

# **The Leisure Styles of Canadian Rural Recreation Participants**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the leisure styles of rural recreationists in Canada. The study involved a secondary analysis of data from a previous study, with a sample of 248 Canadians, which gathered data on four dimensions of leisure style: time use, leisure setting, leisure activity participation, and leisure motivation (Heintzman & Mannell, 2003). Correlation analyses were conducted on the data to determine if frequency of participation in three rural leisure settings was related to other dimensions of leisure style. The analysis revealed the following: Nonurban Natural Area Visitors were characterized by participation in outdoor, cultural, social, and travel and tourism activities, motivated by stimulus-avoidance motivations, and had a preference for other natural leisure settings in addition to nonurban natural areas; Pastoral/Rural Visitors were characterized by participation in outdoor, cultural, social, hobby, and personal development activities, motivated by intellectual and competence-mastery motivations, and had a preference for nonurban natural areas, cottage or lodge settings, urban and near-urban natural areas, and quiet urban recreation areas in addition to pastoral/rural areas; Cottage and Lodge Setting Visitors were characterized by participation in outdoor, cultural, social, sports, and travel and tourism activities, motivated by competence-mastery and social motivations, and had a preference for pastoral/rural areas in addition to cottage and lodge settings.

Keywords: rural recreation, leisure style, natural areas, pastoral areas, cottages

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## **1.0 Introduction**

In a 1991 article in *Recreation Canada*, Markham observed that little attention had been devoted to rural recreation in Canada: “One of the most important, but least analyzed, segments of the recreation delivery system is ‘rural recreation’ ” (p. 12). Close to two decades later there is still a paucity of empirical data on rural recreation in this country. In fact, more recently, Halseth (2004) has written, “A better understanding of the rural recreation countryside has some urgency, given the shifting economic, social, and demographic characteristics of this part of Canada” (p. 54). In an attempt to increase recreation and tourism providers’ knowledge of rural recreation in Canada, this paper explores the leisure styles of rural recreation participants. The purpose of the study is to analyze Canadian rural recreationists in order to understand these people as consumers of recreation and tourism services.

As rural recreation participants may spend a considerable portion of their leisure time in rural areas, they may be considered as tourists in these areas and potential users of recreation, cultural, and tourism services. Therefore understanding rural recreation participants and their leisure styles is important for rural community development. Municipal agencies and private entrepreneurs could enhance their services to rural recreation participants in order to benefit as much as possible from the presence of these tourists in the rural community. For this community development to take place it is beneficial to understand the differences between various types or market segments of rural recreation participants based upon their unique leisure styles, which include the dimensions of leisure activity patterns, leisure motivation, time use, and leisure setting.

From a rural community development point of view, information about the leisure styles of rural recreation participants is essential. When planning recreation services in rural areas where recreationists visit, it is valuable to identify the leisure styles of various types of rural recreationists and their tendency to use services while visiting these rural areas. Knowledge of their leisure style profile is essential in developing, marketing, and providing recreation and tourism services.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

Leisure style may be defined as “overall patterns of leisure activity engagement and time usage” (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 59). A review of literature on rural recreation reveals a paucity of empirical research studies on the leisure style of rural recreation participants. Almost no research exists on the leisure style of Canadian rural recreation participants, and thus we need to turn to research conducted in other countries to find related research.

In a study of 250 university students in Turkey, Müderrisoğlu, Demir, and Kutay (2005) explored the activity preferences, motivations, and setting preferences of visitors to rural recreation areas. The most preferred activities were viewing scenery, walking, and entertainment-aimed active recreation activities (ball games, free games). Frequency of participation in nature sports was significantly greater for men than women. The most frequent motivations were: having fun, having a good time, stress-relief from classes, avoiding boredom, spending time with friends, and being away from tension. Müderrisoğlu, Demir, et al. also found that there were significant relationships between the frequencies of participation in recreational activities and motivation factors. For example, frequency of entertainment-aimed active recreational activity participation was correlated with the desire for socialization motivation. Furthermore, motivations were correlated with leisure settings; for example the greatest motivation for those visiting a historical place was the desire for learning, while the greatest motivation for those visiting the seashore was a desire for socialization. Müderrisoğlu, Demir, et al. concluded that a more comprehensive approach, which includes other factors such as visitor characteristics and behaviours, needs to be considered when examining rural recreation. In a related study, Müderrisoğlu, Kutay, and Esen (2005) found the constraints to rural recreation activity participation for 250 residents of Turkey to be time, interpersonal factors, lack of recreational sites, participants’ self-respect, economic status, their peers, and the physical condition of participants.

A study in the United Kingdom explored the countryside recreation participation of 1,079 secondary students aged 11 to 15 (Mulder, Shibli, & Hale, 2005). The six countryside recreation activities (visiting park or green space, visiting a country

park, visiting a historic building, picnicking, cycling, or visiting a nature reserve) that had a participation rate of 50% or more were easily accessible to the students, as these activities could all be engaged in alone or with others, did not require specialist skills or knowledge, did not require capital investment in equipment, and did not require much effort in terms of organization. Some activities exhibited gender specificity (e.g., boys participated more frequently in fishing, while horse riding was more popular with girls). The greatest influence upon patterns of participation was family, followed by friends and then school. Participation in countryside recreation was a low-priority activity compared to the leisure activities of cinema, sport, television, and computer games. Mulder et al. (2005) found that the “demand for countryside recreation is strongly influenced by tastes and preferences and the availability of alternative forms of recreation” (p. 106). Thus participation in countryside recreation was related to one’s overall leisure style.

While the above two studies examined the individual activities and motivations of those who engage in rural recreation, other studies have examined a combination of these individual components using concepts such as rural recreation lifestyle (Warnick, 2002) and the perspective of a way of life or lifestyle framework (Sievänen, Pouta, & Neuvonen, 2007). For example, in a study of rural recreation lifestyles in the United States, Warnick (2002) used annual market research surveys to examine trends in recreation activity patterns from 1979 to 1998 for both metropolitan (suburban and central city) and rural residents. Recreation activity patterns were different for rural and metropolitan residents, although these patterns were not entirely explained by proximity to place of residence. For example, rural rates of participation in hunting, snowmobiling, and freshwater fishing were double that of metro residents, while participation rates for ice skating and downhill skiing were twice as high for central-city residents compared to rural residents. Furthermore, snowmobiling participation declined dramatically for metro residents while it increased for rural residents, while backpacking participation rates were increasing and were substantially higher for rural residents. In the 1990s there was dramatic growth in a broad range of activities for both metro and rural residents. For example, with the introduction of new trails, participation in rural-based activities such as walking, hiking, and backpacking increased. In regard to rural recreation lifestyles, Warnick (2002) found that rural residents rated spending time with family more important than did metro residents.

Using the lifestyle framework or way-of-life perspective, Sievänen et al. (2007) used population survey data from mailed questionnaires and telephone interviews with a sample of 12,649 persons to explore the recreation activity profiles and lifestyles of rural recreational home users in Finland. The way-of-life perspective is a way of viewing people’s lives as a whole, which includes all of the essential aspects of daily activities, including leisure, and their interactions. The term *recreation home* referred to a variety of different countryside dwellings suitable for regular recreation use. It was found that Finnish recreational homeowners tended to be highly educated city dwellers employed in administrative and clerical jobs. Active recreational home users had distinctly different recreation activity participation than occasional users. Active recreational home users participated more frequently in traditional rural recreational activities, while occasional users tended to participate more in sports-oriented activities, spend more money on recreational home trips, were family oriented, and showed potential to utilize commercial recreation services.

Turning to Canada there is some research on cottage owners and users. The focus on cottagers is not surprising, as “the cottage is a powerful image of rural Canada” (Halseth, 1998, p. i) and “a dominant feature of Canadian leisure ... found across the country” (Butler & Clark, 1992, p. 169). The ultimate Canadian cottage location is a shoreline site (Butler & Clark). With transportation improvements, the cottage has evolved from a summer holiday destination to a weekend destination to a year-round recreation facility and, in some cases, to a permanent residence for retired persons and commuters (Butler & Clark, 1992). Increased use of cottages by retired persons often results in a shift of community recreation activities from youth sports and swim clubs to card and bingo games (Halseth, 1998).

In a study of the rural recreation countryside, that is, rural areas that have attractive recreational amenities, such as lakes, mountains, or ocean shoreline, and are within weekend commuting distance of major urban centres, Halseth (2004) discovered that “cottage ownership is strongly identified with socio-economic status and cottage landscapes are increasingly elite landscapes” (p. 49). However, a study of Canadian cottaging by Svenson (2004) claimed that when cottage users, as opposed to cottage owners, are considered, Canadians with modest incomes participate in cottaging and thus it is less of an elitist activity than Halseth claimed. In terms of recreation activities, based on studies of Muskokan cottage trips, Svenson found that visiting with family and friends along with sports participation, especially water sports, were the “two defining characteristics of cottage life” (2004, p. 69).

Beyond research on cottagers, a study of vacation farm visitors in Saskatchewan found that the most popular recreation activities in order of frequency were wildlife viewing, hunting, casual photography, and touring (Fennell & Weaver, 1997). Bird watching, followed by viewing of mammals and plants, was the most common form of wildlife viewing and occurred most often during the spring and summer.

In summary, little research has been conducted, especially in Canada, on the leisure styles of rural recreation participants. While some studies have investigated specific leisure activities or motivations (e.g., Fennell & Weaver, 1997; Mderrisođlu, Demir, et al., 2005; Mulder et al., 2005), Mderrisođlu, Demir, et al. (2005) suggested that a whole range of visitor characteristics and behaviours need to be considered when examining rural recreation participants. Some studies, such as those by Warnick (2002), who used the concept of rural recreation lifestyle, and Sievnen et al. (2007), who used the way of life or lifestyle perspective, have recognized the importance of a more holistic approach for studying rural recreation behaviours. Thus this study will investigate the following research question: What is the leisure style of Canadians who participate in leisure activities in a rural setting?

### **3.0 Methods**

This study involved a secondary analysis of data from a previous Canadian study that used survey questionnaires to investigate leisure style and spiritual well-being (Heintzman & Mannell, 2003). The previous study included a question that asked participants to indicate their frequency of recreation participation in eight different leisure settings, three of which were rural recreation settings. Thus a secondary analysis of this data set provided the opportunity to explore the relationship between Canadian rural recreation participation and leisure style.

### **3.1 Sample**

The original study consisted of a large-scale quantitative study that used a purposive sample to select participants (Heintzman & Mannell, 2003). The sample was selected from a variety of sources, primarily in Ontario, but also throughout Canada. Although the questionnaire did not ask for place of residence, based on where the survey was distributed, it was mostly likely that the majority of the participants were urban rather than rural residents. A total of 436 survey questionnaires were distributed and 248 had been returned by the time that the data analysis began; thus the data analysis was based on a sample size of 248 (57% of the sample). While this sample was a purposive sample selected to gather information for a different research question, we can still safely conclude that the sample approximates the general population.

### **3.2 Variables and Instrumentation**

This study examined the leisure style of Canadian rural recreation participants. Mannell and Kleiber's (1997) definition of leisure style was used: "overall patterns of leisure activity engagement and time usage" (p. 59). When leisure style is defined as activity, setting, or time, behavioural inventories and time diaries have been the most frequently used data collection strategies (Mannell & Kleiber). The variables that were measured were leisure activity participation, leisure motivation, leisure setting, and perceived time use. The instruments used to measure these variables are described in the following paragraphs.

*Leisure participation* was measured with a leisure activity participation scale adapted from Ragheb (1980). This instrument includes eight categories of activities: mass media, social activities, sports activities, cultural activities, outdoor activities, hobbies, personal development activities, and travel and tourism. Respondents were asked to rate how often they participated in the activities of these categories. Possible responses ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).

*Leisure motivation* was measured with the short form of the Leisure Motivation Scale (Beard & Ragheb, 1983). This scale, based upon the work of Maslow (1970), is similar to other work in leisure studies, wherein leisure is associated with re-creating and finding self. The scale is based on four components of leisure motivation that determine satisfactions obtained from leisure pursuits. These components are

*intellectual*, which assesses the extent to which individuals are motivated to engage in leisure activities that involve substantial mental activities such as learning, exploring, discovering, creating, or imagining;

*social*, which assesses the extent to which individuals engage in leisure activities for social reasons; this component includes two basic needs, the need for friendship and interpersonal relationships, and the need for the esteem of others;

*competence-mastery*, which assesses the extent to which individuals engage in leisure activities in order to achieve, master, challenge, and compete; the activities are usually physical in nature; and

*stimulus-avoidance*, which assesses the drive to escape and get away from overstimulating life situations; it is the need for some individuals to avoid social contacts, to seek solitude and calm conditions; for others it is to seek rest and to unwind themselves. (Beard & Ragheb, 1983, p. 225)

Respondents rated 37 different motivations for engaging in leisure activities on a 5-point scale ranging from *never true* to *always true*.

The Leisure Setting Scale was developed to determine the settings in which the participants' leisure experiences occurred. Respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point scale, from *never* to *very often* how frequently they participated in leisure activities in the following eight settings: primitive wilderness areas (e.g., canoe trip in Algonquin Park), nonurban natural areas (e.g., Provincial and National Park campgrounds), cottage or lodge settings (e.g., locations on the Great Lakes or Muskoka Lakes), pastoral/rural areas (e.g., farms), urban or near-urban areas (e.g., conservation areas, city parks), quiet urban recreation areas (e.g., libraries, museums, art galleries, retreat centres), busy urban recreation areas (e.g., amusement parks, shopping malls, dance halls, sports stadiums, community centres), and one's own home.

*Perceived time use* refers to a person's subjective assessment of his/her experience and use of time in daily life. This variable was measured using a series of 10 questions, adapted primarily from Statistics Canada's *General Social Survey* (1986), which asked about working hours, free time, feeling rushed, having time on one's hands, balance in life, and related topics.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

A variety of statistical analyses, including both descriptive and parametric statistical analyses, were conducted on the data collected to examine and test the relationships between leisure style components (leisure activity, leisure motivation, leisure setting, and leisure time) and rural recreation participation.

## **4.0 Results**

### **4.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Sample**

The percentage of females (57.5%) in the sample was slightly higher than the percentage of males (42.5%). The mean age of the sample was 43.48 years, the standard deviation was 13.93 and the range was from age 14 to age 86. The educational levels of the sample, based on the highest educational level achieved, were as follows: 5.7% had some high school, 5.7% were high school graduates; 19.6% had some college or university; 13.5% were college graduates, 25.3% were university graduates, 6.9% had some graduate school, and 23.3% had completed a graduate degree. With regard to income levels, 29.2% of the sample had an income of less than \$19,999; 29.6% of the sample had an income of between \$20,000 and \$39,999; 25.3% of the sample had an income of between \$40,000 and \$59,999; 12.4% had an income of between \$60,000 and \$79,999; and 3.4% had an income of more than \$80,000.

An open-ended question was used to obtain the participants' occupations. These occupations were then categorized according to the National Occupational Classification of Employment and Immigration Canada (1993). The category of social science, education, government services, and religious professional had the greatest number of respondents (28.1%).

In terms of marital status, 61.1% were married, 1.2% were widowed, 12.7% were separated/divorced, and 25% were never married. One of the survey questions asked respondents to indicate the number of children they had in each of three age

categories: 13 and under, 14 to 18, and 19 or over. It was found that 26.2% of the sample had children 13 and under, 14.6% had children from the ages of 14 to 18, and 33.8% had children aged 19 or over.

There were no significant relationships between frequency of participation in rural leisure settings and sociodemographic variables (age, sex, education, income), with the exception of a negative correlation between age and frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas. With increased age, there was a decrease in frequency of leisure participation in nonurban natural areas.

#### **4.2 Leisure Settings**

Table 1 illustrates the frequency of participation in the eight different leisure settings. The three rural recreation settings (nonurban natural areas, cottage or lodge settings, pastoral/rural areas) had lower means than the leisure settings of one's own home, urban and near-urban natural areas, quiet urban recreation areas, and busy urban recreation areas but had higher means than primitive wilderness areas. If we assume the majority of respondents lived in urban areas based on where the surveys were distributed, in general frequency of participation decreased with an increase in distance from one's own home.

Table 1. *Frequency of Participation in Leisure Settings (n = 248)*

Leisure setting	Mean	SD
Own home	4.32	.923
Urban and near-urban natural areas	3.22	.953
Quiet urban recreation areas	2.85	1.003
Busy urban recreation areas	2.79	1.071
Nonurban natural areas	2.78	1.002
Cottage or lodge settings	2.61	1.111
Pastoral/rural areas	2.53	1.183
Primitive wilderness area	2.14	1.141

*Note.* Mean score based on scale (1 = never, 5 = very often).

#### **4.3 Rural Recreation Participation and Time Use**

There were no significant relationships between scores of perceived time use and frequency of participation in any of the three rural leisure settings.

#### **4.4 Rural Recreation Participation and Leisure Settings**

Table 2 presents the relationships between frequency of participation in rural leisure settings and frequency of participation in other leisure settings. Frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas was significantly correlated at the .01 level with frequency of participation in three other leisure settings: primitive wilderness area, pastoral/rural areas, and urban and near-urban natural areas. Frequency of participation in cottage or lodge settings was significantly correlated

at the .01 level with frequency of participation in the pastoral/rural leisure setting. Frequency of participation in pastoral/rural settings was significantly correlated at the .01 level with frequency of participation in the two other rural recreation settings (nonurban natural areas, cottage and lodge settings) and the urban or near-urban natural areas setting. The numerous significant correlations indicate an affinity between the three types of rural recreation participation with wilderness settings as well as quiet urban recreation areas or urban and near-urban natural areas but not with the home setting or busy urban recreation areas.

Table 2. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficients for Relationship between Frequency of Participation in Rural Leisure Settings and Frequency of Participation in Other Leisure Settings (n=248)

Leisure setting	Nonurban natural areas		Cottage or lodge settings		Pastoral/rural areas	
	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>
Primitive wilderness area	.458**	.000	.157	.013	.074	.243
Nonurban natural areas	1.0		.042	.506	.281**	.000
Cottage or lodge settings	.042	.506	1.0		.204**	.001
Pastoral/rural areas	.281**	.000	.204**	.001	1.0	
Urban and near-urban natural areas	.287**	.000	.132	.038	.211**	.001
Quiet urban recreation areas	.043	.500	.071	.264	.174**	.006
Busy urban recreation areas	.147	.020	.055	.393	.062	.327
Own home	.012	.854	.20	.752	.008	.906

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.5 Rural Recreation Participation and Leisure Activity Participation

Table 3 documents the relationships between frequency of participation in leisure activity categories and frequency of rural recreation participation. Frequency of participation in all three rural leisure settings (nonurban natural areas, cottage and lodge settings, pastoral/rural areas) was significantly correlated at the .01 level with frequency of participation in three leisure activity categories: outdoor activities, cultural activities, and social activities. For all three settings, the strongest correlation was with outdoor activities. There were also significant relationships between (a) frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas and frequency of participation in travel and tourism activities; (b) frequency of participation in cottage and lodge settings with frequency of participation in sports activities as well as travel and tourism activities; and (c) frequency of participation in pastoral/rural areas and frequency of participation in hobbies and personal development activities.



Table 3. *Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficients for Relationship between Frequency of Participation in Leisure Activity Categories and Frequency of Rural Recreation Participation (n = 248)*

Activity category	Nonurban natural areas		Cottage or lodge settings		Pastoral/rural areas	
	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>
Outdoor	.409**	.000	.246**	.000	.274**	.000
Hobbies	.096	.133	.046	.473	.254**	.000
Cultural	.186**	.003	.169**	.008	.211**	.001
Social	.220**	.000	.168**	.008	.203**	.001
Personal development	.125	.049	.019	.766	.171**	.007
Sports	.133	.037	.203**	.001	.160	.012
Travel & tourism	.182**	.004	.182**	.004	.115	.072
Mass media	.075	.241	.021	.740	.124	.050

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### **4.6 Rural Recreation Participation and Leisure Motivations**

In regard to leisure motivations, there were no significant correlations at the .01 level. However, there were positive correlations at the .05 level between (a) frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas and stimulus-avoidance motivations; (b) frequency of participation in cottage and lodge settings and both competence-mastery motivations and social motivations; and (c) frequency of participation in pastoral/rural settings and both competence-mastery motivations and intellectual motivations (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficients for Relationship between Leisure Motivation Scale Component Scores and Frequency of Rural Recreation Participation (n = 248)*

Leisure motivation	Nonurban natural areas		Cottage or lodge settings		Pastoral/rural areas	
	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>rho</i>	<i>p</i>
Intellectual	.044	.493	.015	.818	.160*	.012
Competence-mastery	.054	.401	.136*	.033	.152*	.017
Social	.041	.518	.148*	.020	.119	.060
Stimulus-avoidance	.129*	.042	.029	.651	.087	.174

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## **5.0 Discussion**

The current study found no significant relationships between sociodemographic variables and rural recreation participation, except that older people tended to

participate less frequently in nonurban natural areas. This result is to be expected, as the physical demands of recreation in nonurban natural areas such as provincial and natural parks are often greater than in the rural recreation settings of cottage/lodge settings and pastoral/rural areas, as well as more urban settings. Although the current study was based on rural recreation participation and did not distinguish between urban and rural place of residence, this finding seems to be consistent with Warnick's (2002) conclusion, based on a review of several studies, that rural residents tend to be less active as they became older. However, the general lack of relationships between sociodemographic variables (age, sex, education, income) and the leisure style of rural recreation participants in the current study is not consistent with a number of empirical studies which discovered that rural recreation participation was related to sociodemographic variables. For example, both Müderrisoğlu, Demir, et al. (2005) and Mulder et al. (2005) found that frequency of participation in some leisure activities was significantly different for men and women. In addition, based on a review of several empirical Scandinavian studies, Sievänen et al. (2007) concluded that recreational homeowners compared to the general population tend to be older, have a higher income, and are more likely to be pensioners. Sievänen et al. suggested that this socioeconomic profile of recreational-home users is similar to that found in many other Western countries, including Canada (Halseth, 2004). However, this was not found to be the case in the current study. A possible explanation might be that provided by Svenson (2004), who made a distinction between cottage use and ownership and countered Halseth's (2004) claim that cottaging is an elitist activity. Cottage use in Canada reflects a greater diversity of Canadian society in terms of age, income, and education than cottage ownership. The current study measured cottage use, not cottage ownership, which may explain the lack of significant correlations between frequency of participation in cottage/lodge settings and sociodemographic variables.

Based on the results of this study, the three rural recreation leisure styles may be characterized as follows:

*Nonurban natural area visitors* were characterized by participation in outdoor, cultural, social, and travel and tourism activities, motivated by stimulus avoidance, and had a preference for other natural leisure settings (primitive wilderness areas, pastoral/rural areas and urban and near-urban natural areas), in addition to nonurban natural areas.

*Pastoral/rural visitors* were characterized by participation in outdoor, cultural, social, hobby, and personal development activities, motivated by intellectual and competence-mastery motivations, and had a preference for nonurban natural areas, cottage or lodge settings, urban and near-urban natural areas, and quiet urban recreation areas, in addition to pastoral/rural areas.

*Cottage and lodge setting visitors* were characterized by participation in outdoor, cultural, social, sports, and travel and tourism activities, motivated by competence-mastery and social motivations, and had a preference for pastoral/rural areas, in addition to cottage and lodge settings.

In general those who participated in the three rural recreation categories tended to participate in other leisure settings (e.g., urban and near-urban natural areas) that

were most like the rural recreation settings. None of the three rural recreation settings were correlated with frequency of participation in the leisure settings of busy urban recreation areas or one's own home. This finding seems to suggest that rural recreationists prefer more nature-oriented and quieter settings for their recreation. If we consider only the relationships between the three rural recreation settings, there were significant correlations between frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas and pastoral/rural areas, and between frequency of participation in pastoral/rural areas and cottage or lodge settings. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas and frequency of participation in primitive wilderness areas. These findings suggest a continuum of rural recreation settings with nonurban natural areas at one end and cottage or lodge settings at the other end, with pastoral/rural areas in the middle. Thus the nonurban natural areas visitors were most like primitive wilderness area visitors, while the other rural recreationists were more like urban area visitors. As Sievänen et al. (2007) observed, "the recreational home is a symbol of closeness to nature.... But, on the other hand, a trend of today is also to build modern-style houses with all the technical comforts of urban dwellings, far from the style of nostalgic rural style" (p. 227). Or has Svenson (2004) has documented, Canadian "cottaging has become urban" (p. 63).

It is not surprising that the strongest correlation between frequency of participation in a leisure activity category and the three rural recreation settings was that of outdoor activities, as all three rural recreation settings are nature oriented and provide plenty of opportunity for outdoor recreation. Bell (1992) has explained how rural life is perceived to be closer to nature than urban life. Based on a review of empirical studies, Warnick (2002) concluded that rural residents may have higher participation rates in resource-based outdoor activities. Furthermore, in their study of rural recreational home users, Sievänen et al. (2007) discovered that the main reason for visiting a recreational home was nature while the most active recreational home users preferred nature-based outdoor activities. The correlation between frequency of participation in cottage and lodge settings with frequency of participation in sports activities is consistent with Sievänen et al.'s finding that occasional recreational home users tended to participate more in sports-oriented activities, and also with Svenson's (2004) Canadian study of Muskokan cottage trips, which found that people on these trips had high sports participation (91%), particularly water sports.

Participation in each of the rural recreation leisure settings was correlated with different leisure motivation components. This is consistent with Müderrisoğlu, Demir et al.'s (2005) finding that motivations were correlated with leisure settings: those visiting a historical place tended to be most motivated by a desire for learning, while those visiting the seashore were most motivated by a desire for socialization.

The correlation of frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas with stimulus-avoidance motivations may reflect elements of the Restorative Environments Theory (Kaplan, 1995). This theory states that environments characterized by (a) being away (a conceptually or physically different setting from one's everyday environment); (b) extent (a setting adequately rich and coherent that it can captivate the mind and foster exploration); (c) fascination (a form of attention that requires no effort); and (d) compatibility (advances a person's purposes or inclinations) are conducive to restorative experiences (Kaplan, 1995). Thus, the natural setting of a nonurban natural area may provide a

restorative setting for those under stress to get away from the stress of their everyday environment. Furthermore, given the correlation of frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas with stimulus-avoidance motivations, it is not surprising that there were correlations between frequency of participation in nonurban natural areas with both frequency of participation in primitive wilderness areas and urban and near-urban natural areas, as these settings provide an opportunity to get away, experience nature, and avoid the stimuli of daily urban life.

The significant correlation between frequency of participation in cottage and lodge settings with social motivations may reflect the opportunity that cottages and lodges provide to socialize with family and friends. This finding is consistent with Sievänen et al.'s (2007) conclusion based on a review of several studies that spending time with family and meeting relatives were among the most often mentioned leisure activities pursued at recreation homes. Svenson (2004) also documented the importance of socializing to Canadian cottagers: "Encounters with family and friends take on a richer flavour because we have time to develop meaningful connections with one another, relationships that become forever associated with the special place of the cottage" (p. 74).

The correlation of frequency of participation in cottage and lodge settings with competence-mastery motivations may reflect the need to learn and master certain skills to own and maintain a cottage as well as to temporarily live in a rural setting. Sievänen et al. (2007; c.f., Aronsson, 2004) noted that the maintenance of the recreational home by the owner requires significant investment of money, time, and work. Furthermore, cottages may provide a place to practice traditions and routines that are embedded in rural life (Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999). In addition a cottage provides a place "to have something to do" and to express a person's unique interests and creativeness with recreational activities in and surrounding the cottage (Sievänen et al., p. 228). Describing Canadian cottagers, Svenson (2004) wrote: "At the cottage we relish the simple pleasures of pottering. Whether chopping wood for the fire, replacing a few boards on the dock, repairing Grandpa's favourite old chair, cottage work gives an immediate sense of satisfaction" (pp. 73–74).

The above explanations as to why cottage use and competence-mastery leisure motivations are associated may also be used to explain the significant relationship between competence-mastery motivations and frequency of participation in rural/pastoral settings (e.g., farms). Similar to cottages, hobby farms and other pastoral settings can provide opportunities to practice rural traditions and routines, to have something to do, and to express a person's unique interests and creativeness. The significant relationship between participation in pastoral/rural areas and frequency of participation in hobbies and personal development activities also lends support to the competence-mastery and intellectual motivations associated with participation in pastoral/rural settings. These motivations may reflect the need to master certain skills and learn specific information to experience leisure in a rural setting, for example, hobby farming.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study that may be helpful to municipal agencies, private entrepreneurs, and others who are involved in rural community development as it relates to the provision of recreation, culture, and tourism services. First, this study has illustrated that the concept of leisure style, which

incorporates leisure motivations, leisure setting preferences, and perceived time use, in addition to recreation activity participation, is a more complete approach to understanding the characteristics of rural recreationists than simply recreation activity profiles. Thus community developers need to use surveys, focus groups, and other tools to thoroughly understand the leisure styles, including motivations, of the rural recreationists in their community rather than simply classify them according to leisure activity participation. At the same time it must be remembered that the three rural recreation groups shared some of the same leisure style characteristics that also distinguished them from those who had a higher frequency of participation in primitive wilderness or urban leisure settings.

Second, as demonstrated by the use of the leisure style concept in this study, rural recreation participants are not all alike and may be classified into different leisure styles. This study found differences in leisure style—in terms of leisure activities participated in, leisure motivations, and preferences for leisure settings—according to the leisure setting classifications of nonurban natural areas, rural/pastoral settings, and cottage and lodge settings. If a particular rural community is characterized primarily by one leisure setting classification (e.g., cottage and lodge settings) then the provision of recreation, culture, and tourism services should reflect the leisure activities, leisure motivations, and leisure setting preferences of this specific group. If there is a mix of all three groups, then the provision of these services to enhance community development would become more complex and strategies need to be put in place to cater to the needs and interests of the diverse rural recreation groups. Third, it must be noted that leisure activity participation and leisure motivation appear to be the most important components in determining the leisure style of rural recreation participants. Fourth, the current study, unlike some other research studies (Halseth, 2004; Mūderrisoğlu, Demir, et al., 2005; Mulder et al., 2005; Sievänen et al., 2007), found only one significant relationship between sociodemographic variables and the leisure style of rural recreation participants. Thus, unless a rural community has data to indicate that their rural recreation participants reflect certain sociodemographic characteristics, these assumptions should not be made.

The present research study had a number of limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the study was based on a secondary analysis of data from a different study that used a purposive sample. To better understand the leisure styles of rural recreationists a specific research study on this research question with a representative sample is recommended. Second, this study's sample was primarily from central Canada. A representative sample from the entire Canadian population would provide a more accurate and complete picture of the leisure style of rural recreation participants in Canada. Alternatively, regional studies, such as the Maritime Provinces or the Prairie Provinces, would be beneficial to determine the unique characteristics of the rural recreation participants in specific regions of Canada. Third, the current study did not ask whether the respondents were rural or urban residents but looked at rural recreation participation regardless of the place of residence. Data on place of residence would provide the opportunity to compare the rural recreation of rural versus urban Canadians such as was the case in Warnick's (2002) U.S. study. Fourth, research could be conducted to determine if there are subcategories in each of the main rural leisure styles. For example, based on interviews with Canadian cottagers, Svenson (2004) has suggested four cottager ideal types (cottager, suburbanite, wanderer, and homecomer), while Sznajder, Przezbórska, and Scrimgeour (2009) have suggested a number of agritourist types

(momentary, one-day, overnight, weekend, holidaymakers, discovers, and wanderers). Despite the limitations of this research study, it nevertheless sheds light on the characteristics of rural recreationists in Canada and thus helps address Markham's (1991) and Halseth's (2004) concerns about a lack of research knowledge concerning rural recreation in Canada.

## 7.0 References

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