The Differences in Leisure Activity by Personality, Race, and Gender

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Abstract

Understanding how leisure time is spent can increase knowledge of healthfulness and guide design of health interventions. This study investigated variables (personality, race, and gender) that predict leisure time. A survey was constructed on PsychData assessing different leisure activity categories (physical, social, entertainment, and technology use), the Big 5 personality traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, Neuroticism, and Extraversion) and demographic factors (i.e., race and gender). Participants were 153 people (752Caucasian, 81 African-American) recruited via MTurk. Results showed that personality predicted leisure activity , but race and gender did not.

Introduction

Barnett (2006) focused on identifying leisure time differences between groups, whether one's choice for leisure activities had something to do with gender, race, or ethnicity along with personality, affective style, and motivational orientation. In this study, 999 students participated, these students represented both lower and higher classes. Though all predictors were some significant for some categories s of leisure activity, the personality, affective, and motivational factors predicted more of the variance in leisure activity than did race and gender.

In a follow-up study, Barnett (2013) again focused on people's personality traits , gender, and race and how they shape one's leisure time. A Big 5 personality test was used in this study to predict personality dimensions of university students. For this study, the Big 5 personality dimensions (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) along with the facets were assessed through the NEO personality test (McCrae, Martin, & Costa, 2005). Personality factors again were found to be the best predictors of leisure activity. The most consistent predictor was the extraversion factor. Gender and race again were predictive of some leisure activity variables, but significantly less so than the personality factors.

In the current study, correlations among gender, race, personality and leisure activities were assessed. The goal was to replicate the findings of Barnett (2006, 2013) with a broader sample of participants. Barnett's work was limited to undergraduate samples, and she noted the need for replication with larger and more diverse samples according to age and geographic factors.

Participants

The participants were sampled from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). There were 81 African Americans (41 male, 40 female) and 72 Caucasians (41 male, 31 female). The mean age for African Americans was 33.9 and the range was 19 to 63. The mean age for Caucasians was 37.67 and the range was 19 to 70. This study was approved by the Rider University Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants completed a consent form before starting the survey.

Procedure

Participants were paid $1.50 to take the survey. The survey consisted of leisure activity questions (see the partial list below), the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), and demographic questions. For the 43 leisure activities, participants were asked how often they engaged in each (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, yearly). At the end of the survey, which took approximately 10 minutes to complete, participants were asked their sex (male or female) and their ethnicity (African American or Caucasian). The study was approved by the Rider University IRB.

Activities Lists (examples)

Technology	Social.	Physical	Entertainment
Social Media	Volunteer	Walking	Watch TV
Online News	Club Meet	Lift weights	Movies
Video Games	Religion	Yoga	Theater
YouTube	Sex	Basketball	Shopping
Shop Online	Party	Dance	Drug use
Text	Restaurant.	Swimming	Yardwork
	Beach	Basketball	Music

Design & Analysis

A 2 (Group: male, female) x 2 (Race: African-America, Caucasian) x 4 (Activities: entertainment, social, technology, physical) mixed factorial design was used. The dependent variables were the number of activities participated in (at least weekly) in each category, and the scores for each of the five personality traits. The minimum effect of interest was d equals .5 and eta equal to .2. Power was approximately .85. The Type I error rate was .05. The Type II error rate was .15. Excel and SPSS were used to analyze the data. A series of mixed factorial ANOVAs was used, along with bivariate correlations.

Gender Differences in Personality
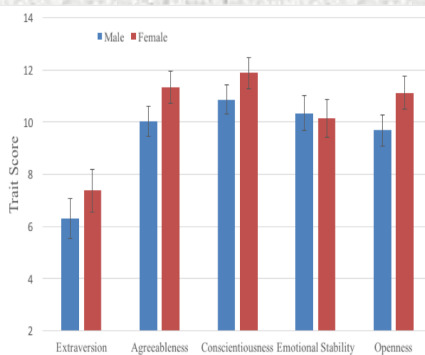
Results

There was a correlation between race and openness of r = .22. African Americans scored higher in openness than Caucasians. Gender also correlated with personality traits (see Figure 1). Age was positively correlated with agreeableness (r = .22) and conscientiousness (r = .27).

As per the table at right, the most consistent predictor of leisure activity was extraversion. Extraversion correlated with social activity (r = .25), physical activity (r = .20), outdoor activity (r = .25), and healthy behaviors (r = .24). Agreeableness (r = .26) and conscientiousness (r = .29) correlated with technology use. Conscientiousness was negatively correlated with social (r = -.19) and outdoor (r = -.19) activities, and positively correlated with unhealthy behaviors (r = .17). When activities were categorized as active-social (e.g., shopping, sports), inactive-social (e.g., movies, texting), active-nonsocial (e.g., jogging), and inactive-nonsocial (e.g., reading, watching videos) , extraversion was positively correlated with active-social (r =.28), inactive-social (r =.28), and active-non social (r = .24). Openness correlated with active-nonsocial (r = .24). Emotional stability did not correlate with any type of leisure activity.

Patterns of leisure activity were similar across races and genders. All groups were more likely to engage in technology activities and least likely to engage in social activities. Generally, inactive activities were most common. See the Figures below.

Group Similarities
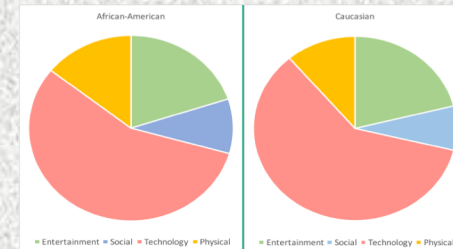
Race & Gender Similarities
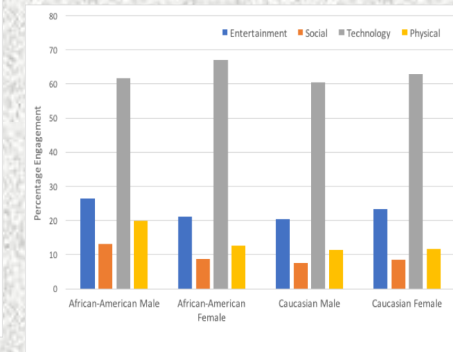
Activities x Personality Trait

	Social	Phys	Tech	Entert.	Hlth.	Out
Extraversion	.25	.20			.24.	.25
Openness						
Conscienti.	-.19		.29			-.19
Agreeableness			.26			
Emotional Stability						

Discussion

Regarding personality, and gender, males and females differed. Females were higher in all personality traits except for emotional stability. As for race and personality, African Americans were higher in openness to experience.

Personality, particularly extraversion, was a key factor in predicting leisure activity. Those higher in extraversion were more likely to engage in social, entertainment, physical, and outdoor activities, which are healthy activities. This means that introverts are more likely to engage in unhealthy activities and, therefore, should be targeted for intervention. Those high in conscientiousness were engaged in unhealthy activities such as technology use, and general unhealthy behaviors. This is different from prior research that has shown conscientiousness is associated with good health (e.g., . Agreeableness correlated with an unhealthy activity, whereas openness did not have significant correlations with any activities within this study.

In regards to race and gender, they were not significant moderating factors in predicting leisure time because they did not predict differences in leisure activities. The Figures at left show that both races and genders engage in similar patterns of leisure activities. Future studies should consider other potential moderating factors, such as income and environment.

In summary, gender and race were not significant moderating factors in determining a person's leisure activity. These groups tended to engage in similar types of activities, predominantly technology-based activities. However, the Big 5 personality traits, particularly extraversion, were significant predictors of leisure activity.

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