

Defining Leisure from the Perspectives of Working Women

How do full-time working women define and characterize their leisure lifestyle?

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Abstract

Leisure provides comfort and consistency for individuals who have many responsibilities and challenges in their lives (Parry & Shaw, 1999). However, people cannot experience the benefits of leisure if they do not have access to it. Working women face many barriers when it comes to partaking in leisure experiences (Eroğlu & Özsoy, 2017). The purpose of this study was to explore how full-time working women defined leisure and the characteristics of their leisure lifestyle. Research methods included a quantitative online survey administered through SurveyPlanet. Sixty-two Canadian women between the ages of 18-55+ participated as research participants. Findings included women's definition of leisure as a time to relax; six common types of leisure pursuits; and domestic duties as barriers to leisure involvement. Recreation Therapists should use women's definitions of leisure to guide their interventions in order to provide meaningful, gender-based leisure opportunities.

Literature Review

Women define leisure as recuperation, convenient, easy, a distraction from other concerns and a way to cope with stress (Martinson, Schwartz, & Vaughan, 2002).

Women should be released from their stereotypical gender roles in order to attend leisure time activities (Eroğlu & Özsoy, 2017).

Women make less of a distinction between work and leisure, and if they have a family, it tends to dominate her leisure experience (Martinson, Schwartz, & Vaughan, 2002)

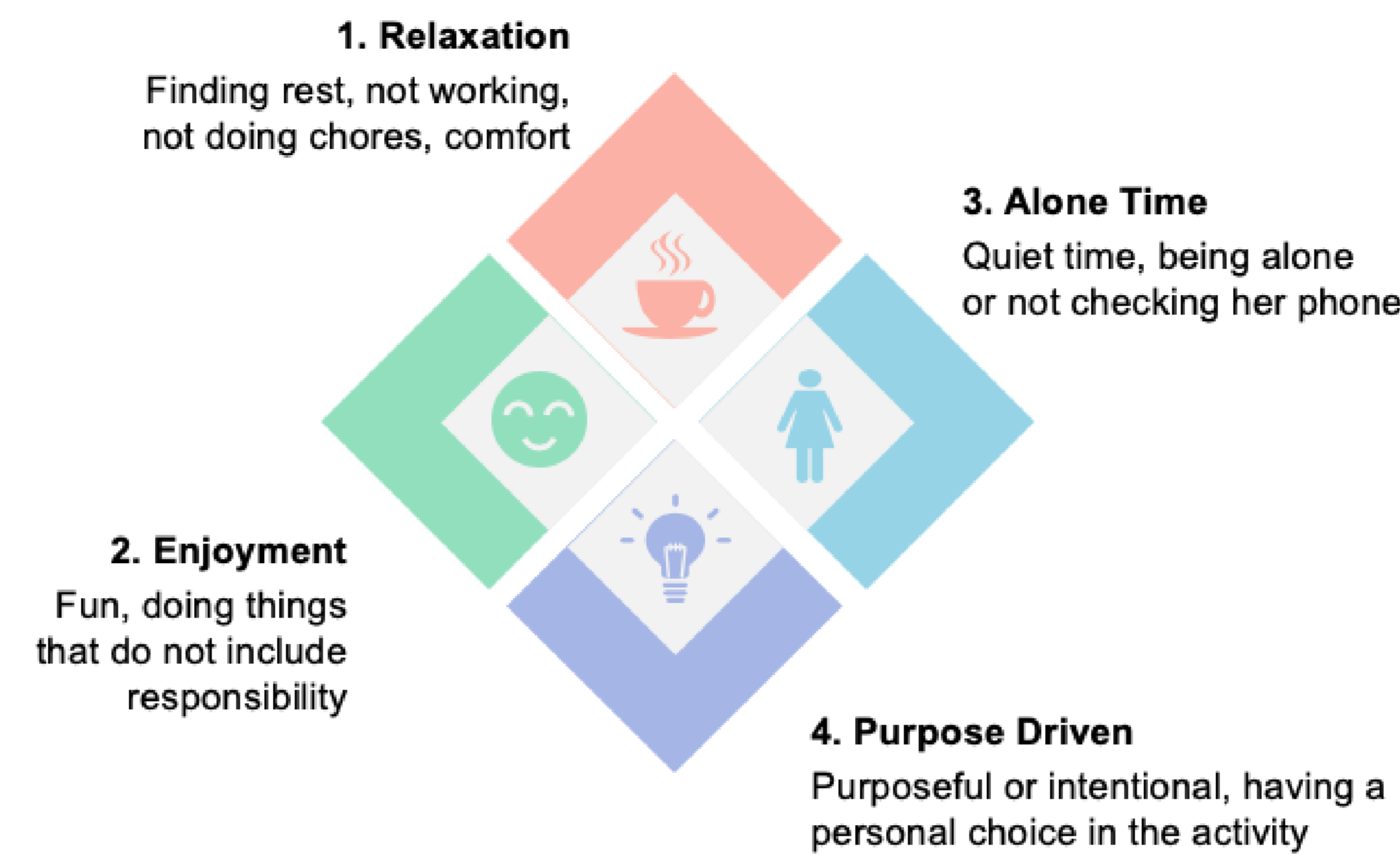
Those with higher education qualifications and higher income are more likely to pursue physically active leisure pursuits (Siti Affira, Mohd Nasir Hazizi, & Kandiah, 2011).

Research Methods

- Quantitative approach
- Purposive and snowball sampling
- Social media and email
- Twenty-nine questions
- Online questionnaire using Survey Planet with open ended, closed ended, and Likert Scale questions

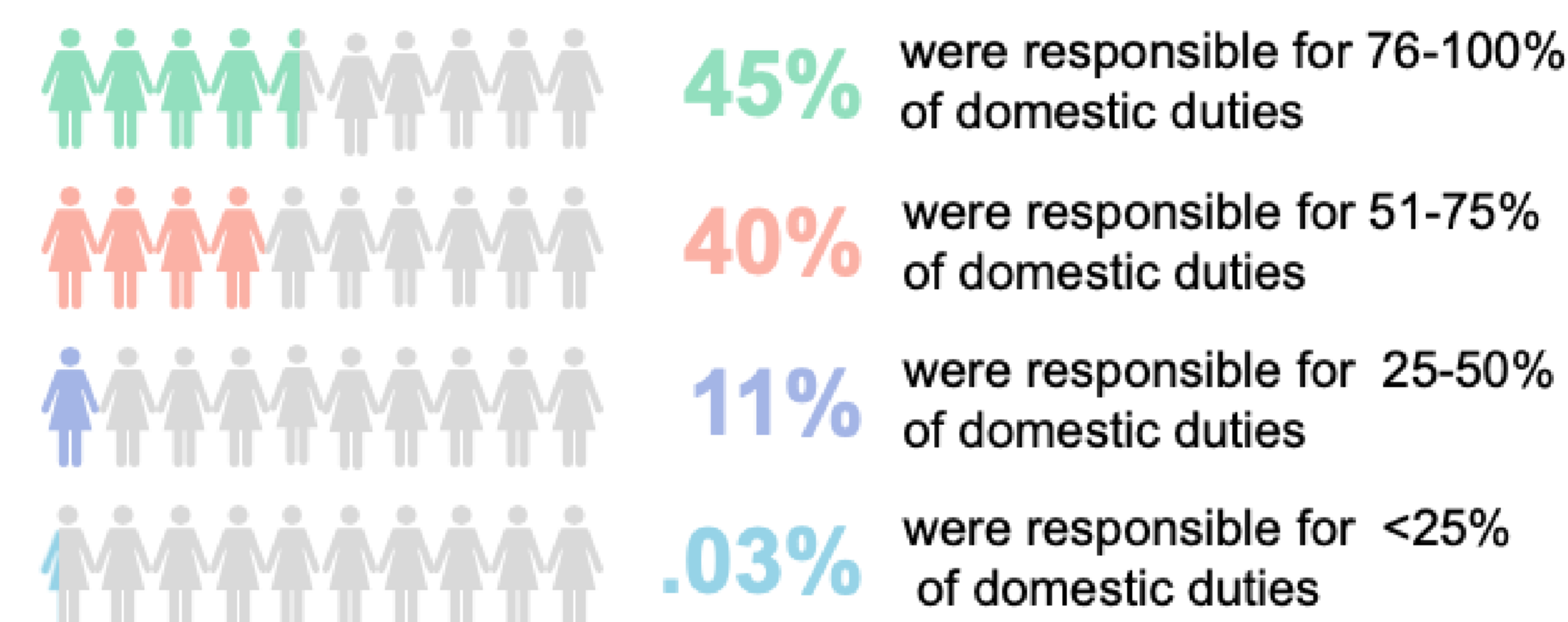
Research Findings

Definitions of Leisure



**There were four common definitions when the participants were asked how they define leisure in their lives.*

Domestic Duties



**85% of the women who responded to the questionnaire see themselves as responsible for over half of their household duties, while maintaining a job. They expressed that if there was an even amount of help or a partner to take on some of the responsibility they may have more time for leisure*

Activities of Interest



**There were six common leisure activities that the participants had in common. This was surprising to uncover because the responses did not include as many active or movement activities as expected.*

Discussion

Women often find leisure as an easy and convenient way to relax (Martinson, Schwartz, & Vaughan, 2002). However, the current study found that leisure was experienced if respondents found time in the day and viewed the activity as something they wished could be in their lives more. Participants also referred to leisure as a way to escape or cope during stressful times. Findings were consistent with the literature on household concerns and family as barriers to women's leisure. Household and caregiving responsibilities had major influences on women's leisure time and choices. In addition, participants stressed the need to change the number of responsibilities they had in order to engage more in leisure. When comparing income and education level the choice of activities was similar, however when they were asked how physically active they were throughout the week, those with higher education and/or income responded as more physically active than those with less post-secondary education and lower income.

Recommendations

- Use different ways to recruit participants to reach a more diverse sample of women; Use mixed methods to provide a deeper analysis into leisure lifestyle and beliefs held by participants
- Conduct a comparative study to examine gender differences and barriers to individual leisure by including both women and men
- Conduct a study that explores the influence of body image and society's view of beauty on women's leisure participation

References

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