

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES

COUPLE AND FAMILY LEISURE TIME AND ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING IN INDIA

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SPRING 2017

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for a baccalaureate degree  
in Human Development and Family Studies  
with honors in Human Development and Family Studies

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## ABSTRACT

Previous research on couple and family leisure suggests that leisure activities have potential to impact adolescent well-being (e.g., Berntsson & Ringsberg, 2008). However, most research has been done in Western contexts (Hodge et al., 2015). This paper utilizes time-use diary data and participant reports of adolescent well-being (physical health, mental health, and academic achievement) collected within the South India Community Health Study conducted in rural Tamil Nadu, India. Participants came from 1,355 households and included fathers, their wives, and their adolescent children (between the ages of 12 and 17). Using their responses, this paper uses correlation and regression analyses to investigate potential relationships between time spent in couple and family leisure activities (both active and passive) and adolescent well-being to examine whether leisure in India follows patterns similar to or different from those within Western nations. Furthermore, this examination attempts to identify whether these effects vary by marriage type (arranged by parents or relatives versus choice-based) or sex of the adolescent. Results suggest a negative association between passive couple leisure time and adolescent sickness within the previous twelve months, anxiety, and depression, but no significant relationship was found for academic achievement. Furthermore, active couple leisure time and family leisure time (active or passive) showed no significant effects for adolescent well-being. Marriage type showed no significant moderating effects, and adolescent sex only significantly moderated the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement, such that correlations were stronger for females than males. Possible implications and limitations to the previous findings are also discussed.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Office of Undergraduate Education at The Pennsylvania State University for the funding it provided for my participation in this project through the Rodney A. Erickson Discovery Grant. Additionally, the project itself was supported by a grant (R01 HD058831-01) from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center for Child Health and Human Development. The data used in this paper are from the South India Community Health Study (SICHS), directed by Kaivan Munshi, University of Cambridge, Nancy Luke, The Pennsylvania State University, Soumya Swaminathan, Indian Council of Medical Research, and Shantidani Minz, Christian Medical College, Vellore. Approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at The Pennsylvania State University (IRB00000192, IRB00000193).

I owe so much appreciation to several individuals who assisted me with the process of creating this project. Thanks to Dr. Nancy Luke for allowing me to access the data and travel to India with her to observe the project. The Schreyer Honors College allowed me the opportunity to receive individualized training and mentorship from faculty within the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Penn State. Dr. Lisa Gatzke-Kopp supported me in my initial stages of project formulation and proposal. Dr. Lesley Ross assisted me with seeing the project through to completion. And, I owe a tremendous amount of thanks to Dr. Gregory Fosco for his mentorship, guidance, patience, and encouragement throughout the entire process, as well as for the time he dedicated to aid in revising and improving the manuscript. Lastly, I would like to thank my best supporter, both academically and personally – my wife, Ashley Larsen Gibby. Thank you for your suggestions, edits, assistance with Stata, and your help in so many ways. Most of all, thank you for believing in me.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The well-being of children is at the heart of much of research and policy on the family, and adolescents have become an increasingly investigated group due to the unique characteristics of this period of development (Steinberg, 2001). Family trends over the past decades have sparked concern for adolescent well-being, including such issues as the relative rise in divorce, increased numbers of single mothers, and the influx of women, specifically mothers, in the work force (Cherlin, 2010; Zimmerman, 1995). Of particular concern for many are the potential effects of these trends on parent-child relationships and the time they spend together (Bianchi, 2011). While much research has been dedicated to finding ways of improving child well-being through effective parenting, less is known about parenting adolescents (Steinberg, 2001) and even less focus has been given to exploring parent-adolescent relationships as they function within the context of the family system.

Alternative explanations for the effects of macro-level family trends can be seen in the interpersonal processes between members of families. For example, it may not be divorce, in and of itself, that causes problems for children, but rather the conflict or instability which is highly associated with divorce (Amato, 2010). From a family systems perspective, the quality of interpersonal processes shapes child outcomes more than whether the family consists of a traditional or non-traditional unit (Buchanan & Waizenhofer, 2001; Bullock & Forgatch, 2003; Minuchin, 1985). Furthermore, unidirectional views of child development such as those often used to study how parenting affects child well-being fail to capture the important, whole-family

dynamics at play. Elements of family relationships such as a general feeling of cohesion or the ability to adapt to stressors provide the framework through which family interactions are shaped (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979).

While it is theoretically beneficial to understand the general dynamics by which families function as a whole, it is also important for family members to know what “cohesion” or “adaptability” look like on a day-to-day basis. These concepts may seem abstract and, thus, beyond the grasp of family members with limited understanding of how to attain these qualities. To aid in this understanding, scholars can identify family practices that contribute to broader family cohesion and connectedness. These practical markers can then provide families, practitioners, and policy makers with the building blocks for improving family well-being from day to day. Examples of practices that influence family quality and child outcomes include conflict resolution (Grych, Oxtoby, & Lynn, 2012), inductive parenting (Teti & Candelaria, 2002), and, of particular interest to the present study, time spent in leisure activities (Crosnoe & Trinitapoli, 2008; Crouter, Head, McHale, & Tucker, 2004; Hodge et al., 2015).

Family leisure has typically been defined as “intrinsically motivated activity which is neither instrumental nor goal-oriented” (Shaw, 1997, p. 99). Many studies of family leisure follow a tradition of basis in family systems theory (Hodge et al., 2015), which holds that each member of a family does not function independently but, rather, reciprocally influences the other members as part of an interdependent system (Minuchin, 1985). Family systems theory has led to an increased understanding of how individual functioning is largely a product of relational influences in the family unit, and this perspective provides a compelling argument for how relational leisure activities in families may affect the well-being of each family member, including adolescents.

The extant body of theory and research related to families and, specifically, family leisure, is mostly based in Western culture (Hodge et al., 2015), which provides a narrow view of concepts that may or may not apply elsewhere. As individuals are nested within and influenced by the context of the family, so too are families nested within and influenced by the surrounding cultural context (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The cultural setting of India provides distinct demographic trends, cultural nuances, and norms related to family structure and formation which have not heretofore been considered in relation to leisure at a family or couple level. For example, demographic trends show that India is undergoing many sociocultural changes as it modernizes and grows economically, following many patterns of Western society (Dommaraju, 2016). In other countries, such trends have been coupled with significant changes to the traditional family structure, including increases in divorce (Lesthaeghe, 2011). However, marital dissolution in India, although slowly rising, is still very low with about two percent of marriages ending in divorce (Dommaraju, 2016; Mullatti, 1995). Because of cultural distinctions such as this, we cannot assume that past findings of family leisure research in Western society will remain consistent in Indian society. As India contains approximately one sixth of the world's population according to estimates by the United Nations (2015), bettering our empirical understanding of Indian families and incorporating these findings into policy and intervention efforts has the potential to aid a vast proportion of the world's families.

In what follows, I provide an overview of family systems theory as a framework for the study of couple and family leisure time, as well as a review of the existing research on couple and family leisure. Next, I give an overview of the ecological systems perspective as it pertains to the unique cultural considerations in India that may have bearing upon an investigation of families and leisure time. Then, I briefly highlight the concept of well-being and relevant

research exploring its multidimensional nature. Finally, through a synthesis of the ideas from these areas of research, I introduce the research questions for the present study investigating the relationships between couple and family leisure time and adolescent well-being in India.

### **Family Systems Theory**

In her summary of family systems theory, Minuchin (1985) combined the ideas from family therapists and developmental researchers to describe family systems as a united whole comprised of various interdependent subsystems. These subsystems (e.g., the interparental, executive subsystem and the parent-child subsystem) are defined by flexible boundaries to facilitate both individuation and cohesion. While the family system as a united whole develops across time, the parts within the whole are dialectical in nature, having both homeostatic and dynamic characteristics such that, when one or more parts of the system is manipulated, the other parts must adapt to establish a new homeostatic state incorporating the changes from the manipulated part(s). Minuchin's (1985) work broadens our understanding of contextual influences on development by suggesting that direct influences upon one or more family members are likely to have indirect influences on all other members of the family, even if those members were not directly affected in any way.

From a family systems perspective, we can expect that adolescent well-being is influenced by and influences the interactions among different family members. Specifically, interparental relationships are likely to have meaningful associations with adolescent well-being. Those associations are likely not limited to direct interactions between parents and their adolescent children either, but, rather, it is quite possible that there are indirect associations between adolescent well-being and other interactions in the family system wherein the adolescent is not present, such as the ways in which parents relate to each other in couple leisure

time. Interparental couple relationship qualities, then, can be measured and studied in an attempt to detect particular adolescents who may be at risk for poor well-being outcomes. These findings suggest ways in which couples can improve the relationship among themselves to lead to increasingly positive well-being for their children. On the other hand, these associations between couple relationship qualities and adolescent well-being may run in the opposite direction; it may be that maladaptive qualities which contribute to poor adolescent well-being add strain to couple relationships. The present study addresses leisure time both at the couple (dyadic) level as well as at the family (triadic) level in an attempt to detect how these different subsystems may relate to adolescent well-being.

### **Couple and Family Leisure Time**

In recent decades, scholars have begun to develop an understanding of leisure within couple and family contexts, and its influence on family functioning. For couples, studies have found that higher levels of shared couple time – time spent with both partners engaging together – were associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction (Amato, Lundberg, Ward, Schaalje, & Zabriskie, 2016; Crawford, Houts, Huston, & George, 2002; Orthner & Mancini, 1990). Additionally, findings indicate that higher levels of shared couple time are related to a lower likelihood of divorce for wives (Gager & Sanchez, 2003) and higher levels of more specific, presumably beneficial relationship qualities such as couple attachment, compatibility, commitment (Hill, 1988), relatedness, autonomy, and competence (Amato et al., 2016). These couple-level relationship influences may have a spillover effect upon children consistent with the view that family subsystems are interdependent (Erel & Burman, 1995; Minuchin, 1985). For instance, couple leisure time may strengthen the couple relationship, and parents who are more satisfied with their marital relationships may be better equipped to parent in positive ways, thus

improving the well-being of children (Stapleton & Bradbury, 2012). Furthermore, the family-strengthening effects of couple leisure time and the resulting improved marital relationship may contribute to general improvements in the emotional climate of the family, fostering a greater sense of emotional security within children, which can be a protective factor against negative outcomes for child well-being (Davies & Cummings, 1994).

Research has also found benefits to family leisure for couple, family, and individual outcomes. In regard to shared time among family units, one study indicated that greater amounts of time spent as a family, including time in leisure activities, were related to higher levels of marital love and warmth of fathers (Crouter et al., 2004). Further, higher levels of family leisure time, specifically, are associated with higher levels of family cohesion, adaptability, communication (Hodge et al., 2015), satisfaction with family leisure, and satisfaction with family life (Poff, Zabriskie, & Townsend, 2010).

In addition, family leisure time has shown significant correlations with child and adolescent outcomes. Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) found that frequent participation in core, consistent, everyday family activities (as opposed to novel, occasional activities such as family vacations) was predictive of adolescents' perceptions of family life satisfaction. This suggests that consistency in family leisure interaction provides adolescents with a needed sense of routine, closeness, cohesion, and family identity to navigate the stresses particular to adolescence. A review by Ward and Zabriskie (2011) also suggests that family leisure helps facilitate positive youth development, and a study of Swedish families (Berntsson & Ringsberg, 2014) provided evidence to suggest that higher levels of time spent in family leisure time was associated with better physical and mental health for youth ages 2-17. For adolescents specifically, Crouter et al. (2004) reported longitudinal associations between higher levels of total time spent as a family

and lower levels of depression in firstborn children. One possible avenue through which family leisure time may be linked to these benefits for children is attachment (Crosnoe & Trinitapoli, 2008). As parents spend leisure time with children, the attachment bond may be strengthened, and a long tradition of research supports the idea that securely attached children fare better on measures of well-being than children with insecure attachments (Ainsworth, 1978; Bowlby, 1969/1982). Despite these apparent benefits from family and couple leisure time, the demands of the modern world, including time-consuming occupational commitments, make it increasingly difficult for families to provide time for leisure at the couple or family level in order to reap its benefits (Wight, Raley, & Bianchi, 2008).

Not all research on family leisure finds it to be uniformly beneficial. Shaw (1997) was among the first to draw attention to the nuances of family leisure time. Drawing upon a feminist perspective, she noted that leisure is not always intrinsically motivated, enjoyable, or beneficial for all family members; rather, leisure is often experienced by women as a form of work to meet the expectations of other family members and patriarchal ideals. She posited that children also may not be autonomous in their leisure participation but may participate out of obligation and, therefore, not always find it enjoyable or beneficial. Shaw's arguments have been met with mixed empirical support. For example, using a sample from Taiwan, Chen, Li, and Chen (2013) found that adolescents' leisure involvement was indicative of satisfaction with leisure activities, contradicting the idea that leisure is obligatory and not enjoyed by adolescents. Nevertheless, another study supports Shaw's (1997) arguments about how gender dynamics affect the ways in which different family members experience leisure. In a longitudinal study of heterosexual, married couples, Crawford et al. (2002) found that more time spent in leisure activities only enjoyed by the husband predicted decreases in both spouses' marital satisfaction over ten years

later. The reverse was also true, wives' marital dissatisfaction at time one predicted more time spent in leisure activities only enjoyed by husbands at time two. This suggests that leisure time is both a cause and an effect of satisfaction within marital relationships. Furthermore, another study found that increases in time spent as a family at one time point were related with increases in mothers' depression two years later among less-educated families (Crouter et al., 2004). These findings call into question past assumptions that leisure is universally beneficial, and underscore the complexity of operationally defining leisure.

Because there is much disagreement about how to define leisure throughout research, it is important to understand previous conceptualizations of leisure in order to comprehend the rationale for the definition of leisure used within the present study. As cited in Shaw (1997), Neulinger (1981) defines a traditional view of leisure as something intrinsically motivated, enjoyment-related, and non-purposive. Alternatively, other scholars view leisure as purposive such that parents intentionally plan and engage in leisure activities with hopes to achieve short-term and long-term goals (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Within this goal-oriented perspective, Shaw (1997) posits that, for women especially, leisure can be a form of work as they strive to engage in leisure under a feeling of obligation to the well-being of their families. She argues that, "on the level of individual experience, family leisure can incorporate contradictory meanings and emotions simultaneously. That is, family activities may be leisure and work at the same time, motivations may be a complex mix of intrinsic and obligatory factors, and both positive and negative outcomes may result from any one family leisure situation" (p. 107).

Further, other scholars have defined leisure as simply residual time after excluding a combination of paid work time, housework, or self-care activities (Barnet-Verzat, Pailhé, & Solaz, 2010; Chen et al., 2013). Using similar activity-focused rather than motivation-focused

definitions, some scholars differentiate between active leisure and leisure activities that are more passive such as TV watching (Crosnoe & Trinitapoli, 2008; Crouter et al., 2004; Hansen & Scullard, 2002; Holder, Coleman, & Sehn, 2009). Passive leisure activities and, more specifically, television watching have typically been negatively correlated with well-being (Committee on Public Education, 2001; Hancox, Milne, & Poulton, 2004; Kenney & Gortmaker, 2017), whereas involvement in active leisure activities is generally related to higher levels of well-being (Holder et al., 2009). From the research literature in India, Gupta, Rasania, and Acharya (2014) suggest that television watching is related to lower levels of physical health (as measured by overweight and obesity) for urban adolescents in Delhi.

When evaluating passive leisure time at a family level, however, results are scarcer and more mixed. Crosnoe and Trinitapoli (2008) found that time spent in family television watching predicted lower math achievement across the transition to adolescence, whereas Crouter et al. (2004) found that time spent in family television watching was related to benefits for parents and children: it was significantly positively correlated with maternal and paternal warmth toward children, and negatively correlated at the trend level ( $p < .10$ ) with father's depressive symptoms. These findings indicate that passive leisure, at least at the family level, may be related to both positive and negative outcomes; passive leisure activities may be detrimental for academic achievement, but, for parenting, shared time in passive leisure may facilitate improved mood states for parents which can result in more effective parenting and improved child well-being (National Research Council, 2009; Özdemir, 2012).

The present study follows a residual time, activity-focused approach by defining leisure as active or passive activities which are not paid work, housework, personal care, caregiving, education, or transportation. This definition is effective because it does not imply enjoyment,

purpose, or any other specific motivation for leisure, but rather focuses specifically on a well-defined list of activities. This way, what is defined as leisure for the purposes of this study remains uniform across observations, not varying from person to person based upon what each person considers to be leisurely.

### **Ecological Systems and Cultural Considerations**

Ecological systems perspectives have provided a complex, yet more comprehensive picture of ontogeny as they have been applied increasingly to the study of human development in recent years. These ideas acknowledge the diverse factors that influence humans, both intrinsically and extrinsically. The bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) emphasizes contextual influences on development. According to the model, contextual influences include factors as broad as government, cultural norms, and the media and as immediate as a child's school, family, and peer group. These more immediate factors are known as proximal processes, and they bidirectionally influence individuals to drive the course of development. According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006), interactions between parents and their offspring are among the most important of proximal processes; because parents generally spend more time with children than most other people during the early years of their children's lives, these bidirectional influences have more time to work on and change the developing individuals involved (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Further, these influences from parents last into adolescence despite the growing influence of peers (Steinberg, 2001). This helps explain why a large portion of research has been dedicated to investigating the specific ways in which parents influence their offspring and have an effect on their well-being (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000; Maccoby, 2000; Steinberg, 2001). Nevertheless, examining proximal processes such as parental influences on offspring cannot

provide a complete picture of development until the entirety of an individual's ecology, including broader contextual influences, is also considered (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

As Magnusson and Cairns (1996) point out, however, it can be methodologically difficult or even impossible to account for the entirety of the interactions in an individual's ecology, so they suggest that studies should strive to capture as much of the complexity of an individual's ecology as possible while maintaining a focus for feasibility and accuracy. Following their suggestion, the present study strives to capture not only individual adolescent measures and measures of the family system, but also culturally-informed measures in alignment with past research on the cultural nuances of India. While much has been explored in terms of parental influences on child well-being, findings which do not account for cultural aspects of the individual's ecology are more limited in their generalizability; there remains much that we do not know about the cultural and contextual nuances of factors influencing well-being which can make for individual differences in child outcomes. The present study seeks to address the broader ecology of adolescents by incorporating aspects of the cultural context into the model, which can help to create a more holistic picture<sup>1</sup> of families in the less-researched population of India. The cultural measures used within the present study are relevant due to their potential to affect family functioning (i.e., leisure) in ways that differ from typical patterns of family functioning in Western society. Western models of behavior do not always hold true for individuals with non-Western characteristics. Cultural family differences may create new meaning for family interactions, leading to distinct outcomes. Thus, the present study examines

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<sup>1</sup> Although the present study strives to cast a wider net to "create a more holistic picture" of family leisure, the present study does not presume to capture the entirety of individuals' ecologies as that is methodologically unreasonable for any study to attempt.

three cultural factors which may hold unique meaning for the study of Indian families: norms related to sex-based treatment, marital norms, and the characteristics of adolescence.

Sex preference is a potentially important cultural phenomenon in India. Some work documents that parents hold a preference for sons and will tend to treat them better than daughters (Bharadwaj, Dahl, & Sheth, 2015; Mishra, Rov, & Retherford, 2004). Thus, any potential impact on adolescents from couple or family leisure time may be amplified or attenuated for females as a consequence of the preferential treatment of males. Perhaps leisure time is more meaningful for females as such attention from parents may compensate for deficits in investment from parents in other aspects of their lives. Conversely, couple or family leisure time may have a greater impact for male children than females because parents show preference toward males and, thus, engage more actively and purposefully with them during leisure activities.

A second cultural feature of India is found in the marital norms and courtship practices, which differ considerably from Western cultures. Marital norms are influenced by the joint-family structure in India which plays into the patriarchal society (Allendorf, 2012; Modi & Modi, 1996). At the time of marriage, wives become a part of their husband's family (and not vice versa), and the new couple often lives near them (Rao & Finnoff, 2015); wives effectively leave behind their identity within their family of origin to start a new life with their husbands (Modi & Modi, 1996). Additionally, intermarriages between certain uncle-niece and cousin-cousin combinations are not only permitted, but are often encouraged (Kapadia, 1995). These family dynamics, although not specifically measured in the present study, serve as context for the examination of couple and family leisure time in Indian versus Western families. The present study does, however, measure and consider traditions for finding a spouse as a factor which

could possibly contribute to differential results for leisure time in India. Dating culture is almost non-existent there due to strict norms discouraging romantic interaction between non-married, opposite-sex peers. Consequentially, most marriages in India are arranged by parents or relatives; this trend does not seem to be changing much as India develops (Banjeri et al., forthcoming). Rather, Westernization and education of individuals seems to be contributing to greater involvement of the child in terms of obtaining some degree of consent in regard to a potential arranged spouse; the proportion of choice-based, “love marriages,” as they are commonly called, still remains quite low (Banjeri et al., forthcoming). Additionally, skewed sex ratios in India provide an interesting context that will likely effect the future of marriage patterns in India (Kashyap, Esteve, & García-Román, 2015). Because of the differential nature of choice-based versus arranged marriages, it is possible that couple and family leisure time have meaningfully different effects within each of these types of marriages. Autonomy of choice in a marriage partner may reflect greater autonomy and empowerment for women in general, which relates to Shaw’s (1997) feminist perspective on leisure; perhaps leisure for women in choice-based marriages is less obligatory and more freely chosen for personal enjoyment, making it more beneficial. In addition, choice-based marriages may benefit more from shared leisure time because of the emotionally intimate basis upon which these marriages are presumably built; since spouses chose each other based on love, leisure time may be much more enjoyable for them. Alternatively, arranged marriages may benefit more from couple and family leisure time precisely because they were not built upon an emotionally intimate foundation, so they may have more of a need for family bonding activities to build and strengthen family relationships. The current study will seek to identify whether these differences do exist between arranged and choice-based marriages for leisure time and adolescent well-being.

With regard to cultural considerations related to adolescence in India, it should be noted that there is a paucity of research on adolescence in India, so the cultural nuances of this period of development are not as well-understood in the context of India as within the United States. Prior research in India has focused heavily on children (morbidity, mortality, etc.) as is typical among developing countries. Whereas India has become increasingly developed in recent years and child health has improved (National Institute of Medical Statistics, Indian Council of Medical Research, and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2012), research on the health of young children has decreased in urgency, giving space for researchers to expand their focus to include less vulnerable but equally important populations such as adolescents. Therefore, the present study attempts to shed new light on adolescence in India and add to the emerging body of literature in this area.

In accordance with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), societal norms related to sex, marriage, and adolescence would influence the ecology of development from a macro-level, which can alter the family system and individual development. The present study attempts to account for these cultural nuances to provide a more accurate evaluation of how couple and family leisure time relate to adolescent well-being.

### **Conceptualizing Well-being among Adolescents**

Within the social sciences, scholars have conceptualized well-being as multidimensional in nature. As Howell et al. (2016) note, the World Health Organization has defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Constitution of the World Health Organization, 1946). This definition recognizes three broad dimensions of well-being, and each of these dimensions has been measured and

studied extensively in the medical and social sciences. Through empirical investigation of these dimension, scholars are able to recognize implications for improving each dimension, and there exists a long history of intervention research with solid practical implications for such improvement. These components of well-being may also be related to an overall sense of life satisfaction and happiness, as described by Diener, Lucas, and Scollon (2006). The present study utilizes two of these dimensions to examine adolescent well-being: physical health and mental health. In addition, academic achievement is measured within the present study as another dimension of well-being which shows important implications for adolescents. These three dimensions of well-being are described below.

### **Physical Health**

In the present study, physical health is defined as an absence of sickness (although physical health exists on a broad spectrum and, even among individuals who are not sick, there exist varying degrees of healthiness). Empirical evidence suggests that poor self-rated physical health is associated with lower levels of life satisfaction (Lacruz, Emeny, Baumert, & Ladwig, 2011). Suffering, pain, discomfort, and impaired physical functioning can erode one's quality of life and make one wish for better life circumstances. Nevertheless, it is important to note that not all those who are ill or physically impaired have lower life satisfaction with their lives (Määttä, Hurtig, Taanila, Honkanen, Ebeling, & Koivumaa-Honkanen, 2013); some people may find fulfilment in accepting and taking on the challenges of deficits in physical health. Regardless of one's outlook toward physical health and life satisfaction, physical ailments by nature constitute an inability to function at normal levels in a given aspect of functioning. Since physical ailment constitutes sub-optimal functioning, physical health will serve as one indicator of adolescent well-being in this study.

## **Mental Health**

Adolescent mental health, defined as one's levels of depression or anxiety symptoms, represents the second aspect of well-being examined in the current study. Decades of research have been dedicated to the investigation of the etiology of psychopathology. Couple and family leisure time may be among the environmental factors that, in combination with biological factors, can contribute to the development of mental illness. Past research has suggested that qualities within the family environment do have implications for mental health, and family leisure may function similarly. Interparental conflict, for example, has been found to be associated with anxiety and depression in children (Jekielek, 1998), and some research suggests that positive parental qualities can buffer adolescents from developing mental illness (Bilsky et al., 2013). Thus, couple and family leisure time may be among those positive parental qualities influencing adolescent mental health, and this influence may follow pathways similar to those of interparental conflict as it impacts adolescent well-being. As emphasized by Hinshaw (2013) in describing the concept of equifinality, research has uncovered multiple pathways to similar outcomes in psychopathology; in other words, two individuals might develop the same mental disorder on account of different biological and/or environmental factors, so exploring couple and family leisure time as potential environmental predictors of mental illness can add to a more holistic understanding of the etiology of anxiety and depression.

Although mental illness is not the only component to consider in assessing mental well-being (i.e., the absence of mental illness is not necessarily mental wellness), the present study provides a good starting point by assessing unique new data on adolescent anxiety and depression in India. Both anxiety and depression can, in many cases, be associated with a lower overall sense of well-being in adolescents (Antaramian, Scott Huebner, Hills, & Valois, 2010).

As the field of adolescent research in India becomes more saturated, further research can be dedicated to gathering more thorough indicators of adolescent mental health.

### **Academic Achievement**

The third and final aspect of adolescent well-being examined in the present study is academic achievement, defined as adolescent performance on standard school examinations. Within the United States, higher levels of academic achievement have been found to be associated with positive outcomes in later life such as higher earnings and lower divorce rates, among other outcomes (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). For adolescents in India, parents highly encourage academic achievement (Sriram & Sandhu, 2013), and studies have shown positive correlational relationships between study habits and social competence (Roma & RituBakashi, 2015) and self-esteem and academic achievement (Vishalakshi & Yeshodhara, 2012) among Indian secondary school students.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The combination of past research on couple and family leisure time from a family systems perspective, the insight from an ecological perspective on cultural considerations within the context of India, and past research on various dimensions of well-being lead to important questions to help advance empirical study and understanding of the workings of Indian families. The present study utilizes measures of couple and family leisure time novel to the area of study, measures of adolescent well-being, and culturally-sensitive information on gender, caste, and marriage to shed more light on whether these past theories and research findings hold true within a less-researched context. As such, I investigated the following research questions:

*(1) Is there a relationship between the amount of family leisure time (active or passive) families engage in and adolescent well-being, specifically (a) physical health? (b) mental*

*health? (c) academic achievement?* Drawing on the prior research on leisure, I predicted that higher levels of active family leisure time would be associated with higher levels in each dimension of well-being, but that higher levels of passive family leisure time would be associated with lower levels of physical health, mental health, and academic achievement.

*(2) Is there a relationship between the amount of leisure time (active or passive) that couples spend together and the dimensions of adolescent well-being?* Here, I hypothesized that couple leisure time would follow the same patterns of correlation with adolescent well-being as family leisure time, such that higher levels of active couple leisure time would be positively correlated with higher levels of physical health, mental health, and academic achievement but that passive couple leisure time would be negatively correlated with well-being measures.

*(3) Are these potential relationships between leisure time and adolescent well-being different based on marriage type (arranged versus choice-based)? Sex of the adolescent?* For marriage type, I predicted that couple and family leisure time would be more salient correlates of adolescent well-being for choice-based marriages than arranged marriages, as such time spent together may indicate emotional intimacy shared by these choice-based couples which may not be as commonly present among arranged marriage couples. Furthermore, women within choice-based marriages may have greater autonomy of choice in leisure activities within their families, making these activities more enjoyable for them, which may, in turn, more powerfully influence adolescent well-being. For adolescent sex, I hypothesized that leisure time would be more strongly correlated with adolescent well-being for boys versus girls, as boys are often preferred to girls, so parents may be more invested in the time they spend with boys.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

Participants for this study came from the South India Community Health Study (SICHS) and were selected based on a random sample from a census of all households in rural areas of Vellore District, Tamil Nadu, India. Family interviews were conducted to create a household roster for all individuals residing in a household and to collect demographic information (name, age, relationship to male primary respondent, anthropometry, etc.). Then, in-depth interviews were conducted with the male primary respondent, the spouse of the male primary respondent, and adolescent children. Only married couples with adolescent children who completed an interview were included in the sample for the present study, and a small number (20) of polygamous households and households with more than one male primary respondent (which could not be matched to their own adolescent children within the household) were excluded, resulting in a final sample of 1,355 households. Male primary respondents ranged in age from 30 to 65 ( $M = 43.39$ ,  $SD = 5.88$ ), spouses ranged in age from 24 to 56 ( $M = 36.55$ ,  $SD = 4.95$ ), and adolescent children ranged from age 11 to 17 ( $M = 13.86$ ,  $SD = 1.96$ ).

#### **Procedures**

Interviewers were trained in data collection procedures at Christian Medical College in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. Over the course of several months, trained interviewers visited the villages and homes of each participant. After first obtaining verbal and written consent (including thumb stamps for people unable to sign their name), interviewers collected names and

basic information for each household member and took anthropometric measurements. Either during the same visit or upon return visits, male interviewers conducted approximately 30-minute-long interviews following a multi-subject questionnaire with each household's male primary respondent. Female interviewers followed similar questionnaires for interviews with spouses of male primary respondents. Adolescent interviews were also conducted by a same-sex interviewer. Conducting interviews with same-sex interviewers was necessary to create a comfortable situation for participants given prevalent gender norms in India.

## **Measures**

### **Couple and Family Leisure Time**

The measures of couple leisure time and family leisure time are both derived from time diary data using a 24-hour recall method. These measures were collected as part of each interview with male primary respondents, spouses, and adolescents. For this portion of the interview, participants were asked to list the activities in which they engaged from midnight “yesterday” to midnight “this morning” and determine what time they started and ended each activity. They then listed any household members (up to four) with whom they interacted during the activity or any children or sick or disabled adults whom they helped or “kept an eye on.” Interviewers were trained to probe regarding whether participants were interacting with anyone else for each activity.

Responses were later coded according to a list of 64 activities, 17 of which were used as indicators of leisure for the current study. To distinguish between more active and more passive leisure, these 17 activities were divided into two groups. Those activities included within “active leisure” required more engagement, interaction, or effortful participation. Active leisure consisted of 14 activity codes: “playing with,” “talking with,” “reading to or with,” “outdoor

sports, exercise, play, recreation, sightseeing,” “attending social events, wedding, festival, ceremony,” “religious and spiritual group activities,” “socializing/chatting,” “telephone/mobile,” “radio, listening to music” (included as active because it is likely done in conjunction with conversation), “reading book, magazine, newspaper,” “cinema, theater” (included as active because it is a group outing, which implies more interaction) “indoor sports, play, recreation,” “caring for or playing with pets,” and “relaxing (no TV, videos, etc.).” A second group of three activities indicated passive leisure, which requires less interaction between participants. These activities were “TV or videos/movies,” “video games (computer, mobile),” and “computer/internet, social media (not including games).” In each of these three activities, most interaction is between a participant and an electronic device, rather than human interaction between participants.

For the analyses in the present study, the measures of leisure time from the male primary respondents’ (fathers’) perspectives were utilized [measured at the dyadic (parent-parent) and triadic (parent-parent-child) levels] rather than the spouses’ or adolescents’ perspectives, which were not available for analysis at the time of the present study. Therefore, male primary respondents’ active leisure time with their spouses (dyadic/couple leisure) ranged from 0 to 29 hours ( $M = 2.23$ ,  $SD = 3.03$ ) and their passive couple leisure time ranged from 0 to 7 hours ( $M = .28$ ,  $SD = .82$ ). Participants could list more than one activity for any given time, which explains how a participant could have more than 24 hours of leisure within a 24-hour period. Couple leisure time did not include time the couple spent together wherein children were also listed as engaging in the activity; such triadic time was excluded because it is captured within the measure of family leisure time.

For family leisure (triadic – both parents and their adolescent child), male primary respondents spent an average of .26 hours in active leisure ( $SD = 1.00$ , range = 0 to 13.98) and an average of .51 hours in passive leisure ( $SD = 1.13$ , range = 0 to 13.83).

### **Adolescent Well-being**

Adolescent well-being was divided into three domains: physical health, mental health (indicated by two separate measures: anxiety and depression), and academic achievement.

**Adolescent Physical Health.** To ascertain the presence or absence physical health problems, interviewers asked spouses/mothers, “Was [child name] sick or injured in the last 12 months?” to which respondents could answer “yes” (49%) or “no” (51%). This question was asked for each child in the household, and the present study utilizes the responses regarding the adolescents who also completed individual interviews.

**Adolescent Mental Health.** Both depression and anxiety were measured for adolescents to assess mental health problems. For depression, interviewers used translations of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996). The BDI includes 20 items capturing common symptoms of depression (e.g., sadness, sense of failure, guilty feeling, fatigability, irritability, etc.). For each series of statements, respondents are asked to choose only one response which they feel best describes themselves, and each statement corresponds to a score between 0 and 3. For example, regarding “Sadness,” respondents selected from the following statements: “0 - I do not feel sad,” “1 - I feel blue or sad,” “2a - I am blue or sad all the time and I can’t snap out of it,” “2b - I am so sad or unhappy that it is very painful,” and “3 - I am so sad or unhappy that I can’t stand it.” The corresponding scores for each selected statement were summed to create a depression scale with an absolute range from 0 to 60. Responses ranged from

0 to 40 with an average score of 5.27 ( $SD = 5.20$ )<sup>2</sup>. Reliability for this measure was adequate, as indicated by the Cronbach's alpha (.78).

For anxiety, interviewers used the 41-item Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED) (Birmaher et al., 1997). Participants responded to items on a three-point Likert-type scale, with 0 indicating "not true or hardly ever true," 1 indicating "somewhat true or sometimes true," and 2 indicating "very true or often true." Item examples include "People tell me that I look nervous," "I worry about things working out for me," and "I get really frightened for no reason at all." Scores for each item were summed, and overall scores could range from 0 to 82. Participants actual scores ranged from 0 to 53 ( $M = 12.84$ ,  $SD = 7.05$ )<sup>3</sup>. This scale evidenced adequate reliability in the current sample ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

***Adolescent Academic Achievement.*** Information on adolescent academics was collected during interviews with spouses of male primary respondents (mothers). Mothers were asked the question: "What were the overall marks [on secondary school exams]?" "Marks" or grades ranged from 140 to 497 ( $M = 342.96$ ,  $SD = 80.63$ ). It should be noted that this measure included a large number of respondents missing data (missing = 922), of which 790 were below the typical age at which students take the exam (age 15). For the remaining 132 respondents, some may be students who simply had not reached the point in their fifteenth year when exams are administered, while others may be lower-achieving adolescents who did not complete enough education to take the exam, whether because of dropping out or getting held-back in school. In considering results, analyses of the relationship between leisure time and academic achievement

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that less than 3% of adolescents responded in a manner above the threshold for clinically significant distress on the BDI (a score of 19 or an answer indicating suicidality).

<sup>3</sup> For the SCARED measure of anxiety, only 3% of adolescents rose to the minimum threshold for referral to treatment, equal to a score of 25.

are only for the sub-sample of respondents who completed the 10<sup>th</sup> standard examination ( $N = 435$ ).

### **Marriage Type**

To test the third research question regarding whether different types of marriages reflect different outcomes of leisure time, the present study uses a measure assessing different types of marriages based on arrangement versus choice and the degree of input from the child/parent in arrangements/choices. This measure comes from a question to male primary respondents (fathers) which asks “Who chose your wife?” Possible answers are “parents/relatives chose, asked your opinion,” “parents/relatives chose, did not ask your opinion,” “you chose, parents/relatives consented,” “you chose, parents/relatives did not consent,” and “you chose, did not ask parents/relatives.” However, preliminary analyses indicated very few responses in three of the five categories (less than 2.5% each for the categories “parents/relatives chose, did not ask your opinion,” “you chose, parents/relatives did not consent,” and “you chose, did not ask parents/relatives”), so responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable with “0” indicating that “parents/relatives chose” (with any degree of child input) (68%), “1” indicating “you chose” (with any degree of parent/relative input) (14%), and the remaining 18% were missing data for this item.

### **Adolescent Sex**

Sex of the adolescent children was also used for the third research question to test for moderation between leisure time and adolescent outcomes. A response of female was coded as “0” (48%) and a response of male was coded as “1” (52%).

## Control Variables

A number of potential confounding variables were included within the full analysis model, including adolescent sex (described above), age of both parents, age of the adolescent, household income, and mother's education. For household income, interviewers asked male primary respondents to list all people within the household who worked for income in the previous four weeks and then to list each person's income during those four weeks in Indian Rupees. Income from each household member was totaled to create the measure of overall household income, which ranged from 200 Indian Rupees (approximately \$3.09 in United States Dollars) to 100,000 Indian Rupees (equal to approximately \$1,543.05 in United States Dollars) ( $M = 8,825.26$ ,  $SD = 8,451.68$ ).

Mother's level of education was used because of the bearing it has on autonomy and economic potential within the highly-gendered context of India (Dommaraju, 2016). Not only might mother's education indicate a higher socioeconomic status, but it may also indicate more freedom of choice within family activities such as leisure. Educational attainment ranged from no formal education to completion of Standard 9, but, since Standard 8 is a significant milestone in the Tamil Nadu education system (completion of "upper primary" school), responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable with "0" indicating any level of education below Standard 8 (78%) and "1" indicating completion of Standard 8 or above (22%).

## **Chapter 3**

### **Results**

#### **Family Leisure Time and Adolescent Well-being**

The first research question for this study asked whether the number of hours spent in family leisure time among the triad of fathers, mothers, and adolescent children would be related to the four measures of adolescent well-being. This was first tested by estimating correlations between family leisure time, both active and passive, and the measures of physical health, mental health (both anxiety and depression), and academic achievement. Results of the correlation analyses are shown in Table 1. Neither active nor passive family leisure were significantly correlated with any of the adolescent well-being outcomes. Due to the lack of correlation between variables of interest for this question, no further analyses were conducted to incorporate control variables and attempt to account for selection effects.

#### **Couple Leisure Time and Adolescent Well-being**

After examining the effects of family leisure, I next investigated potential relationships between the number of hours of leisure spent at the couple level (father and mother together, without their adolescent child) and adolescent well-being. Similar to the first research question, correlations were computed to examine the relationships between the number of hours spent in active couple leisure, passive couple leisure, and all four measures of adolescent well-being. These results are reported in Table 2.

Of the couple leisure variables, passive couple leisure time was significantly correlated with three adolescent outcomes. First, greater amounts of time spent in passive couple leisure

Table 1

*Correlations between Family Leisure Time and Adolescent Well-being*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Active Family Leisure Time	-					
2. Passive Family Leisure Time	.006	-				
3. Sickness in Last 12 Months	.021	-.018	-			
4. Anxiety	.054	.013	.074*	-		
5. Depression	.039	.033	.027	.607**	-	
6. Academic Achievement	-.006	.039	.075	-.066	-.194**	-

Note: \*p < .05; \*\* p < .01

Table 2

*Correlations between Couple Leisure Time and Adolescent Well-being*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Active Couple Leisure Time	-					
2. Passive Couple Leisure Time	.014	-				
3. Sickness in Last 12 Months	.032	-.077*	-			
4. Anxiety	.050	-.096*	.074*	-		
5. Depression	.006	-.085*	.027	.607**	-	
6. Academic Achievement	-.072	.023	.075	-.066	-.194**	-

Note: \*p < .05; \*\* p < .01

were related to higher levels of physical health as manifested by fewer occurrences of sickness within the previous 12 months [ $r(896) = -.08, p = .021$ ]. Second, more time in passive couple leisure was negatively correlated with scores on the measure of anxiety, with  $r(696) = -.10, p = .012$ . Lastly, with greater amounts of passive couple leisure between parents, adolescents were less likely to score high on the measure of depression, as shown by an  $r(697) = -.09, p = .025$ . Although these correlations were small, they each demonstrated significance at the  $p < .05$  level. None of the measures of active couple leisure time were significantly correlated with adolescent outcomes, nor was passive couple leisure time significantly correlated with academic achievement.

Next, the significant correlational relationships between couple leisure time and adolescent well-being were tested more rigorously using regression analyses that incorporated control variables with the previously correlated variables of leisure and adolescent well-being.

The first regression equation was computed to evaluate the relationship between passive couple leisure time and physical health (see Table 3). This regression equation was built in two steps. In the first step, the control variables (adolescent sex, age of each parent, age of the adolescent, spouse's/mother's education, household income, and marriage type) were entered as predictor variables. At step one, results indicated that the overall model was not significant,  $F(7, 773) = 1.82, p = .081$ , which indicates that the control variables did not account for a significant proportion of variance in the outcome variable of physical health. However, the addition of passive couple leisure time at step two, resulted in a statistically significant equation,  $F(8, 772) = 2.36, p = .017$ , and passive couple leisure time was significant ( $\beta = -.09, p = .014$ ). Thus, after accounting for the study's control variables, higher levels of passive couple leisure time were

Table 3

*Regression Model with Sickness in Last 12 Months as Dependent Variable*

Step 1	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Sig.
$R^2 = .016$			
Spouse Age	-.104	.006	.071
MPR Age	-.001	.005	.985
Adolescent Sex	.039	.036	.280
Adolescent Age	-.020	.010	.606
Marriage Type	-.046	.049	.209
Mother's Edu.	-.032	.045	.381
Income	.006	.006	.876
<b>Step 2</b>			
$\Delta R^2 = .008$			
Passive Couple Leisure Time	-.088*	.020	.014

*Note:* Values reported are standardized  $\beta$ . \* $p < .05$

Table 4

*Regression Model with Adolescent Anxiety as Dependent Variable*

Step 1	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Sig.
$R^2 = .017$			
Spouse Age	.054	.090	.391
MPR Age	-.044	.075	.484
Adolescent Sex	.044	.567	.269
Adolescent Age	.104*	.189	.014
Marriage Type	.032	.798	.425
Mother's Edu.	.047	.697	.252
Income	-.013	.000	.750
<b>Step 2</b>			
$\Delta R^2 = .012$			
Passive Couple Leisure Time	-.112**	.301	.005

*Note:* Values reported are standardized  $\beta$ . \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

associated with lower levels of adolescent physical health problems. This same analytic procedure was followed for anxiety and depression.

The second regression analysis was computed to evaluate the relationship between passive couple leisure time and anxiety (see Table 4). This equation was again built in two steps. In the first step, control variables (adolescent sex, age of each parent, age of the adolescent, spouse's/mother's education, household income, and marriage type) were entered as predictor variables. This overall model was not significant at step one [ $F(7, 616) = 1.51, p = .16$ ]. Adding passive couple leisure time to the model at step two resulted in a statistically significant equation [ $F(8, 615) = 2.33, p = .018$ ], and passive couple leisure time was significant ( $\beta = -.11, p = .005$ ). Beyond the effects of control variables, higher levels of passive leisure time were significantly associated with lower levels of adolescent anxiety.

Lastly, a third regression equation was estimated to evaluate the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent depression. Results can be seen in Table 5. Again, control variables (adolescent sex, age of each parent, age of the adolescent, spouse's/mother's education, household income, and marriage type) were entered as predictor variables in the first of two steps. At step one, the overall model was not statistically significant [ $F(7, 617) = 1.93, p = .063$ ], although the model approached the .05 level of significance. At step two, passive couple leisure time was added to the model, which resulted in a statistically significant equation [ $F(8, 616) = 2.35, p = .017$ ], and passive couple leisure time was also significant ( $\beta = -.09, p = .023$ ). Independently of control variables, greater amounts of time spent in passive couple leisure time significantly related to lower levels of adolescent depression.

Table 5

*Regression Model with Adolescent Depression as Dependent Variable*

<b>Step 1</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .021			
Spouse Age	.031	.067	.623
MPR Age	-.044	.056	.474
Adolescent Sex	.089*	.420	.026
Adolescent Age	.086*	.140	.040
Marriage Type	.010	.587	.807
Mother's Edu.	.046	.516	.261
Income	-.071	.000	.081
<b>Step 2</b>			
$\Delta R^2 = .009$			
Passive Couple Leisure Time	-.091*	.224	.023

*Note:* Values reported are standardized  $\beta$ . \* $p < .05$

### Marriage Type and Sex of Adolescent as Moderators

#### Marriage Type as Moderator

The final research question for the present study asked whether potential relationships between family or couple leisure time and adolescent well-being might be moderated by marriage type or adolescent sex. To test this question for moderation by marriage type, interaction terms were computed using standardized scores for active couple leisure time X marriage type, passive couple leisure time X marriage type, active family leisure time X marriage type, and passive family leisure time X marriage type. Regression equations were then estimated for each of the interaction terms. These equations incorporated an interaction term and its component variables as independent variables for each of the adolescent outcomes (physical

health, anxiety, depression, and academic achievement) as dependent variables. However, none of these regression equations resulted in a statistically significant interaction effect, so marriage type did not appear to moderate the relationship between any of the leisure time variables and any of the adolescent well-being variables.

### **Adolescent Sex as Moderator**

Similarly to the analyses for marriage type, to evaluate the moderating effect of sex, interaction terms were computed using standardized scores for active couple leisure time X adolescent sex, passive couple leisure time X adolescent sex, active family leisure time X adolescent sex, and passive family leisure time X adolescent sex. Regression equations were estimated to evaluate whether adolescent sex moderated the relationships between couple leisure time (active or passive) and adolescent well-being (physical health, anxiety, depression, and academic achievement) and between family leisure time (active or passive) and adolescent well-being (physical health, anxiety, depression, and academic achievement). For each relationship, the interaction term and its component variables were entered as predictor variables. Only one relationship, examining the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement, showed a statistically significant interaction effect (see Table 6). Passive couple leisure time, adolescent sex, and standardized scores of passive couple leisure time X adolescent sex were entered into the equation as predictor variables. This resulted in a statistically significant overall model [ $F(3, 293) = 5.30, p = .001$ ], and the interaction term was also statistically significant ( $\beta = .157, p = .008$ ). This result suggests that adolescent sex significantly moderated the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement.

Table 6

*Regression Model with Adolescent Academic Achievement as Dependent Variable*

	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
$R^2 = .051$			
Passive Couple Leisure Time	.001	6.151	.983
Adolescent Sex	-.162	10.168	.005
Passive Couple Leisure Time X Adolescent Sex	.157*	5.115	.008

*Note:* Values reported are standardized  $\beta$ . \* $p < .05$

To further explore the moderating effect of adolescent sex on the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement, the data file was split by adolescent sex, and correlations were estimated between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement. This resulted in a significant correlation for female adolescents only between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement [ $r(144) = -.165, p = .049$ ], whereas the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement was not significantly correlated for male adolescents [ $r(153) = .156, p = .054$ ].

## **Chapter 4**

### **Discussion**

The present study sought to gain insight regarding the relationships between couple and family leisure time and adolescent well-being within the context of South India, where these relationships have not been empirically explored previously. The first two research questions inquired whether family leisure time or couple leisure time related to the well-being of adolescents. In accordance with findings of previous studies, I hypothesized that higher levels of active leisure time (couple or family) would correlate with higher levels of physical health, mental health, and academic achievement in adolescents, but that higher levels of passive couple leisure time would related to lower levels on the same measures of adolescent well-being. These hypotheses were not supported. Findings from the analyses indicated that greater amounts of time that parents spent in passive couple leisure activities such as TV watching, video games, and computer interaction were significantly associated with higher levels of adolescent physical health and lower levels on measures of anxiety and depression. These relationships remained significant even when controlling for sex of the adolescent, age of each parent, age of the adolescent, spouse's/mother's education, household income, and marriage type. However, no significant relationship was found for passive couple leisure time and academic achievement. Furthermore, no significant relationships were found between active couple leisure time and adolescent well-being outcomes, or between family leisure time (either active or passive) and adolescent well-being outcomes.

The significant findings that passive couple leisure time is associated with better adolescent well-being point to important potential implications for family life in India, which

differ from previous findings within Western contexts. Past research conducted in Western cultural contexts has indicated that time spent in passive leisure activities is generally related to lower levels of well-being (Committee on Public Education, 2001; Hancox, Milne, & Poulton, 2004; Holder et al., 2009; Kenney & Gortmaker, 2017). In the present study, however, passive couple leisure time was correlated with higher levels of physical health and mental health. This indicates that passive leisure time may play a different role within a relational context than an individual context, as most of the previous negative findings looked solely at individual time spent watching television. Whereas sitting alone watching television might relate to negative outcomes, watching television with a spouse may be beneficial similarly to how family television watching was correlated with beneficial outcomes in Crouter et al. (2004).

In addition, the correlations between passive couple leisure time and higher levels of adolescent physical and mental health may indicate that leisure functions differently within Indian families due to their qualitative differences from families within Western society. Indeed, Verma and Larson (2002) provided evidence to suggest that television watching is more often done with other family members in India than it is in the United States, which reflects the high cultural importance given to family relationships in India. This may also indicate that television watching holds different meaning for Indian families than for families within the U.S. The results of Verma and Larson's (2002) analyses indicated that television watching is an opportunity for relaxation as a family unit. These conclusions, along with the findings of the present study, support the argument that we cannot assume that past findings related to marriage and family functioning from studies conducted in Western nations and conceptualized using Western family ideals will apply within the cultural context of India (Allendorf, 2012). The

unique dynamics of family structure and function in India necessitate that more research be done to create paradigms and research models which will be culturally-informed and appropriate for Indian context.

There are various possible interpretations for the finding that passive couple leisure time related to higher levels of adolescent physical and mental health. It is possible that the time spent by couples in passive leisure activities within this sample is leading to improved well-being for their adolescent children. There may be bonding and emotional closeness attained during passive couple leisure time which improve the warmth of parenting (Crouter et al., 2004) and the general emotional climate of the family, making it easier for adolescents to thrive in terms of physical and mental health as they experience emotional security in family life (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Perhaps this leisure time, due to its passive nature, gives these couples time to decompress from daily stressors (Caldwell, 2005; Verma & Larson, 2002), which then spills over into less stressful parenting (Erel & Burman, 1995). In this regard, passive couple leisure activities might have a more powerful effect than active couple leisure time within this sample because many of the activities included within the active couple leisure measure require more commitment, planning, and purpose on the part of couples which could indicate that these activities are more obligatory and do not alleviate stress for the couples (Shaw, 1997).

On the other hand, it may be that the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent well-being runs in the opposite direction (Caldwell, 2005). Where adolescents are healthier, both physically and mentally, parents may be more at liberty to spend relaxing time together in passive couple leisure activities simply because they are not required to dedicate as much time to caring for their adolescent child's physical and mental health needs. It also may be

that adolescents with a more positive emotional state influence parents to interact more positively with each other and seek out time to share in passive couple leisure activities.

In this study, the findings indicate that time spent in triadic, family leisure activities, either active or passive, was not correlated with adolescent well-being outcomes. The average amount of time spent in family leisure activities was quite small (about 30 minutes for passive leisure and 15 minutes for active leisure), so the limited amount of variability in the measure could be making it difficult to detect meaningful differences. Additionally, the lack of significant results for family leisure time may stem from the cultural context of the sample within the present study. Although this cannot be concluded from the null finding in the present study, it may be that family leisure time is less influential within a non-Western context. Whereas family leisure time is widely sought after within Western nations with their child-centeredness and focus on family togetherness (Daly, 2001), it may not be held with the same degree of importance by Indian families. This lack of idealization may make family leisure time less influential for adolescent well-being outcomes. Alternatively, it may be that the measure of family leisure in the current study, while quite similar to measures used previously in Western contexts, fails to capture the unique qualities of family leisure activities within South Indian cultural norms. In fact, many of the measures used within this study (i.e., BDI, SCARED) originated within Western contexts, and, even though they were chosen in consultation with Indian scholars and were translated into the native languages spoken within Tamil Nadu, they may not have captured the concepts they attempted to measure as adequately as measures developed specifically for the Indian context might have done.

The final research question asked whether marriage type (arranged versus choice-based) or the sex of adolescents acted as moderators for any of the relationships between couple or family leisure time and measures of adolescent well-being. Of sixteen interaction analyses testing moderation for either marriage type or adolescent sex, only one showed statistical significance. Adolescent sex moderated the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement, such that passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement were more strongly correlated for female adolescents than for males. This contradicted the hypothesis that such relationships would be stronger for male adolescents than for females. Generally speaking, though, couple leisure time did not have significantly different associations with outcomes of adolescent well-being for females versus males or for arranged versus choice-based marriages. Out of sixteen tests of interaction effects, only one showed significance, which is very near to five percent and, thus, potentially due to random chance. However, the one exception where moderation was found to be statistically significant is worth noting for its potential implications. Perhaps female adolescents, due to their profound obligations to sacrifice for their spouses when it comes time for them to marry (Modi & Modi, 1996), are more sensitive to the state of their parents' marital relationships, and this sensitivity may result in improvements or declines in academic achievement based upon the time they see their parents spend together. Children's perceptions of their parents' relationship qualities have been shown to have significant relationships with their own adjustment (Grych, Seid, & Fincham, 1992). An alternative explanation for the moderating effect of adolescent sex could be that the academic success of female adolescents may reflect more egalitarian views held by

parents who are encouraging of their daughters' education. Parents with more egalitarian views may also be more likely to value and make time for shared activities as a couple.

For the remaining tests of adolescent sex as a moderator, which failed to show significant results for adolescent females versus adolescent males, findings are somewhat surprising based on previous evidence of son preference within parent-child interactions (Bharadwaj et al., 2015; Mishra et al., 2004). Past evidence of parents treating male children preferentially to female children might suggest that time spent in triadic family leisure would be of a higher quality for male adolescent children, which could relate to higher levels of adolescent well-being for males versus females. It could also be that family leisure time plays a compensatory role for the inferior treatment of females in other spheres of their lives, which may result in stronger correlations between family leisure time and adolescent well-being for females versus males. However, in the current study, neither of these hypotheses seemed to be the case. While son preference might still exist within these families through allocation of material resources, it did not appear to exist through family leisure time.

For tests of marriage type as a moderator, findings failed to support the hypothesis that relationships between couple or family leisure time and adolescent well-being would be stronger for choice-based marriages versus arranged marriages. From a Western perspective where arranged marriages are uncommon, it may be suspected that arranged marriages would be meaningfully different from choice-based marriages. Perhaps leisure time would have weaker effects within arranged marriages due to a lack of emotional intimacy within the couple relationship or due to a lesser degree of female autonomy within these marriages. Alternatively, perhaps leisure time would have stronger effects in arranged marriages because such time spent

together might compensate for and build emotional closeness more drastically among these couples than among couples in choice-based marriages who may already share that emotional bond. Notwithstanding these postulations, arranged marriages do not seem to be significantly different from choice-based marriages in regard to leisure time; perhaps a society where arranged marriages are normative allows for those marriages to function similarly to choice-based marriages, even if that seems improbable from the perspective of those within societies where arranged marriages are not normative.

This study makes several contributions to the current literature. First, this study utilized unique data from a large sample of households within rural Vellore District, Tamil Nadu. A review of past literature produced no previously published studies using time diary data within the same South Indian region, and, furthermore, the literature review only produced three previous studies (Lloyd, Grant, & Ritchie, 2008; Modi & Modi, 1996; Singhal & Siddhu, 2014) of leisure time in India, none of which evaluated leisure time using the same dyadic (couple leisure) versus triadic (family leisure) approach. Thus, the present study provides an initial glimpse into the nature of couple and family leisure time (phenomena studied relatively substantially within the United States and other Western nations) in South India, which is unique in many respects. Indian families, particularly, are characterized by a number of different qualities which differ from Western norms (i.e., arranged marriages, joint-family structure, intermarriages, prevalent sex-based preferential treatment, etc.), and each of these cultural norms could theoretically impact the relationships between couple and family leisure time and adolescent well-being outcomes from an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Nevertheless, regardless of their structural differences in India, family systems perspectives hold that families still function through systemic interactions demonstrating interdependence between the various family members and family relationships (sub-systems within the greater family system; Minuchin, 1985). This family systems approach is a second major contribution of the present study as it provides a more accurate picture of correlates of adolescent well-being. Adolescents do not exist in a vacuum with only external forces influencing them unidirectionally, but rather they compose one piece of an interconnected family system, which influences them directly and indirectly, and which they influence directly and indirectly. However, from all studies reviewed on the topic of leisure in India, none utilized a family systems approach, and all focused on the individual experience within leisure activities (Lloyd et al., 2008; Modi & Modi, 1996; Singhal & Siddhu, 2014).

As a third contribution to the research literature, this study utilized a multidimensional definition of adolescent well-being. Previous well-being research (Howell et al., 2016) supported the conceptualization of well-being within three different dimensions: physical well-being, mental well-being, and social well-being. Many studies only focus on one of these dimensions, but the present study also examined three dimensions of well-being (physical health, mental health, and academic achievement). Through examination of these three dimensions together, the current study captured a more holistic view of the well-being of adolescents within the sample and how that well-being varied in association with higher or lower levels of couple and family leisure time.

Implications of this study should only be interpreted within the context of the study limitations. Due to the cross-sectional nature of this study, directionality cannot be assumed

within the significant relationships between passive couple leisure time and adolescent physical and mental health, nor can the relationships be attributed to a direct, causal effect. It is possible that the relationships between passive couple leisure time and adolescent well-being are spurious in nature. Important variables may have been omitted from the analyses that could explain the impact of couple leisure time on adolescent well-being. Further, study data were also limited by weaknesses in various measures. Some measures were not developed specifically for the cultural context under examination, as mentioned previously. In addition, the measures of leisure time were taken from the male primary respondents' perspectives, and I was unable to test whether significant differences existed for how spouses or adolescent children reported their time spent in leisure activities. Perhaps results would have been different if evaluated from a different family member's perspective. Further, the measure of adolescent academic achievement only included a sub-sample of adolescents who took the secondary school examination; while most missing data for this measure came from adolescents not old enough to take the examination, a significant amount of missing data likely included the lowest achieving adolescents who were old enough to take the examination but failed to do so. Lastly, while 24-hour recall data provide a fairly accurate picture of actual rather than longer term recall data (Robinson, 1985/1999 as cited in Stalker, 2011), these time-use measures did not provide any indication of the quality of such shared time. Leisure time may not be beneficial if it requires too much effort of certain individuals (i.e., women), feels obligatory, or is a source of conflict (Shaw, 1997). If spending time together as a couple or family is having detrimental effects, more of that time is likely to only be more harmful. However, regardless of these limitations, the current study provides important contributions to existing research, as well as insight into avenues for future study.

In summary, this study synthesized the findings and ideas from past leisure research, family and ecological systems perspectives, and well-being research to evaluate relationships between couple and family leisure time and adolescent well-being in India, with particular attention to important cultural dynamics, which may have affected results. Specifically, marriage type (choice-based versus arranged) and adolescent sex were evaluated as potential moderators between couple and family leisure time and adolescent well-being. Findings indicated significant results for passive couple leisure time and three adolescent well-being outcomes, while the remaining leisure variables showed no significant relationships with any of the domains of adolescent well-being. Adolescent sex moderated the relationship between passive couple leisure time and adolescent academic achievement, suggesting that this relationship is stronger for female adolescents than for males. Nevertheless, adolescent sex did not moderate any of the other relationships between couple or family leisure time and adolescent well-being, nor did marriage type show any significant moderating effects. These findings can be used as a starting point for further research into couple and family leisure time in India, where these concepts have hardly been studied. After further research, including culturally-sensitive measures and longitudinal designs, to increase understanding of how leisure time functions in India, findings can potentially be used to influence policy and intervention efforts to strengthen family relationships and improve adolescent well-being.

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## EDUCATION

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- 2017 **Bachelor of Science Degree with Honors**, Human Development and Family Studies (Expected)  
*Penn State, Schreyer Honors College*, University Park, PA  
Minor: Spanish
- 2011 **Associate of Arts**, General Studies  
*Weber State University*, Ogden, UT

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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- 11/14-present **Prevention Educator**, *Centre County Women's Resource Center*, State College, PA
- Gave presentations about violence prevention to school and community groups.
  - Organized outreach campaigns to spread awareness of victims' issues and services.
  - Completed extensive training to become a certified domestic violence/rape crisis counselor/advocate.
- Summer 2015 **Supervised Visitation Monitor**, *Child Access Center*, Bellefonte, PA
- Provided supervision of parental visits and custody exchanges for families with a history of abuse.
- 9/14-5/15 **Day Care Aide**, *Wonderland Day Care*, State College, PA
- Supervised and cared for children at an after-school day care program.
- Summer 2014 **House Parent**, *Family Support and Treatment Center*, Orem, UT
- Cared for children's physical and emotional needs while their parents were in therapy, group classes, high-stress situations, or crises.
  - Worked on-call shifts in case of crisis emergencies.
- 1/14-4/14 **Department Secretary**, *BYU Clinical Psychology Department*, Provo, UT
- Kept financial records, organized admission materials for the doctoral program, and assisted the entire Clinical Psychology Department (faculty and students) with day-to-day tasks.

## HONORS & AWARDS

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- 2017 **Schreyer Honors Medal (Expected)**, Penn State University
- 2017 **Evan Pugh Scholar Senior Award**, Penn State University
- 2016-2017 **Ragosta Mentoring Award**, Penn State University
- 2016-2017 **Johnson Memorial Scholarship**, Penn State University
- 2016-2017 **Lord Academic Excellence Scholarship**, Penn State University
- 2015-2016 **Dean's List**, Penn State College of Health and Human Development
- 2016 **Inducted Member**, National Society of Collegiate Scholars
- 2014-2015 **Continuing Student Full-tuition Academic Scholarship**, Brigham Young University (declined)
- 2010-2011 **Presidential Academic Scholarship**, Weber State University

## GRANTS

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- 2016 **Erickson Discovery Grant**, Penn State University
- Research grant to support travel to Tamil Nadu, India in relation to honors thesis.
- 2016 **Schreyer International Thesis Research Grant**, Penn State Schreyer Honors College
- Offered initially, but ineligible after receipt of Erickson Grant.
- 2014 **Finalist for Y-Prize Grant**, Brigham Young University
- For facilitation of an international intervention to increase access to treatment for schistosomiasis.

## RESEARCH

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- 2017 **Honors thesis: Couple and Family Leisure Time and Adolescent Well-being in India**
- Advisor: Dr. Gregory Fosco, Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies
  - Poster Presentations:
    - Penn State Health and Human Development Alumni Society Poster Competition
    - Penn State Undergraduate Exhibition
      - Second Place: Social and Behavioral Sciences; Second Place: Information Literacy
- 2016 **South Indian Community Health Study**, *Christian Medical College*, Tamil Nadu, India
- Traveled to India for field work related to my honors thesis.
  - Supervisor: Dr. Nancy Luke, Associate Professor of Sociology and Demography
- 2015 **Research Paper: Effects of Interparental Conflict on Adolescent Relationships via Parental Attachment**
- Completed in HDFS Honors Research Methods course.
  - Supervisor: Dr. Lisa Gatzke-Kopp, Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies
- 2014 **PROSPER Study**, Data Coder
- Supervisor: Dr. Wayne Osgood, Professor of Criminology and Sociology

## ASSISTANTSHIPS

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- 2017 **Teaching Assistant**, HDFS 411: "The Helping Relationship"
- Supervisor: Dr. Steffany Fredman, Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

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- 2011-2013 **LDS Church Missionary Service**, Santiago, Chile
- Educator: taught religious lessons to thousands of people from various backgrounds.
  - Leadership: Trainer- 6 times, Zone Leader- 8 months, District Leader- 6 months, Congregation Leader- 3 months.
  - Community Service: painted homes, pulled weeds, tutored youth.
- 9/14-11/14 **Centre County Women's Resource Center**, State College, PA
- Completed 40+ hours of training to become a hotline volunteer prior to being hired.

## CERTIFICATES

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- 2014 **Spanish Language Certificate**, Advanced-mid level