooming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do home work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play games: computer, Nintendo, electronic games, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in family activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel trips, joy riding, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating activities: go for a hamburger, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do household chores: clean bedroom, wash dishes, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit or talk to friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work: a job you get paid to do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read for fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in organized activities: piano, basketball, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to radio, tapes, CDs, just listen for fun, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activities: please list</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
Appendix E

T-Test Results Table
## T-Test Results Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Hypothesized Mean</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CU Boys-weekday</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-3.263</td>
<td>.0470</td>
<td>Television</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.700</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-3.298</td>
<td>.0458</td>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU Boys-weekend</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.200</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1.487</td>
<td>.2338</td>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
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<td>CU Girls-weekend</td>
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<td>2.108</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1.292</td>
<td>.7891</td>
<td>Television</td>
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<td>0.03</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.420</td>
<td>.2506</td>
<td>Church</td>
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<td>.700</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.664</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3.076</td>
<td>.0543</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cu Girls-weekend</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>2.108</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.986</td>
<td>.0155</td>
<td>Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.697</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.2932</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.700</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.410</td>
<td>.0950</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td>2.200</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.555</td>
<td>.0380</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cu Girls-weekend</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6.060</td>
<td>.0090</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU Boys-weekday</td>
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<td>.697</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.122</td>
<td>.3434</td>
<td>Visit Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.25</td>
<td>.700</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2.974</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Cu Girls-weekend</td>
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<td>2.108</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.986</td>
<td>.0155</td>
<td>Visit Friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

Cell-line charts
Chart # 1 - Hours spent sleeping

Chart # 2 - Hours spent in personal care and grooming

Chart # 3 - Hours spent in school
Chart # 4 - Hours spent doing homework

Chart # 5 - Hours spent playing computer games, Nintendo, etc.

Chart # 6 - Hours spent in family activities
Chart # 7 - Hours spent traveling

Chart # 8 - Hours spent eating

Chart # 9 - Hours spent doing household chores
Chart # 10 - Hours spent visiting friends

Chart # 11 - Hours spent working at paid job

Chart # 12 - Hours spent reading
Chart # 13 - Hours spent attending church

Chart # 14 - Hours spent in organized activities. (Clubs, sports, etc)

Chart # 15 - Hours spent listening to the radio
Chart # 16 - Hours spent watching television

Chart # 17 - Other # 1 activities - Hours spent in activities identified by the youth which were not included in the 16 categories.

Chart # 18 - Other # 2 Activities - Time inputted by evaluators for youth whose diaries did not equal 24 hours.
Adolescents' Use of Discretionary Time:

A Time Use Study of the Central Utah Area

Rebecca Hirschi

Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership

M.A. Degree, August 1995

ABSTRACT

This study provides Central Utah school and recreation leaders with local data on which to base their program development by collecting and analyzing data on adolescents' use of time, and to compare local statistics with national data. The research included participants from Nephi, Spanish Fork, and Provo schools. Each participant completed 7 days of a leisure time diary, which detailed daily activities. Single sample t-tests on the data revealed that Central Utah adolescents' time use is significantly different from national statistics. The differences in the statistics indicate that school and recreation leaders need local data on which to base adolescent programs.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

Burton K. Olsen, Committee Chair

Thomas S. Catherall, Committee Member

S. Harold Smith, Committee Member

S. Harold Smith, Department Chair