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Viewing leisure as experience

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Abstract

Introduction. Serious leisure is a well-established concept in leisure studies and combined with the everyday information seeking model, has led to an increased study of leisure activities in library and information science. Considering the limitations of the serious leisure perspective, this conceptual paper makes the case for viewing leisure as experience.

Method. A theory adaptation and conceptual synthesis approach is adopted based on analysis of relevant literature and the use of two studies as cases.

Analysis. Analysis of serious leisure as well as information and document experience literature is used in conceptualising leisure as experience and to make the case for adopting an experience-oriented approach to studying leisure pursuits in LIS.

Results. Leisure is conceptualised as experience rooted in everyday, and falling in a continuum of intentionality based on personal circumstances.

Conclusion. Viewing leisure as an experience will enable the identification and study of holistic experiences of information along with the social context to such experiences.

Introduction

A simple definition of leisure is time spent away from work and other duties, exercising one's freewill in choice of pursuits. Coined by Stebbins (2020), serious leisure is a well-established concept in leisure studies and refers to a 'broad range of leisure pursuits, such as hobbies, voluntary activities and amateurism, which are sufficiently challenging but adequately rewarding' (Mansourian, 2024, p. 1). As Veal (2021) notes, serious leisure perspective has presented an 'accessible and attractively labelled framework' (p. 575) for studying leisure activities. Gallant (2017) views serious leisure as a foundational concept in leisure studies, which provides a new way of examining leisure undertaken in a systematic and committed manner resulting in significant benefits.

In library and information science (LIS), the influence of Stebbins's (2020) serious leisure perspective combined with Savolainen's (1995) everyday life information seeking framework has resulted in an increase in information behaviour studies looking into non-work contexts including leisure (Given, Case & Willson, 2023). One could add Kari & Hartel's (2007) call for studying the pleasurable and profound as contributing towards this increase in attention to leisure-related contexts. In a similar vein, Ocepek (2018) called for greater focus on the everyday, while Gorichanaz (2019) made the case for studying freely-chosen, personally meaningful activities. Mansourian (2024) put forward 'passionate pastime' as an experience-oriented perspective towards leisure and a complementary concept to go with serious leisure perspective, helping to capture the affective dimensions of leisure.

Even though serious leisure perspective has remained unchallenged and unchanged pointing to its popularity and durability, it has faced criticism and debate, with certain aspects facing more critique like its lack of growth as a concept, its status as a theory, and absence of attention paid to political and social contexts of serious leisure among others (Gallant, 2017). In a similar vein, Gallant et al. (2013) also raised certain limitations to Stebbins conceptualisation of serious leisure perspective and called for an expanded view of serious leisure. Veal (2021) termed serious leisure perspective a typology of activities and suggested that one could attain an optimal lifestyle without participating in serious leisure. In LIS, serious leisure has been viewed as more attractive due to the notion that such activities are information rich, leading to much of everyday life being viewed as information poor.

Considering the critique and limitations raised against serious leisure, the aim of this conceptual paper is to propose the viewing of leisure as an experience. Adopting a theory adaptation and conceptual synthesis approach, the argument is developed for viewing leisure as experience, moving away from dichotomies like serious/casual, and situating it in the everyday. Jaakkola (2020) states that theory adaptation starts with the 'problematization of a particular theory or concept' (p. 23). Here the critique against serious leisure perspective is treated as the point of departure for problematisation of serious leisure and draws on the work of Gallant et al., (2013), Gallant (2017), and Veal (2017, 2021, 2023) for providing an alternative frame of reference in developing the conceptual approach of viewing leisure as experience. Further, the paper draws on information and document experience related literature for conceptual synthesis to advance the argument that viewing leisure as experience for information behaviour studies will enable the capture of holistic experiences of information along with the social context of such experiences. Two empirical studies from LIS literature are analysed to support the conceptual synthesis.

Serious leisure

The serious leisure perspective developed by Stebbins (2020) categorises leisure activities into three forms: casual, project based and serious; each of these categories have several distinguishing qualities, costs, rewards and benefits. Activities that are carried out for fun and pure pleasure and which do not call for any specific skillset or commitment have been termed casual leisure, whereas

project-based leisure requires some amount of basic skills while not requiring any long-term commitment. It covers activities that are occasional, or which happen only once, like organising a cultural event or completing a do-it-yourself project. The third category, serious leisure, has two further subcategories: serious leisure and devotee work. It calls for knowledge, skills, and long-term commitment on the part of the person participating in it. As such it is termed as generating durable benefits and exhibits the potential for turning into a career (Mansourian, 2024). It has been used to study wide ranging activities like sports, hobbies, tourism and volunteering, and varied populations, including disabled individuals and older adults Stebbins (2020) states that the serious leisure perspective takes its name from serious leisure as it was the first form to be studied. He also states that serious leisure has often been the point of reference for analyses of casual and project-based leisure activities, and as such, naming serious leisure perspective after serious leisure ‘facilitates intellectual recognition’ (p. 2).

In its earlier iterations, serious leisure was perceived as activities that are ‘particularly intense and enduring’ (Hartel, 2003, p. 230). It was also categorised into three general forms: hobbies, volunteering, and amateurism. Hartel (2003) made a case for adopting serious leisure in LIS noting that participants must make ‘significant personal effort based on specially acquired knowledge, training, or skill’ (p. 230), and as such, information seeking and use is central to it. Stebbins (2009) himself noted that the serious leisure perspective could bridge the critical gap separating both disciplines, adding that due to its complexity compared to casual and project-based leisure, serious leisure is particularly suitable to be used by LIS scholars. Empirical research into serious leisure in LIS has mostly been limited to activity-based contexts starting with Hartel’s (2003) study of gourmet cooking hobbyists as serious leisure. There have been other studies ranging from knitting groups (Prigoda & McKenzie, 2007), motorsport (Joseph, 2016), food blogging (Cox and Blake, 2011), hobbyist collectors (Lee and Trace, 2009), quilting (Gainor, 2013), music record collectors (Margree, MacFarlane & Prie, 2014), urban exploration (Fulton, 2017), and fandom (Hill & Pecoskie, 2017) among others. Mansourian (2021) looked at the joy of information associated with participation in serious leisure.

Challenges to serious leisure

Serious leisure has been a significant concept withstanding the test of time by shaping leisure research over many decades, through the many empirical studies which have used it as a theoretical lens to look at various leisure activities, especially hobbies, volunteerism or activities engaged in by amateurs. Some of these studies have started from the assumption that engagement in a particular activity means serious leisure is present in it. On the other hand, researchers have chosen certain activities for study and then looked for evidence of the presence of serious leisure in them. Over time there was a shift in focus to an exploration of the six distinct qualities of serious leisure. The concept has remained largely unchallenged and unchanged pointing to its durability, while also being reflective of its ‘somewhat intractable links to its past and the intellectual context from which the theory emerged’ (Gallant et al., 2013, p. 92). The following aspects of serious leisure has faced most critique.

1. its lack of growth as a concept as well as its status as a theory;
2. the assumption often made that certain activities are serious leisure, rather than defining serious leisure based on the attributes of the experience;
3. a lack of clarity on how serious leisure is connected to casual leisure;
4. focus on benefits, ignoring costs which could have resulted in a more balanced conceptualisation; and
5. lack of attention paid to the political and social context of serious leisure, especially in its research and conceptual development (Gallant, 2017).

Scholarly attention to leisure emerged at a time when it was viewed as a sphere of life capable of contributing meaningfully toward fulfilment of individuals. It was typically examined together with and in opposition to work. In North America, by the 1970s, theoretical focus turned towards the instrumental function that leisure could play. Based on the notion that our feelings of accomplishment, success, and rewards emanate from work, leisure was viewed as providing similar outcomes. The formative years of leisure studies during the latter half of the 20th century were focused on examining how leisure could be used effectively to attain benefits from it. This had the result of imbuing leisure with traits similar to work for the purpose of justifying its importance. Gallant et al. (2013) suggests that this viewpoint has led to the utilitarian, instrumental, and functionalist approach to leisure and its commodification. They argue that Stebbins early work on serious leisure emerged during this time frame.

Calling for the re-envisioning of serious leisure, Gallant et al. (2013) puts forward three limitations to the concept of serious leisure which demand an increased attention to the 'sociopolitical context and the adoption of a critical lens' (p. 91). These limitations arise from an activity-based view of serious leisure in empirical studies and the conceptualisation of serious leisure 'as embedded in a series of dualisms such as positive-negative, work-leisure and serious-casual' (p. 91). The first limitation arises from the fact that assumptions are often made that participation in a particular activity implies that a person has engaged in serious leisure, and as such, is in receipt of the positive benefits accruing from such activity. This, in essence, reflects a normative tone on the types of activities considered as serious leisure and the inevitable benefits accruing from them. Further, there is an absence of attention to the costs associated with such activities. These assumptions have been challenged by studies of normatively marginal activities in recent times. Secondly, it fails to fully consider the psychological aspects of participation in serious leisure pursuits. Thirdly, the social context to leisure activities is often not fully acknowledged or studied, with the results, its potential to help build identity and foster social ties, disregarded.

Keeping these limitations in mind, Gallant et al. (2013) call for viewing leisure as an experience, thereby moving it beyond activity and dichotomy. Shen and Yarnal (2010) noted that we could approach any leisure activity with different styles, and most activities offer the potential for varying levels of skill and behavioural involvement to participants. In other words, 'serious and casual leisure pursuits can be found in practically any activity' (p. 165). They also raised the question that neither forms of activities nor the distinguishing qualities associated with serious and casual leisure are reliable as criteria to evaluate whether a particular leisure pursuit is casual or serious. This dichotomy fails to consider the wide range of leisure pursuits which might represent the 'typical experiences of the majority of individuals' (p. 167) and could fall in a casual-serious continuum. Veal (2017) also made a case for viewing seriousness as a continuum and not as distinct categories, while noting that most leisure activities can be carried out with varying levels of seriousness. Similar to Mansourian (2024), an experience perspective is also proposed by Veal (2017) 'which consolidates features of the serious leisure perspective and other research traditions and theoretical perspectives' (p. 205).

Viewing leisure as experience

According to Fox (2008), 'experience is a multilayered phenomenon; individuals make sense of experience through cultural, cognitive, subconscious, and personal interpretive layers' (p. 41). It also involves the negotiation of norms and dominant values, managing immediate relationships with others and the personal context within 'larger societal and historical positioning' (p. 41). As Savolainen (2020) notes, defining experience in detail is difficult as an 'all pervasive quality of human life' (p. 672). In a similar vein, Lloyd (2014) argues that similar to difficulties in defining information, defining experience comes with its own set of challenges. For this paper, experience is understood as a 'complex interaction between body, sensory input, and neurological processing

—a relationship with the world as humans encounter, interpret, and shape messages’ (Fox, 2008, p. 41).

Calling for viewing leisure as an experience, Gallant et al. (2013) offer a definition of serious leisure as

the committed pursuit of a core leisure experience that is substantial, interesting, and fulfilling, and where engagement is characterized by unique identities and leads to a variety of outcomes for the person, social world, and communities within which the person is immersed. (p. 104)

The ‘committed pursuit’ contrasts with Stebbins’s (2007) ‘systematic pursuit’ which implies a rigid, structured interaction. Viewing serious leisure as a committed pursuit allows for the possibility of interruptions from various personal circumstances. This stance implies that ‘serious leisure is associated with strong personal interest, nurturing highly engaging social worlds and identities’ (p.104). It also removes the activity-based focus of serious leisure and views it as a core leisure experience, removing it from the dichotomies like work/leisure and casual/serious. Gallant et al. (2013) calls for viewing serious leisure as an ‘experience embedded in social and community processes rather than as an activity with individual outcomes’ (p. 104). This could also be seen to be in line with Mansourian’s (2024) idea of a passionate pastime, with passionate standing in place of the committed. Yet this also raises the question, if the idea is to move away from the dichotomy of casual/serious, then why should we refer to it as serious leisure? The idea of committed pursuit could be seen to continue the dichotomy even though the stated intention is to move away from it.

Within LIS, information experience is a new construct where ‘analysis of human experience is taken as a point of departure’ (Savolainen, 2020, p. 671). Bruce et al. (2014) defined information experience as a ‘complex, multi-dimensional engagement with information’ (p. 4) in real world contexts, that ‘integrates all information related-actions, thoughts, feelings and has social and cultural dimensions’ (p. 34). According to Davis (2015), the three dimensions to information experience are individuals with their backgrounds, world views, emotions, thoughts and feelings; the myriad forms of information, or information as experienced; and physical or virtual context in which the experience takes place. Hoyte (2019) argued that the concept of information experience is holistic as it unites ‘perceptual, cognitive, and embodied experience’ (p. 413). Pollak (2015) looked at experience in general, in a small rural context, across the life, work, and leisure spectrum to come to an understanding of experiential information.

Introduced by Latham (2014), information experience from a document perspective is termed as document experience. She drew on the work of Dewey and Rosenblatt, and holds that document experience in the form of a transaction falls in a continuum between aesthetic and efferent, with the stance taken by a person having an impact on it. Dewey (1934) viewed experience as transactional. Latham (2014) observes that Dewey defined experience as the ‘undivided continuous transaction between human beings and their environment’ (p. 549). Rosenblatt (1981), who herself drew on Dewey, states that the term transaction is used to ‘designate a two-way relationship in which one shapes and is shaped by the other’ (p. 18). A person and their environment are seen to be parts of an entire event or system. A transaction is not fixed or stable, and ‘involves both the past and the future, and is always historically situated; it includes not only thought, but also feeling, doing, perceiving, suffering and other aspects of living in the world’ (Latham, 2014, p. 549). The stance taken by Rosenblatt’s reader is reflective of their purpose, unconscious or conscious. Similarly, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) as cited in Latham (2014), also employed Dewey’s concept of transaction in viewing the relationship between people and household objects. The transactional outcome in this case depends on ‘intention, a direction or purpose that is an

essential feature of the meaning of the activity' (Latham, 2014, p. 549) and is similar to the stance in Rosenblatt's work.

Taking Gallant et al.'s (2013) repositioning of 'serious leisure as *experience in social context*' (p. 104-105) as a springboard and drawing on information experience and document experience literature, as well as following an approach previously put forward by Pollak (2015), this paper calls for *viewing leisure as an experience rooted in the everyday*. This paper also proposes that leisure be viewed as an experience falling in a continuum. Figure 1 presents a mapping of concepts used in the conceptualisation of leisure as experience.

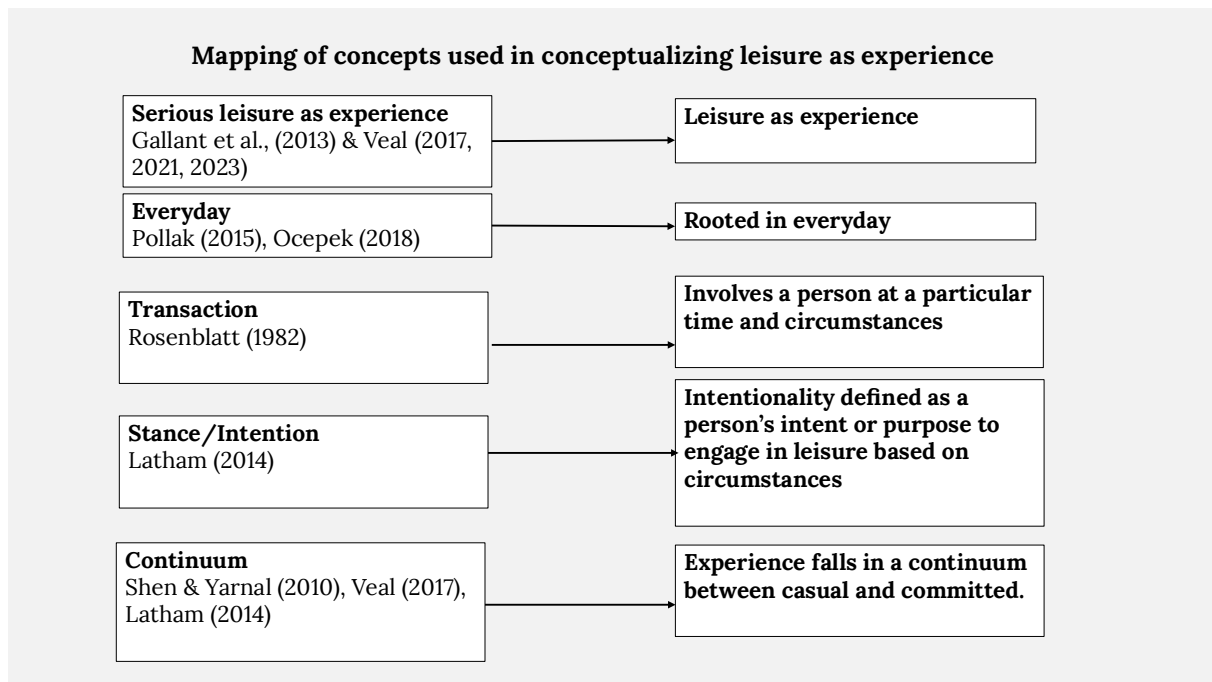


Figure 1. Mapping of concepts used in the conceptualisation.

In her transactional theory, Rosenblatt (1982) states that 'reading is a transaction, a two-way process, involving a reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances' (p. 268). Drawing on this, I would like to argue that the experience of leisure involves a person at a particular time and in a particular circumstance, with these circumstances falling in a continuum of intentionality. Here intentionality is defined as a person's intent or purpose for engaging in leisure. Various aspects of life could potentially play a part in the circumstances surrounding leisure experience, like availability of time for leisure pursuits, which could have an impact on one's ability and intention to engage in such activities. In document experience, the stance towards the document is crucial and the 'experiencer's purpose, focus and goals determine the kind of encounter, efferent or aesthetic' (p. 558). Adapting this, the intentionality based on circumstances will determine whether an instance of leisure experience is casual or committed, with most falling in the continuum. The term committed is adopted from Gallant et al.'s (2013) work, as it recognises interruptions from personal circumstances. Figure 2 presents the leisure experience continuum.

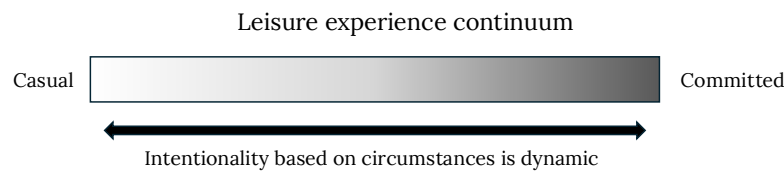


Figure 2. Leisure experience continuum.

Using terms from serious leisure literature we could say that the interest and motivation to engage could fall in a continuum between casual and committed, by situating the leisure experience in the everyday. Table 1 lays out the major differences between serious leisure perspective and viewing leisure as experience.

Serious leisure Perspective	Leisure as experience
Categorisation of activities into serious, casual and project based, on the basis of certain inherent characteristics	Leisure experiences are fluid, emergent and are contextually situated
Primary focus is on classifying leisure activities into types	Primary focus is on understanding lived experiences and the meaning making processes therein
Serious leisure is privileged based on required perseverance, effort and potential for career trajectory	Experiences are not privileged but are seen to fall in a continuum based on circumstances
Often perceived as linear	Nonlinear, based on circumstances, experiences will shift and transform
Associated information practices are seen as goal oriented to support serious leisure activities.	Information practices span the spectrum from seeking, sharing, browsing and as constitutive of experience. Includes affective dimensions of information too

Table 1. Serious leisure perspective versus leisure as experience.

Implications for LIS

Highlighting the lack of interest in everyday as information poor, Ocepek (2018) noted that even in studies of leisure, the focus has been on information richness. In making her observation, she points to the exhortation made by Hartel (2003) for information behaviour studies of leisure, that ‘the most fruitful starting point [for leisure research] is serious, not casual leisure, because it is information-rich’ (p. 230). She argues that the traditional understanding of information and information richness in information behaviour literature ‘makes much of everyday life appear to be information poor and thus not a worthy focus of research’ (p. 404). In calling for an expanded view of what constitutes information richness, Ocepek (2018) noted that future work should move beyond serious leisure and explore other activities including those defined as casual. In a study of casual leisure, Elswailer et al. (2011) found that many of the behaviours identified in the study did not ‘fit with existing models of information behaviour in the literature’ (p. 237). An understanding

of and usage of the 'transformative power of the everyday' can enable us to expand our research to 'new domains and new forms of information' (Ocepek, 2018, 405). According to Case and Given (2016), in information behaviour studies, information and entertainment have been treated as if they had nothing to do with each other. But it could be said that these concepts exist on a continuum, 'with some sensory input being 'purely' enjoyable, other input being 'purely' informative and much of what we encounter in everyday life falling somewhere between the two extremes' (p. 127).

In a similar vein, Pollak (2014) argued that socially constructed and unacknowledged dichotomies have the potential to stifle the study and interpretation of leisure activities. The results of Elswailer et al.'s (2011) study of casual leisure can be said to support this. The limitations highlighted by Gallant et al. (2013) also apply to information behaviour studies of leisure. One could argue that viewing activities as pleasurable and profound is also dichotomous, as is the idea of lower and higher things. Along with Ocepek's (2018) observation of the perceived lack of information richness in the everyday, Pollak (2015) observed that very little is known about non-documentary and experience-based information that is found in informal contexts. Viewing leisure as experience, rooted in everyday and falling in a continuum of intentionality, can provide a lens to study information experiences in leisure contexts, moving us away from the work/leisure and casual/serious dichotomies amongst others. Using two studies as cases, this paper demonstrates that such an approach would enable the identification of holistic information experiences in a more holistic way, placing the emphasis on the 'relationship between the various types of information and the individual interacting with that information' (Ocepek, 2018, 405). This is also aligned to Gallant et al.'s (2013) call for an 'expanded view of experiences of leisure in general, and serious leisure more specifically, particularly the gendered and commodified nature of these experiences, as well as the potential for diversity and innovation' (p. 94).

Case one: Rural context

Pollak (2014, 2015) looked at the nature of experience across work, leisure, and everyday life in a remote, rural village in Canada. She views it as a small world, in terms of both the geographic location as well as in terms of the dynamic present within it. The study is positioned as an initial attempt at bringing together the disciplines of information behaviour studies and leisure studies, 'in a way that privileges the experiential nature of information behaviours in everyday life' (Pollak, 2015, p.33). She notes that viewing experience as an information source across the spectrum of work, leisure, and everyday, we can gain a finer and minute understanding of leisure related information experiences, in contrast to what can be understood through the examination of individual activities in isolation. The results of her study supported Gallant et al.'s (2013) claim that serious leisure is 'more textured and complex than often acknowledged' (p. 94). The boundaries between the various domains of life and the various social worlds one occupies were seen to be considerably more fluid, highlighting that various dichotomies could stifle our understanding of leisure. She offers a working definition of experiential information as 'sensation, emotion, fact, skill, knowledge, or understanding acquired or otherwise derived from interactive participation in a social or solitary context, or occurring at some point thereafter as a result of contemplation and reflection' (Pollak, 2015, p. 255-256). Here the process of experiencing information occurs in physical or cognitive contexts, in work or non-work contexts as well as in formal or informal contexts.

Case two: Virtual context

Kizhakkethil (2020a, 2021) studied an online community from a gender, diaspora, and leisure perspective, adopting the theoretical lens afforded by information and document experience literature, to understand the experiences of information within that context. Viewing leisure as an experience, the population studied consisted of Indian women belonging to the diaspora and who were also fans of an Indian television show. Fanfiction associated with the show is extremely

popular within the community and the blogs where the stories are hosted function as *Addas* or hangouts, providing the social context to study information experiences within it. The participants in the study consisted of both writers and readers. To capture the social context, a model of a small world was used, defined as having a primary activity and sites of activity, supported by mediated practices and characterised by the presence of social ties and a sense of community. A key takeaway from the study is the importance of social ties for the participants, playing a part in their experience of reading and writing. Participants also described their experience as an enriching or learning one. Based on the results, information was experienced as everyday, as social ties in the form of interaction and motivation, as awareness, and as memories resulting in a broad conceptualisation of information as meaningful experience. Table 2 provides a comparison of the two cases.

Feature	Rural context (Pollak, 2015)	Virtual context (Kizhakkethil, 2021)
Context/Setting	Rural village in remote Canada	Online community, blogs functioning as spaces
Population	Rural residents	Women belonging to the Indian diaspora
Theoretical approach	Everyday life information seeking, experiential information, serious leisure, small world rural context	Small world model; Information and document experience, leisure as experience
Key findings	Boundaries between domains of life (everyday, work, leisure) are fluid. Leisure is complex and textured	Role of social context in information and document experience. Experience seen as learning or enriching.
Definition of information	Experiential information: Emotion, fact, knowledge, sensation, skill and understanding derived through participation either socially or solitarily or through reflection.	Meaningful experience: Information as everyday, social ties (interaction & motivation), awareness and memories.
Nature of experience	Occurring in cognitive/physical, formal/informal and work/everyday	Socially mediated, by way of social ties and a sense of community. Also cognitive, perceptual and embodied

Table 2. Comparison of the two cases, representing rural and virtual contexts.

Discussion

The two cases discussed above show that viewing leisure as an experience result in the identification of more holistic forms of information experiences. It enables the capturing of non-documentary forms of information highlighted by Pollak (2014). In the remote rural context of Pollak's (2015) study, information experiences occurred across the 'work-play-everyday life spectrum' (p. 260), whereas in Kizhakkethil's (2021) study, the social context to the leisure experience was seen to play an important role in experiences of information. Pollak (2015) noted that 'examining leisure information behaviours from the perspective of experience—broadly defined and across the work-maintenance-leisure spectrum—can potentially reveal macro-level detail and connections between activities that might otherwise remain hidden' (pp. 34-35). Her participants did not differentiate between the foisted boundaries between work, everyday life—and drawing on leisure and information behaviour literature—casual project-based, and serious leisure. Activities were undertaken which spanned the different domains, like female participants foraging for berries as a fun activity to do, as well as a way to earn money. Though Kizhakkethil's (2021) study looked at a leisure context, it afforded the opportunity to examine how 'individual experiences of leisure are socially constructed within ideologies and discourses of gender, sexuality, race, and class that are present within institutions and structures of society' (Gallant et al., 2013, p. 96). The participants of her study experienced leisure within the larger context of

migration and questions of identity that stem from it. The small world of similar others played a role in their information and document experience, whether in the form of motivation for writers, an awareness of self in contrast to others, or a more critical way of engaging in other activities borne out of the social nature of their leisure experience.

Gallant et al. (2013), drawing on the work of Dilley and Scraton (2010), note that the values associated with the acquisition of skills in serious leisure are gendered. It is described as closely aligning with 'traditional male values such as action and challenge rather than feminine values related to building interpersonal relationships' (p. 99). The emphasis on social ties and the benefits that accrued from it like motivation and support in Kizhakkethil's (2021) study shows that there can be gendered differences in experiences of leisure. Participants who were writers spoke of the motivation they received from their social ties as instrumental in them becoming writers, thereby discovering a side to themselves. Similarly, Pollak (2014) notes that the results of her study support the examination of leisure social worlds in terms of 'fluid plurality that embraces difference' (Gallant et al., 2013, p. 103). In her study, hunting as an activity was seen to be enjoyed by both individuals and small groups. There is not only a sharing of labour, but also the proceeds of hunting even with people outside of the groups. Membership is seen to persist in the hunting communities across generations and can play a part in who is invited to hunt. She argues that this can be seen to support Gallant et al.'s (2013) suggestion that leisure experiences are 'influenced by the socio-political context in which they occur' (p. 96).

According to Gallant et al. (2013), the serious leisure conceptualisations display a 'functional, gendered and westernized view of leisure' (p. 98), which Pollak (2014) notes does not capture differences in leisure experiences in other cultures. Her study also suggests that it is possible to find unique leisure-related cultures within one large socio-cultural context. This not only shows that studies of such contexts and cultures are warranted, but it may also afford us the opportunity to have a more nuanced understanding of leisure experiences, along with associated activities, practices and behaviours. Kizhakkethil's (2021) study highlights the role technology can play in leisure experiences, especially in engendering spaces which support the development of social ties and a sense of community. For immigrant and diaspora communities this could play an important role in how leisure is experienced. The results of both studies show that the 'social experiences of information and leisure are particularly important to how and why people participate in various leisure activities and how they affect individuals and groups' (Pollak, 2015, p. 265). Both studies show the value in viewing leisure as an experience, moving away from ideas of the need for perseverance and commitment. Gallant et al. (2013) states that 'perseverance as a means of acquiring high levels of skill and knowledge is a privilege available primarily to those with sufficient material and temporal resources' (p. 101). This would mean differences not only in terms of access but also in terms of gender and class. Viewed as an experience rooted in the everyday, this can mean viewing leisure as 'nurturing both individual identities and social ties' (p. 101).

The approach put forward in this paper also supports Ocepek's (2018) call for a more holistic approach to information behaviour studies, and the need to 'research the quotidian aspects of the everyday world, a fruitful and underdeveloped domain' (p. 409) by discarding dichotomies that have been a feature of both information behaviour and leisure studies. This would enable the exploration of methods that highlight forms of information that may be hidden and present in lived experiences, and which may not be revealed by 'customary methods and concepts of information' (p. 408). Both Pollak (2015) and Kizhakkethil (2021) adopted a qualitative approach to their studies, with Pollak (2015) adopting an ethnographic approach, while Kizhakkethil (2021) adopted an institutional ethnographic approach. Much of the literature drawn on for this paper is rooted in phenomenology, and as such, the approach adopted by Kizhakkethil (2020b) of viewing phenomenology as meta-theory, that is philosophy behind theory, could be valuable not just for studies of leisure but studies of information experiences in general. As Gorichanaz et al. (2018) highlights, even if not 'self-evidently phenomenological in nature' (p. 886), the concept of life world

was a finding in Pollak's (2015) study also. This approach is supported by Suorsa (2024), who calls for the 'conceptualization of information starting from a holistic concept of human being, which combines the understanding and thinking human being to the perceiving and experiencing human being' (p. 1470). She highlights the phenomenological threads in LIS, by pointing out its usage as a broad approach, 'both as a way to understand the premises of the discipline and as a way to introduce methods for examining phenomena related to information' (p. 1468).

The definitions of information presented by Pollak (2015) and Kizhakkethil (2021), show a nuanced view of information, which also highlights the relationship between an individual's interaction with new information and the use of their existing knowledge in the meaning making process. In Pollak's definition, it is the varying contexts to the information experience, like social or cognitive, and in Kizhakkethil's definition, in information viewed in the form of social ties, awareness and memory. In both studies, experiential learning plays a part in the information experience. Pollak (2015) states that while 'experiential learning is an iterative process of engagement, growth, practice, feedback, and reflection, it is always in response to a dynamic set of context-related information variables' (p. 253). In Kizhakkethil's (2021) study, participants pointed to things like developing a positive attitude towards life, the discovery or nurturing of a talent or skill as a learning or enriching experience emanating from their information and document experience. This is reflected in the definitions of information put forth by the two authors.

Elsweiler et al., (2011) noted that casual leisure is marked by a wide variety of motivating factors for engagement, such as desire to change mood or to gain knowledge generally or for social interaction. Similarly, information encountered could play a role in evoking a physical or emotional response to the experience. The importance placed on the leisure experience can also vary with an emphasis on personal wellbeing. Viewing leisure as an experience, falling in a continuum of intentionality can help to capture these nuanced experiences of information rooted in the everyday. Viewed this way information can be seen to constitute the leisure experience, whether in the form of emotion, or a cognitive process, or a fact. It also helps to capture the social context in which the experiences take place, resulting in a more holistic conception of information. This is also in line with Davis's (2015) conception of the three dimensions of information experience, which includes individuals and their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Adopting Rosenblatt's work as utilised by Latham (2014) in her model of document experience, I argue that viewing leisure as an experience falling in a continuum would enable the identification of information that also falls in a continuum between efferent and aesthetic, similar to the argument made by Case and Given (2016), of information and entertainment falling in a continuum. This captures the holistic view of information present in the definitions from both Pollak (2015) and Kizhakkethil (2021). The efferent side would be a person looking to take away information like, say, a fact from reading a book, while aesthetic side would feature the meaning making process involving one's emotions, prior knowledge, and memories. The social context to the leisure experience would also enable the experience of information through interactions which can also fall in a continuum between efferent and aesthetic. Using Kizhakkethil's (2021) definition, efferent would be information sharing (everyday) and aesthetic where information is experienced as motivation or awareness.

Limitations

This paper is an initial attempt at conceptualising leisure as experience for information behaviour studies. The review may have failed to consider relevant literature which could have improved the conceptualisation. It also needs empirical support apart from the two cases considered for the paper, in order to show the validity and usefulness of the conceptualisation, especially in identifying holistic forms of information.

Conclusion

Making the case for viewing fiction as informative, Broussard and Doty (2017) argued that doing so would help to better address problems in information science theory, like the ‘frustrated attempts to define *information*, the (generally hidden) gendered character of information science and information behaviour research, the misguided conduit metaphor and an overemphasis on cognition at the expense of practice, documents and materiality’ (p. 61). This aligns with Gallant et al.’s (2013) argument for viewing serious leisure as experience, which may be gendered, commodified, and stratified requiring an ‘increased attention to the sociopolitical context and the adoption of a critical lens’ (p. 91). It goes without saying that serious leisure has a rich history of application in research in various areas, including in information behaviour studies. The durability of the concept has been established by its widespread adoption. At the same time, it has certain limitations which can be overcome through conceptual approaches like viewing leisure as an experience. Various dichotomies have been a feature of both serious leisure and information behaviour studies, and this paper offers a more nuanced way than such dichotomous approaches. Pollak’s (2015) study was an attempt to bridge these two disciplines by offering a fresh perspective of viewing leisure as an experience. This paper attempts to take it further by proposing that leisure be viewed as an experience, rooted in everyday and falling in a continuum of intentionality, enabling a holistic understanding of information experiences in various social contexts.

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