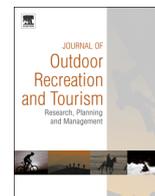




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Exploring outdoor recreation conflict's role in evolving constraints models

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ABSTRACT

Following recommendations to cross-fertilize leisure constraints and recreation conflict research, this project proposes contributions to the leisure literature in two areas: (1) it advances the study of outdoor recreation conflict by empirically testing the role of motivations in coping with outdoor recreation conflict and (2) it further develops the discussion of the relationships among motivations, constraints, coping, and participation. Analysis of data from hiker surveys in Minnesota, USA, revealed that: (1) constraints, coping, and motivations directly impacted outdoor recreation participation, and (2) coping did not mediate the relationship between constraints and participation. Whereas data do not elucidate the roles among these variables, they do empirically support the relationship between constraints and conflict. Hence, findings suggest the need for future constraint investigation to include motivation and coping indicators.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

In outdoor recreation settings, managers can expect conflict affiliated with visitor interactions resulting in visitor stress and constraints to participation. In response, managers can expect experienced hikers to use mostly cognitive strategies that will not impact participation days. However, displacement used in this sample positively and directly impacted visitor outdoor recreation participation days, as did the motives of *challenge* and *viewing nature*. Therefore, planning for displacement is prudent and monitoring the social, economic, and environmental impacts is important. Similarly, anticipating the impacts of this displacement on staffing and educational efforts should be attended to.

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1. Introduction

Outdoor recreation conflict and leisure constraints share similarities and conceptual overlap. Recreation conflict incites stress (Miller & McCool, 2003; Peden & Schuster, 2008; Schneider & Hammitt, 1995a; Schuster, Hammitt & Moore, 2003) and can be viewed as a constraint (Schneider & Wilhelm Stanis, 2007; Walker & Virden, 2003, 2005; Walker, 2007). Coping has been identified as a response to both constraints and outdoor recreation conflict (Miller & McCool, 2003; Schneider & Hammitt, 1995a, 1995b; Schneider, 1999; Schuster et al., 2003; Schuster, Hammitt & Moore, 2006; Schuster, Hammitt, Moore & Schneider, 2006). Furthermore, Walker and Virden (2005, p. 215) recommended that “future studies on constraints, outdoor recreation conflict, or both, borrow liberally from the others...” Although these similarities exist,

there remains a need to empirically assess whether or not the constructs can and should be incorporated into a single model. This project empirically assesses the constructs and contributes to the literature in at least two ways. First, this project advances the study of outdoor recreation conflict by providing proof-of-concept of the hypothesized, but untested, role of motivations in coping with outdoor recreation conflict (Schneider & Hammitt, 1995b; Walker & Virden, 2003, 2005; Walker, 2007). Second, given the lack of certainty about relationships among motivations, constraints, coping, and participation, this project advances the study of constraints by comparing competing models where outdoor recreation conflict is conceived as a constraint which incites stress (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Loucks-Atkinson & Mannell, 2007; Son, Mowen, & Kerstetter, 2008; White, 2008).

1.1. Leisure constraints and negotiation modeling

Leisure constraints, “factors that are assumed by researchers and perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of

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leisure preferences and to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure” (Jackson, 1997, p. 461), have been modeled since the 1980s. Constraints were initially identified and described as: (1) structural, for instance time and money, that were hypothesized to intervene between leisure preference and participation, (2) intrapersonal, such as psychological attributes, that interacted with preferences, and (3) interpersonal, such as lack of opportunities for interactions with others. Not long after the identification of these constraints, Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) integrated them into a hierarchical model and proposed that individuals first encountered intrapersonal constraints and, if they were overcome, interpersonal constraints, and finally structural constraints. Academic discussions ensued where Kay and Jackson (1991) suggested that leisure participation occurred despite constraints and others (Jackson, Crawford & Godbey, 1993; Jackson & Rucks, 1995; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997) concurred. From this, the “negotiation thesis” emerged, which suggested that leisure participation resulted from the absence of or negotiation of constraints with negotiation defined as the effort of individuals to use behavioral or cognitive strategies to facilitate leisure participation (Jackson et al., 1993).

Still, early in the 21st century, a consistent set of negotiation measures remains to be agreed upon, although several common categories exist. Jackson et al. (1993) suggested dividing negotiation strategies into two areas: (1) cognitive (changing leisure aspirations) and (2) behavioral (modifying the use of time and acquiring skills). For example, if one is hiking in the wilderness but encounters more people than is liked or expected, one might change their expectation of the experience to a more developed or social hike rather than a wilderness hike. Alternatively, if one changes the hike location due to the number of people, they are exhibiting a behavior strategy. In 1995, Jackson and Rucks empirically verified these categories using qualitative data and, in 2001, Hubbard and Mannell created scales for several behavioral negotiation strategies: time management, skill acquisition, financial strategies, and interpersonal coordination. Nonetheless, testing and questioning of these scales continue.

More recently, Schneider and Wilhelm Stanis (2007) re-conceptualized negotiation into problem- and emotion-focused coping strategies, categories used in stress research (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). Emotion-focused strategies include cognitive responses such as regulating emotions, product shift (i.e., changing the definition of

the experience), rationalization (e.g., reevaluating the situation more favorably), and psychological avoidance. Problem-focused strategies include behavioral responses in which individuals take direct actions such as managing the environment, substitution (e.g., temporal, resource, and/or activity), or displacement if time, places, and activities are not available.

Empirical testing has focused on relationships among constraints, negotiation, motivation, and participation (Fig. 1). The first of these assessments came from Hubbard and Mannell (2001). Among the four models they tested, from a simple independent effects model to those with more complex effects, Hubbard and Mannell found the most statistically sound model was one in which constraints decreased participation but also influenced greater use of negotiation, which they termed the constraints-effects-mitigation model (Fig. 1). Subsequent modeling efforts found mixed support for this constraints-effects-mitigation model. Although Wilhelm Stanis, Schneider, and Russell (2009) found support for this model, neither Son et al. (2008) nor Covelli, Graefe, and Burns (2007) could confirm significant relationships between constraints and negotiation. Covelli et al.’s (2007) final model did not include constraints, but instead motivations positively related to coping and coping positively related to participation (Fig. 1). Son et al.’s work, however, found a direct effect of constraints on participation and indicated similar fit indices between the simple independence model and the constraints-effect mitigation model and an even better fit among a reduced independence model and a new ‘dual channel model.’ Ultimately, statistical assessments led them to selecting the dual channel model as the best fit for the data (Fig. 1).

While each of these studies and the models tested contributed to the literature, the lack of consensus regarding the relationship structure among constraints, negotiation, motivation, and participation represents a gap in the understanding of constraints negotiation. Hence, further investigation is warranted.

1.2. Recreation conflict as a constraint

As the constraints literature was evolving, so were assessments of recreation conflict. Initially, recreation conflict was defined as goal interference in a recreationist’s experience, influenced by activity, place, mode of experience and tolerance for lifestyle diversity (Jacob & Schreyer, 1980). As the definition of conflict

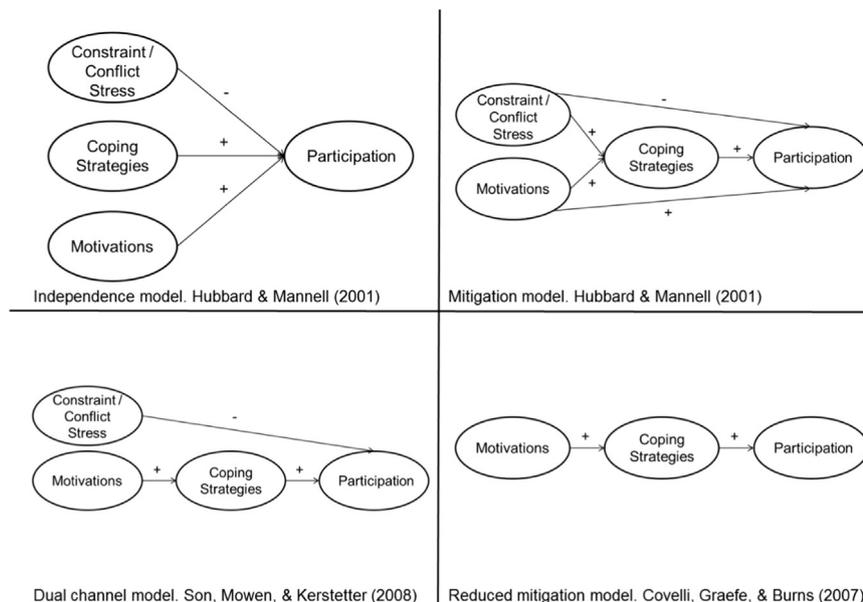


Fig. 1. Tested constraints models.

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