

# LEISURE BEHAVIOR AND SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT GROUPS

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With the rapidly changing social environment, adolescent culture has also changed substantially during recent years. It is increasingly difficult to predict the versatile culture of adolescents with existing data. In order to seek efficient ways to help adolescents' grow in the right direction, it is prerequisite to understand them within their own cultural boundaries (Korea Adolescent Development Institute, 1993; Korean Adolescent Study Institute, 1990). The life of adolescents can be divided into three parts; the basic life, i.e., sleeping and eating; the learning/working life; and the leisure life. The leisure life, particularly, holds an extremely important key to the understanding of adolescent culture (Lee & Yoon et al., 1995).

Leisure activities of adolescents play a crucial role in developing their physical, psychological, and intellectual state of being, as well as shaping their personalities, creating their own unique culture, and preventing them from any wrongdoing (Caldwell, Smith & Weissinger, 1992; Ragheb & Mckinney, 1993; Hong, Eunsook et al., 1993). To promote leisure activities of adolescents, it is important for society to provide them with appropriate and adequate space. As a first step, we should understand the leisure behavior and spatial characteristics of leisure activities of adolescents. Indeed, adolescents' preferences for leisure activities and space differ according to the groups to which they belong. In this regard, the purpose of this research was to analyze the present and desired leisure activities of adolescents, and the spatial characteristics required by these leisure activities. In particular, the specific research questions dealt with: (1) characteristics of environmental experience (2) types and frequency of leisure activities of adolescents during the past year and adolescents' desired types and anticipated frequencies for the next year and (3) the spatial characteristics which accommodate their leisure behavior.

The definitions of key words used in this study are:

Leisure time: Free time left after physiological needs (sleeping, eating, bathing, etc), housekeeping/working hours, and commuting time.

Types of leisure behavior: Leisure activities can be divided into several types according to certain standards. In this study, Murphy's (1973) method, which classifies leisure activities based upon objective standards was used.

The survey was restricted to adolescents aged 14 to 24 living in Seoul and the surrounding area. The respondents were selected through "proportional stratified

cluster random sampling." The stratum consisted of various groups of adolescents: 650 senior high school students, 450 college students, 100 high school graduates preparing for the college entrance examination, 300 working adolescents, and 100 jobless adolescents.

During the period from March 6 until March 22, 1995, we directly visited with school principals to distribute/explain/collect the questionnaires at sites. A total of 5 researchers with MS degrees distributed 1600 questionnaires, checked the reliability of the answered questionnaires on the spot, and provided small gifts to reward respondents. After sorting out those questionnaires which were frivolously answered or when the age of the surveyed turned out to be under or over the 14-24 bracket, a total of 1365 usable questionnaires were collected.

The data analysis methods used in this research were frequency, percentage, chi-square test, F-test, Duncan test, and MDS (Multi-Dimensional Scale).

The major findings of the research were as follows:

1. The characteristics of daily environmental experience (e.g., settings) of adolescents significantly differed by groups. High school students, adolescents preparing for the college entrance examination, and working adolescents spent a substantial amount of their time (8-10 hours) at school, at academic institutes, and at work, respectively. College students and jobless adolescents on the other hand spent their time at various environmental settings such as on the road, in a shopping mall, a game room, a drinking establishment, a coffee shop, a restaurant, a theater etc. Thus, the latter groups of adolescents were found to have comparatively more environmental experiences than the former groups.
2. Adolescents' present leisure behavior was mostly passive and required no special facilities. However, exposure to diverse leisure activities significantly differed by adolescent groups. College students and jobless students were exposed to diverse kinds of leisure activities, while high school students and adolescents preparing for college entrance examinations were constrained to limited kinds of leisure activities.
3. Adolescents generally desired diverse kinds of leisure activities, although the degree of such desire differed by group. College students, followed by adolescents preparing for the college entrance examination, high school students, jobless adolescents, and working adolescents in that order, desired diverse kinds of leisure activities.
4. In comparing the present leisure activities and desired leisure activities by adolescents, several points are noteworthy:
  - First, adolescents' present leisure behavior differed from their desired leisure

activities. Adolescents wanted more active leisure activities that would enhance their self-development (e.g., swimming, computer lessons, etc.), while they wanted fewer passive or pleasure-seeking leisure activities (e.g., watching television, drinking/smoking, playing cards, etc.). As mentioned above, adolescent leisure behavior tends to be passive.

- Second, adolescents' preferences for desired types of leisure activities and their present leisure behavior differed by groups. Therefore, we must take the background of the adolescents into account and categorize them (e.g., high school students, college students, working adolescents, etc.) when dealing with their leisure activities. Third, high school students and adolescents preparing for college desired diverse leisure activities more than the other groups of adolescents did, particularly, working adolescents. As previously mentioned, the two former groups were exposed to limited kinds of leisure activities. For this reason, we must actively pursue the development of leisure space and programs that can provide the groups' desire for leisure. Moreover, we need to develop leisure programs for working adolescents, who are constrained by time and money.
5. With respect to spatial characteristics, adolescents experienced leisure activities either home or at some distance from their residential areas. They preferred, however, to have their leisure space in closer proximity to their residential areas. While, adolescents desired to experience "resource-based" (e.g., skiing, mountain climbing, mountain biking, etc.) sports away from home, they preferred other facility-based sports to be located within walking distance. Also, they wanted facilities for frequent leisure activities, such as computer lessons, movies/concerts/plays, and indoor sports, to be located in their neighborhoods. These facilities need to be encouraged within the residential area. Particularly, considering that proximity is a critical factor to leisure behavior, leisure facilities should be located within easy access. For leisure behaviors which are available only in remote areas, effort should be made to make these such leisure programs more universally available.

In conclusion, first, the future direction of adolescent culture is positive in that they want more sound and diverse leisure possibilities behavior, though their current leisure can be restricted and negative. To further accelerate this positive change in adolescents' leisure behavior, more efforts are needed to provide sufficient leisure facilities, where they can enjoy a variety of safe leisure activities. Second, adolescents preferred to experience leisure activities near their homes. To promote leisure activities of adolescents, we must take "proximity" into consideration and provide adequate leisure space for them in their primary living space (e.g., residential community), as well as their secondary living space (e.g., school, institute, and workplace). In the future, the residential complex, schools, institutes, and workplaces should be more deliberately designed to provide leisure space and facilities for adolescents.

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