

## BABY BOOMERS & SENIORS: *A LEISURE VALUE STUDY*

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*Baby boomers worldwide are influencing the aging of society in different ways and greatly are impacting recreation programs and facilities. The purpose of this study was to understand what tomorrow's seniors (baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964) search for in terms of community leisure needs as perceived by their value structure. As a comparison, today's senior citizens (born from 1925 to 1945) were also examined. Through a written survey, 52 respondents indicated their preferences regarding leisure values, programs, and facilities. Additional commonalities and differences regarding leisure were identified between baby boomers and seniors based on their survey responses. Findings provide the recreation professional with valuable insights into leisure values between these two cohorts.*

The field of recreation and leisure studies is on the horizon of change. A large segment of the population contributing to the change is one that is termed, "baby boomers." The return in 1946 of millions of WWII soldiers from battlefields and military units, combined with the desire of married couples to start a family, resulted in the largest generation (1946-1964) born in history. Other explanations for the creation of the baby boom include the positive economic climate, the changing social values of post-war society, and the acceptance of large family size and status (Morias & Goodman, 2002). Eventually, the introduction of birth control, increased education of men and women, deferred marriages, and an increase of women in the workforce lead to the end of the baby boom (Drucker, 2002; Freedman, 1999; Gillon, 2004). This growth phenomenon occurred also in Canada and throughout Europe and Asia during this same time frame.

Populations are growing older in most countries around the world. This trend has characterized the age structure of developed countries for well over a century. Population ageing is defined as the process by which older individuals, aged 50 or over, make up a proportionally larger share of the total population over a period of time (United Nations, 2002). Baby boomers, those born in the United States, consist of nearly 76 million

Americans, making up 30% of the total U.S. population. In the United Kingdom, there were 17 million born, making up 29% of the total British population (Office for National Statistics, 2004). For the U.S. and other Western nations, it means that both the number and percentage of the total population that is older has increased and will continue to increase at a rapid rate.

In the United States, the 65 years and older population, also known as the population of senior citizens born between 1925 and 1945, is projected to double in size over the next three decades to nearly 70 million. This trend will make the seniors approximately 20% of the population, a growth from 24.9 million in the year 2000 which was approximately 12.7% of the population (Administration on Aging, 2002). Similarly, population ageing continues to be an important feature of the UK population. In 2003, there were 20 million people aged 50 and over in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2007). Therefore, worldwide, in the year 2011, the first wave of the baby boomer generation will turn 65 years of age. It is projected that over 40 percent of the total population will be aged 50 and over by the year 2031, making this the largest group of senior citizens. In addition to the many needs of this cohort, a whole new dimension of leisure activity will be generated. As such the climate and nature

of leisure programming is changing. With this influx of more active senior aged participants, recreation professionals need to be educated on the programs and services that are preferred by them. This new group will define our facilities and programs; recreation professionals must be ready to meet their demands.

### COHORT DIFFERENCES

It is typical for people born in a given generation to share values and attitudes about life, which were acquired because they share a series of common life experiences formed in youth and young adulthood (Cochran, 2005). Each cohort exhibits preferences particular to the influences that shaped their formative years. These differences affect the interests, needs and behaviors of the participants in terms of leisure facilities and programs. By the sheer force of their numbers, the boomers are considered a "demographic bulge" who have remodeled society as they pass through it and will continue to shape their future, including influencing trends in leisure programming. Boomers will require major adjustments in the delivery of leisure facilities, programs, and services.

Today's seniors consist of survivors of the Great Depression and WWII. The values driving this generation are hard work, organization, hierarchy, tradition, logic, discipline, family, honor, respect for authority, consistency, and uniformity (Brokaw, 1998). They are generally conservative, loyal to brands, and believe in planning and saving. Many of their leisure activities require little or no physical activity or exertion, and include bingo, golf, cooking, and sewing (Cochran, Rothschild & Rudick, 2009).

From a sociological perspective, the baby boomer cohort has a unique set of values and characteristics, vastly different from previous generations. Edmunds and Turner (2002), for example, suggest that in the UK the boomers were a "strategic generation in aesthetic, cultural and sexual terms" (p.31). Their values encompass all aspects of life, affecting their beliefs about self, career, home, and leisure. Boomers are the most-educated, influential, and prosperous generation in history (Gillon, 2004). Baby boomers are an individualistic, self-focused generation which is economically optimistic; they are

highly educated, comfortable with technology, healthier and more affluent than any generation before them. They have high expectations, want value for their money and expect quality products along with convenience (Freedman, 1999). Despite their hectic lifestyles, leisure is still a necessity for them (Cochran, Stoll, & Kinziger, 2006).

Boomers were not born into depression or war and as a result, experienced more freedom of activity. They will experience longer lives and retire in less time than their predecessors. They have visions of retiring into recreation and they are motivated to engage in healthy activity. Most appear not interested in pursuing a sedentary lifestyle: sitting down and playing cards; they want to get out there and learn, discover, play and move (Cochran, Stoll, Beller, & Goc Karp, 2009). A recent European survey discovered that seniors in Britain spend their free time watching television, socializing, working on sport and hobbies. Other popular leisure activities are listening to the radio, listening to pre-recorded music, reading, gardening, eating out and going to the cinema (Office for National Statistics, 2004). This study further points out that these activities may change as boomers age into retirement. In order to respond to the challenges and opportunities of this social transition, the recreation professional needs to consider specific value structures of this unique and large cohort in order to adequately provide programs and services for them.

## LEISURE VALUES

Recreation and leisure are important elements in the lives of every individual and family. Recreation professionals increasingly face the need to develop a variety of experiences to meet their participants' needs. This includes understanding what drives leisure participation- or, our leisure non-moral values. We know that leisure is an important element in the lives of most people but the term "leisure" has different meanings to different people under different circumstances. At the same time, participation and benefits of leisure can contribute to several different lifestyle elements. Value is given to something we have strong feelings toward, and is often what we deem worthwhile, desirable, or consequential. Values influence all aspects of life and can be viewed from a societal, group, or individual perspective (Cochran, Rothschild, & Rudick, 2009).

When values relate specifically to leisure or leisure activities, they can be

referred to as leisure non moral values. An example of the non-moral values people hold for leisure is suggested by the pioneering work in leisure motivation by Beard and Ragheb (1982). In developing a scale to measure leisure motivations, which are directly affected by values, Beard and Ragheb identify six categories of leisure motivations: competitive, educational, physiological, social, relaxation and aesthetic (1982). These, in turn, are a reflection of the attitudes that play an important role in deciding how we view leisure and the types of activities in which we choose to participate. For example, some people place value on feelings of anticipation, choice, physical ability, or on cultural growth (Cochran, 2005). From the recreation professional perspective, understanding leisure values gives us direction.

Historically, recreation programmers have used various approaches, theories, and strategies to plan and deliver leisure programs for their participants. Previous research reflects importance in the study of leisure motivations, leisure constraints, and the impact of leisure satisfaction in life among various senior age groups (Sperazza, 2008). However, little research is actually available to the professional about the specific leisure differences between boomers and today's seniors in terms of leisure values. This provides a need for this study as potentially these two cohorts will be sharing facilities and programs. By focusing on how individuals make decisions to participate in leisure and the activities they choose, the professional can develop programs to suit the leisure values of their participants, in turn, maximizing the benefits leisure has to offer.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to understand what tomorrow's senior (baby boomers born 1946-1964) are searching for in terms of community leisure needs as perceived by their value structure. In comparison, this study needed to identify differences that may exist between today's senior (born 1925-1945) and the boomers. The main research question for the study was: "What are the leisure participation values of boomers and seniors in the Borough of Wandsworth, London?" Subsequent research questions were stated as follows:

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Is there a difference between boomers and seniors regarding their preference of leisure activities based on competitiveness, education, physiological

reasons, socializing, relaxation and aesthetics as values?

Subsequently, the researchers also theorized that choices for leisure programming would be made based on leisure participation values. As such, a secondary line of questioning emerged: RQ<sub>2</sub>: What is the likelihood of boomers and seniors preferring or engaging in particular types of leisure programming?

## METHODOLOGY

### PARTICIPANTS

The study was primarily exploratory in nature and descriptive. After obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board to conduct research, data were collected from members of a local community center who were participants in leisure programs in the Borough of Wandsworth, London. A non-probability sample of convenience was chosen and 300 surveys were distributed at the end of leisure programs where all participants were over the age of 50 years. A total of fifty-two surveys were returned resulting in a 17.3% response rate. The researchers acknowledge that the project has limited generalizability due to the nature of sample selection and sample size.

### SURVEY

The survey was modified from an Existing Customer Satisfaction Survey administered for two townships in western New York State. U.S. Survey items regarding leisure participation values were included from the Cochran Baby Boomer Quiz (Cochran, 2005). The survey included the following subscales.

The first subscale measured the participants' opinion about how important it was to participate in recreation activities (for example, "to compete against others, or because I am good at it, or improve my skills or knowledge" – with response options ranging from "extremely important to not important"). Each of the 23 statements (numbered a-w) corresponded into one of six categories of non-moral values. Responses ranged from "extremely important" to "not important."

The second subscale was designed to describe preference of programming and the likelihood of participation in certain activities (the arts, literary, sports, aquatics, etc.). The response options ranged from "very likely" to "not likely."

The third subscale dealt with questions about preferred facilities, particularly experiences with facilities and preferred attributes of the facilities. Response options ranged from, "excellent to poor"

and “very important to not important” respectively.

The fourth subscale addressed facility preferences of the participants. The question in this subscale was, “what time/day would be most convenient for you to visit senior leisure facilities?” and “what days are you most likely to participate in leisure activities?” These questions yielded ordinal responses.

The final section of the survey was designed to capture the demographic elements of the sample which included age, gender, level of education, gross annual income, race etc.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS<sup>®</sup>), version 17.0, was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were calculated for demographic items as well as all subscales. Frequency statistics and Kruskal-Wallis H tests were conducted on the data to answer research questions. Kruskal-Wallis provides a powerful alternative to the *t*-test or ANOVA for the equality of means (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2006; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). According to Seigal (1956), compared with the *F*-test, the Kruskal-Wallis test has an asymptotic efficiency of 95.5% when used with non-normal populations. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a nonparametric test with few assumptions and was chosen as the best fit for the sample size, ordinal nature of responses, and non-probability sampling technique.

Reliability analyses (Cronbach's alpha) were conducted on two of the three subscales. The recreation and leisure participation subscale was found to have a high internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha = .901$ ), the programming areas subscale yielded a coefficient of .77 and the six value composites yielded an internal consistency coefficient of .82. Face validity for the instrument was established through consultation with a panel of recreation professional experts who reviewed the items.

## RESULTS

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The mean age of the participants was 69,  $\pm 8.29$  years. Ages ranged from 52 to 89 years. More females (82.6%) participated in the study than males (17.4%), and the majority of the participants (52.4%) described themselves as Caucasian, 16.7% classified themselves as Asian, and 31.0% opted for the “other” category. The participants often described themselves as “British” in the “other” category. Most of the participants (73.9%)

were retired, and 27% reported a 2006 gross annual income between £5080 - 12,699 and £20,320-32,511 which is approximately \$8,344-\$53,383 USD with a monthly discretionary income of \$197-\$415 per month (33.3%). In the research literature, the “boomer” variable is operationally defined as describing those between the ages of 43-61, since this study captured a sample consisting of participants over the age of 50, boomers were classified in this study as those between the ages of 50 and 61. As such, of the total sample, 30.2% were classified as “boomers” and 69.8% were classified as “seniors.” Due to missing data on a few surveys, responses were excluded from analysis when appropriate.

### LEISURE PARTICIPATION VALUES

Six composite variables were created from the first subscale – recreation and leisure participation to measure specific leisure participation values. The composites were named competitive, educational, physiological, social, relaxation, and aesthetic. For a detailed description of each variable, see Table 1.

The Competitive Value measured the level of competitiveness as a value necessary to participation in recreation activities. Scores ranged from 7 indicating a low value for competitiveness to a score of 28 indicating that competitiveness was very important to the participant. The Educational Value measured the importance of participating in recreational activity for educational purposes. Scores ranged from 3 indicating a low value placed on education as the reason for participating in recreational activities while a score of 12 indicated that education was very important to the participant. The Physiological Value measured the importance of activities for physiological development and relaxation for the participant. A score of 2 indicated low importance and a score of 8 indicated high importance. The Social Value measured how important it was to participate in recreational activities for the purposes of socializing such as being with their families, keeping them busy, contributing to community, or for cultural interaction. Scores ranged from 6 indicating low importance while a score of 24 indicated high importance or value. The Relaxation Value measured the importance of doing something different from work or to be alone as an important reason or value to participating in recreation activities. Scores ranged from 3 (low importance) to 12 (high importance). Finally the Aesthetic Value measured the importance of simply for pleasure and to enjoy nature in

recreation. Scores ranged from 2 (low importance) to 8 (high importance). In order to correlate the specific leisure participation values with preferences of boomers and seniors, the six composite variables were divided into three categories, namely: “extremely important,” “somewhat or moderately important,” and “not important.”

### VALUE RESULTS

Based on the range of scores described above, the mean score on the competitive value was assessed at 13.88,  $SD = \pm 4.5$ , indicating a level of high competitiveness among the sample. For the educational value variable, the average was assessed moderately important ( $M = 7.79$ ,  $SD = \pm 2.34$ ); The average physiological value was  $M = 6.41$ ,  $SD = \pm 4.18$ , indicating a moderate to high importance; the mean of the social value variable was assessed at  $M = 13.29$ ,  $SD = \pm 4.31$ , indicating a moderate level of importance; the mean for the relaxation value was  $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = \pm 1.79$ , indicating a moderate to high level of importance, and the aesthetic value variable ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = \pm 1.47$ ) was assessed as moderately important. See Table 2 for value results between cohorts.

*RQ<sub>1</sub>: Is there a difference between boomers and seniors in the Borough of Wandsworth, London regarding their preference of leisure activities based on competitiveness as a value?*

Of the 52 participants, 32 (62%) responded to the questions regarding competitiveness as a value for participating in leisure activities. Fifty six percent of the participants reported that the value of competitiveness was “not important” when it came to choosing leisure activities. Of these, more seniors (57%) stated that participating in leisure activities for competitiveness was not important. Only 22% of the boomers and 8.7% of the seniors reported that competitiveness as a value for participating in leisure activities was extremely important. The Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to compare the outcome of competitiveness as a value for boomer and seniors was not significant ( $H(2) = .109$ ,  $p > .05$ ), indicating that boomers and seniors for this sample did not differ significantly in terms of how important competitiveness was perceived as a value. Mean rank for this variable was 17.28 for boomers and 16.20 for seniors.

*RQ<sub>2</sub>: Is there a difference between boomers and seniors regarding their*

**TABLE 1. Description of Specific Leisure Participation Values**

Variable	Description
Competitive	To compete against others, improve skills or knowledge, for a challenge, excitement, risk, adventure, or to show others I can do it.
Educational	To be creative, expand intellect, and to learn new skills.
Physiological	For health or exercise and relaxation of mind, body, spirit.
Social	To help community, be with family or friends, meet new people, and for cultural interaction.
Relaxation	Something different from work, to be alone, and to be away from family.
Aesthetic	Simply for pleasure or to enjoy nature.

**TABLE 2. Results of Kruskal-Wallis Tests**

Types of Cases	N	Mean Rank
Competitive		
Boomers	9	17.28
Seniors	23	16.20
Educational		
Boomers	8	19.25
Seniors	23	17.50
Physiological		
Boomers	11	17.14
Seniors	29	21.78
Social		
Boomers	8	15.44
Seniors	24	16.85
Relaxation		
Boomers	7	18.43
Seniors	25	15.96
Aesthetic		
Boomers	10	19.25
Seniors	25	17.50

*preference of leisure activities for educational reasons as a value?*

Regarding the Educational Value (n=31) in leisure participation, 63% of the participants classified as boomers reported that this value was “extremely important.” Forty five percent of all the participants classified the educational value as being extremely important in the choice of leisure activities. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test were not significant. The difference between boomers and seniors regarding their reported preference for this value was not statistically significantly different  $H(1) = .264, p > .05$ . Mean rank for boomers was 19.44 and seniors was 14.80.

*RQ3: Is there a difference between boomers and seniors regarding their preference of leisure activities based on physiological reasons as a value?*

Seventy-three percent of the participants responded that choosing leisure activities for physiological reasons (value) was “extremely important.” Of all the values the physiological dimension as the reason for participation in leisure activities received the most response (77%). Participants classified as seniors, responded in greater percentages (79.3%) to placing the reason to participate in leisure activity for physiological reasons as “extremely important.” However, the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to compare the difference between boomers and

seniors for preferring leisure activities for physiological reasons was not statistically significant ( $H(1) = 2.081, p > .05$ ). Mean rank for boomers was assessed at 17.14 and 21.78 for seniors.

*RQ4: Is there a difference between boomers and seniors regarding their preference of leisure activities for the purpose of socializing?*

Sixty one percent of the participants responded to the question regarding choosing socialization as a value for leisure activity. Surprisingly, 31.3% of the participants responded that it was “not important” to choose a leisure activity for socializing. Interestingly, however, more Seniors than boomers choose to report that socializing was either “somewhat important,” (41.7%) or “extremely important” (29.2%). The Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to compare the difference between boomers and seniors for preferring leisure activities for socializing was not statistically significant ( $H(1) = .365, p > .05$ ). Mean rank for the social value for boomers was assessed at 15.44 and 16.85 for seniors.

*RQ5: Is there a difference between boomers and seniors regarding their preference of leisure activities for relaxation?*

Interestingly, from the perspective of relaxation as a value for participating in leisure activities, the preponderance of responses for both boomers and seniors combined was “not important” (66%). Further, overwhelmingly more seniors (68%) than boomers (57.1%) reported that participating in leisure activities for relaxation was “not important.” The Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to compare the difference between boomers and seniors for preferring leisure activities for relaxation was, however, not statistically significant ( $H(1) = .551, p > .05$ ). Mean rank for boomers for this variable was assessed at 18.43 and 15.96 for seniors.

*RQ6: Is there a difference between boomers and seniors regarding their preference of leisure activities for aesthetic reasons?*

More of the participants classified as seniors (71.4%) responded to this value. Both boomers and seniors reported that leisure activities for aesthetic reasons was either “somewhat important” (49%) and “extremely important” (46%), and slightly more of those classified as boomers (50%) than seniors (44%) reported that choosing leisure activities for aesthetic reasons was “extremely important.” The Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to compare

the difference between boomers and seniors for preferring leisure activities for aesthetic reasons was not statistically significant ( $H(1) = .264, p > .05$ ). Mean rank for boomers was assessed at 19.25 and 17.50 for seniors.

#### VALUES RELATED TO ACTIVITY CHOICE

Based on the likelihood of boomers and seniors choosing leisure activities related to their non-moral leisure value system, more boomers reported that they would be more likely to choose leisure programming in the health and wellness (92.3%), outdoor (91.7%) and travel/tourism (84.6%) areas. Seniors reported a preference for leisure programming based on travel/tourism (83.3%), health and wellness (75%) and the arts (65.5%). Curiously, aquatics was not a popular programming area for boomers; 63.6% reported that they were “not likely” to pick any aquatic related leisure activities. Similarly, seniors reported that they were “not likely” to choose volunteering (56.5%) and self-improvement (56.0%) programming for their leisure activities. Table 3 reflects the statistical analysis of these questions as stated in the narrative above. The results from this section can help guide the recreation professional to adequately implement leisure programs between these two cohorts.

#### FACILITY EXPECTATIONS

A large part of leisure programming revolves around facility usage. It is important to understand when participants are likely to use facilities and what they expect of them in order to maximize their usage. In regards to preferred facilities, particularly experiences and preferred attributes, the top qualities for leisure facilities for both boomer and senior groups were those that were located close to public transportation, had a qualified staff, good quality and up-to-date equipment, a friendly staff and volunteers and a wide range of activities. More participants classified as “seniors” responded that facilities—closer to home and facilities that had good lighting and signage were important. The topmost preference for the participants classified as boomers was choosing a facility for the wide range of activities. For both cohort groups, it was relatively unimportant that facilities had cafés or kitchens on site, or that they had easy parking or modern, appealing décor or furniture or spaces (see Table 4).

Another important factor to successful programming is recognizing when participants are able to attend. Given the dynamic of the seniors (most are retired

and have minimal commitments) to that of the boomer (most working full time and some still raising children) the demands of facility scheduling can be quite challenging. There is nothing worse than offering a program on a day that does not work for the cohort at hand. The question in this subscale was, “what time/day would be most convenient for you to visit senior leisure facilities?” and “what days are you most likely to participate in leisure activities?” For both the boomer and senior groups, the preferred time for visiting senior leisure facilities was reported being between 9:00 a.m. and noon. The participants classified as “seniors” preferred this time slot (92.3%) over the group (58.3%) classified as “boomers.” The least preferential time slot for both groups was evening – early to late evening. More seniors (87.5%) reported a preference for Friday as the day they

would most likely participate in leisure activities, and more boomers (83.3%) chose Thursday as their preferred day for leisure. Least preferential for both boomer and senior groups for leisure participation were Saturday and Sunday.

#### DISCUSSION

It is the opinion of the researchers that not much is known about the specific leisure preferences of this growing cohort of people, especially in the U.K., and how they differ from seniors. More and more, baby boomers as a group are emerging in their distinctness, often being described as vastly different from the seniors in almost every aspect of their lives. For example, for the first time, we have a generation of people who are entering retirement with extensive knowledge of the Internet, who are healthier, more active, energetic,

**TABLE 3. Comparison of Boomers' and Seniors' Likelihood of Choosing Type of Leisure Programming**

	Percentage Likely	Percentage Not Likely	$\chi^2$
The Arts			.352
Boomers (n = 12)	75.0%	25.0%	
Seniors (n = 29)	65.5%	34.5%	
Literary			1.779
Boomers (n = 12)	75.0%	25.0%	
Seniors (n = 25)	52.0%	48.0%	
Aquatics			.936
Boomers (n = 11)	36.4%	63.6%	
Seniors (n = 28)	53.6%	46.4%	
Sports			.023
Boomers (n = 11)	54.5%	45.5%	
Seniors (n = 27)	51.9%	48.1%	
Outdoor			4.096*
Boomers (n = 12)	91.7%	8.3%	
Seniors (n = 27)	59.3%	40.7%	
Social Recreation			.278
Boomers (n = 13)	76.9%	23.1%	
Seniors (n = 28)	64.3%	35.7%	
Self-Improvement			1.668
Boomers (n = 12)	66.7%	33.3%	
Seniors (n = 25)	44.0%	56.0%	
Health and Wellness			1.693
Boomers (n = 13)	92.3%	7.7%	
Seniors (n = 28)	75.0%	25.0%	
Hobbies			.062
Boomers (n = 11)	54.5%	45.5%	
Seniors (n = 24)	50.0%	50.0%	
Travel and Tourism			.010
Boomers (n = 13)	84.6%	15.4%	
Seniors (n = 24)	83.3%	16.7%	
Volunteering			1.084
Boomers (n = 13)	61.5%	38.5%	
Seniors (n = 23)	43.5%	56.5%	

\*p-value significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 4. Percentage Comparison to the Question, "When choosing a facility, which of the following are important?"

Variable	Important for Boomers	Important for Seniors
Good quality/ up to date equipment	91.7%	88.9%
Modern, appealing décor/furniture/space	41.7%	50.0%
Friendly staff and volunteers	91.7%	96.6%
Good lighting and signage	58.3%	78.3%
Wide range of activities	100.0%	87.5%
Qualified staff	91.7%	100.0%
Close to public transportation*	84.6%	100.0%
Close to home	45.5%	69.0%
Easy parking	37.5%	23.5%
Café/Kitchen on site	45.5%	50.0%

\*Difference between observed and expected frequencies for this category was statistically significant at the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 4.841, p = .028$ ).

opinionated, demanding and more vigorous than the seniors who went before them (Sperazza, 2008; Joseph, 2009). The purpose of this study was to understand what tomorrow's seniors (today's boomers) are searching for in terms of community leisure needs as perceived by their value structure, and to discover, along the way, the various differences between the boomer and senior groups.

Surprisingly, the demands of baby boomers, while perceived to be very different from those of seniors, in this study actually were very similar. The data revealed that the members of the community center of the Borough of Wandsworth, London collectively had similar preferences regarding their values. With regard to the type of leisure programming preferred by both groups, it was notable that the boomer group selected leisure programming related to outdoor activity a lot more often than the group. This may speak to the fact that boomers, as the literature indicates, are indeed more vigorous or more interested in physical activity than are seniors. Finally, it was also interesting to note that 100% of the seniors and 84.6% of the boomers indicated that they would be more likely to join a facility that was close to public transportation. There is support in the research literature for this as well. According to the Office of National Statistics (2009), older women in the U.K. are more likely to access public transport than men. In our sample, 76.9% of the boomers were female and 83.3% of the seniors were female.

The study captured a small glimpse of the preferences of the group in the Borough of Wandsworth, London. Their habits, values and preferences could be used as a starting point for professionals interested in tailoring leisure programming

targeted toward a group similar to this one. Clearly, the popularity of the boomer generation has the recreation professional rethinking and eliminating traditional stereotypes about the elderly or retired people to effectively meet their needs. Traditional activities that were popular among seniors will now be changed to high-energy group exercise classes, Nintendo Wii video game tournaments, and travel clubs that incorporate volunteerism and educational components. With only 52 respondents it is difficult to generalize however, the data results provide valuable information to recreation professionals in the Borough of Wandsworth, London. This needed information helps to show what drives leisure participation between boomers and seniors. Additional research could include not only an increased sample size, but also examination of gender between cohorts and personal interviews. Generalizability of the results was affected by the small sample size and the non-probability sampling procedure.

## SUMMARY

The baby boomers are the dominant generation of this century. Recreation and leisure will be influenced by this dominance until the group behind it, "Generation X," enters the retirement stage of life. These influences have long-term implications for current and future recreation professionals. As boomers age, the look, meaning, experience, and purpose of maturity will be transformed. Due to the significant increase in the aging of our society and the fact that boomers are unlike any other generation, it is imperative that recreation professionals are prepared to provide leisure programs and

services to this new cohort. This study showed that non moral leisure values influenced leisure activity choices. It is also necessary for recreation and park professionals to develop a schedule of programs which maximizes attendance and patron satisfaction. Evidence shows that recreation professionals can anticipate an active, educated, affordable, and physically fit new customer who is of retirement age. If what we know is true, today's practice of leisure programming will have to break out of isolation to meet the demands and expectations before them.

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