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Throughout history, civilizations have sought to guard themselves against a host of environmental and psychological threats. Migration, wars, intricate politics, and so on have typically evolved as an answer toward alleviating a real or perceived threat.

Ironically, as our society has sought to protect itself from risk, increasing numbers of individuals have sought the personal testing ground of outdoor adventure pursuits. Participating in outdoor adventure activities such as rock climbing, white-water rafting, sailboarding, and ropes courses has moved from the domain of daredevils to one in which a wide variety of people are interested. Society has responded to this growing trend through the development of schools, organizations, and businesses that cater to the outdoor adventurer. As early as 1975, over 200 outdoor adventure-based programs were operating within the United States (Hale, 1978). Hendee and Roggenbuck (1984) have estimated that there were 542 wilderness-related courses offered by American universities during the 1983-84 academic year. In a previously discussed study of outdoor adventure leaders (Ewert, 1987), a moderately strong increase in the number of colleges and universities offering outdoor adventure programs is anticipated by the year 2000. Given this increase of interest and institutional attention to outdoor adventure pursuits, this chapter addresses the theories and models that underlie
the outdoor adventure pursuits experience. This chapter is divided into the following categories: (1) the importance of theory and model building, (2) optimal arousal, (3) competence-effectance, (4) self-efficacy, (5) attribution theory, (6) expectancy theory, (7) attitude and behavior mix, and (8) a causal model of behavior in outdoor adventure pursuits.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THEORY
AND MODEL BUILDING

How do we "know" the world? How do we get a sense of cause and effect and what is real versus what is illusion? As the general public, we have the luxury of using hearsay and intuition to provide knowledge. On the other hand, program planners often employ the added techniques of reading and observation to understand their portions of the world. As researchers and evaluators, the questions are approached through systematic inquiry and testing. Foregoing systematic and scientific inquiry and relying merely on common sense and intuition limit the observer to the obvious. The development of theories and models can aid both the scholar and the practitioner in the quest to understand, predict, and control their specific areas of concern. While theories can be considered a collection of explanatory statements about observed and inferred relationships among variables (Kerlinger, 1973), models can be considered descriptions or analogies that provide descriptive patterns. In addition, it should be recognized that the purpose of science is to develop these explanatory theories and models. In turn, these theories and models rely on the use of research questions and attendant hypotheses to investigate relationships between various factors and variables. Upon testing these hypotheses, the findings are used to support, refute, or redesign the original theories and models. DiRenzo (1967) suggests that the maturity of a science is reflected in the accumulation of its theory. This accumulative role of research is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

With respect to outdoor adventure pursuits, the systematic development and inquiry into applicable models and theories has had a relatively short history. Nevertheless, there are a variety of theories and models which can be used to better describe the outdoor adventure pursuits phenomenon. Examples of these theories are discussed in the following sections. It should be noted, however, that the theories and models presented do not exhaust the list but merely serve to illuminate several of the more important issues in outdoor adventure pursuits.

---

1 For a more elaborate discussion of theories and models see Sławski (1981)
OPTIMAL AROUSAL

One of the most pervasive theories associated with outdoor adventure pursuits is that of optimal arousal. Originally conceived by Duffy (1957), optimal arousal refers to a level of arousal or sensation that is sought by the organism (person). It is dependent on both the organism-environment interaction and individual experience. In other words, individuals will seek levels of arousal that are congruent with their past experience, skill level, and situation. This relationship is quadratic in that it can best be represented by an inverted "U" shape, as illustrated in Figure 6.2.
As depicted in Figure 6.2, levels of arousal for each individual can move from being too little through too intense. Along with this concept of differing levels of arousal, Berlyne (1960) has suggested that arousal contains the attributes of novelty, uncertainty (dissonance), and complexity. In other words, for an environment or situation to be optimally arousing it must contain the proper mix of new activities or old activities done in a new way (novelty). In addition, there must be an uncertainty of outcome (dissonance) and to a certain degree the individual must have a sense that he or she has enough ability to succeed at the task (complexity). Ellis (1973) suggests that the complexity of an event or
situation can be modified by increasing the number of behavioral options, increasing the dissimilarity of the options, and intensifying the possible outcomes. As most outdoor leaders can attest, decisions are often difficult because there are a number of different possible actions and these actions can lead to a variety of different but critical outcomes. A good example of an individual seeking optimal arousal in outdoor adventure pursuits might be a mountain climber taking a "new" route or making a "first" ascent (see Games Climbers Play by Lito Tejada-Flores, 1973). A first ascent or new route implies that no one else has completed that particular climb and hence there are no guidebooks or past knowledge to completely aid the climber.

Fowler (1966) reports that arousal seeking may be linked to a survival instinct to gain information and mastery over an individual's environment.

Ice-climbing is one way the outdoor pursuit specialist seeks optimal arousal.
through exploration. Specifically, exposure to something new creates uncertainty within the individual. This uncertainty necessitates a change in behavior which generates knowledge about the success of the new behavior. To be successful in meeting the demands of a new situation, a new behavior must often be learned; in essence something new must be tried. Thus the individual is “pushed” along to learn new, more successful and innovative behaviors that can be remembered and utilized in some future situation. Many outdoor pursuits programs utilize optimal arousal by casting students into new environments and creating situations that necessitate the learning of new personal and social skills. The keys to successful arousal are information load and intensity of motivation, with uncertainty and dissonance being increased in three ways:

1. Increasing the number of acceptable choices.
2. Increasing the complexity of the situation.
3. Creating an information overload.

Individuals respond in a variety of ways to these techniques. Some of the more common responses often seen by outdoor instructors include omission (ignoring the information), queuing (storing the information but not acting upon it), and selective discrimination (not dealing with information accurately enough). For example, a student may come to a fork in the trail and instead of “seeing” two trails, he or she will think, “I’m lost” even though there may be a trail sign at eye level.

While optimal arousal can provide an explanation for many situations in outdoor adventure pursuits, it does not address all the possibilities. For example, consider the recreationalist who continues to practice his or her activity even after the novelty or other aspects of optimal arousal have worn off. This type of behavior involves continued learning and interaction with the environment and can be related to the theory of competence and personal ability.

COMPETENCE-EFFECTANCE

Initially discussed by White (1959), competence-effectance involves a need to demonstrate an ability to affect or control the environment. A similar theory, later developed by Deci (1975), stated that there is a human need for feeling capable and self-determining. Consequently, individuals seek out optimally arousing situations and strive to successfully respond to those challenges. Iso-Ahola (1980) suggests that this need to seek out and successfully complete these challenges is an ongoing process with the end-product being feelings of satisfaction arising from a sense of competence and effect. Csikszentmihalyi (1975), however, suggests that this is a cyclic process, in which the individual will seek out greater challenges as his or her skill and competence level grows. He suggests that when challenges and levels of competence are congruent a feeling of “flow” develops. This concept of “flow” is illustrated in Figure 6.3.
Indeed, it should surprise no one involved in outdoor pursuits that as individuals gain in experience they often change the types of activities they pursue.

Related to competence-effectance and "flow" is the concept of specialization advocated by Bryan (1979). Formally stating an intuitively logical idea, Bryan suggested that a mega-activity, such as watersports, involves a variety of subactivities, including canoeing, powerboating, and white-water kayaking. These subactivities fall on a continuum based on the required specialization of the activity. For example, powerboating generally requires less skill and specialization than activities such as white-water canoeing or kayaking. The illustration in Figure 6.4 depicts this relationship.

Concomitant to this change in specialization is a change in the motivations of the recreationalists. What this implies is that what motivates the powerboater is often different from what motivates the wilderness canoeist or kayaker. For example, the powerboat enthusiast may be more interested in the socialization and waterskiing aspects of the activ-
ity. In contrast, the canoeist may more often seek the solitude and challenge of the wilderness environment (Rossman and Ulehla, 1977; Ewert, 1985. Fridgen and Hinkelman (1977) supported this concept by suggesting that the search for challenge and solitude through recreational activities was increasingly correlated with the natural environment. These findings have implications for outdoor adventure pursuits as, with any outdoor activity, there may be a variety of skill and experience levels, motivations, and subactivities (e.g., rock climbing can involve bouldering, aid climbing, lead climbing, top-roping, and soloing).

Climbing Mt. Robson in the Canadian Rockies involves a high degree of specialization in mountaineering.
In sum, competence-effectance implies the dual concepts of ability and influence. In part, outdoor adventure pursuits is an increasingly popular form of recreation because these activities provide opportunities for people to seek out avenues to acquire and demonstrate competence and ability. DeCharms (1968) supports this idea by stating that

Man’s primary motivational propensity is to be effective in producing changes in his environment. Man strives to be a causal agent, to be the primary focus of causation for, or the origin of, his behavior; he strives for personal causation.

In a sense this process is related to problem solving (Ellis, 1973) and involves an awareness of one’s abilities in or through the outdoor environment and a testing of those abilities. Through this testing and appraisal, individuals gain a sense of their personal ability to control their immediate environment. This sense of control, the perception that one can exercise control over his or her environment and affect personal choice, has been a cornerstone in Western man’s thought process. In turn, critical components of competence-effectance are self-efficacy and attribution theory.

**SELF-EFFICACY THEORY**

One of the most heavily subscribed-to theories of human behavior in outdoor adventure pursuits is that of self-efficacy. Originally conceptualized by Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to personal judgments of how well one can perform actions in specific situations that may contain ambiguous, unpredictable, and stressful features (McGowan, 1986).

Whether an individual will choose to participate in an outdoor adventure activity is often determined by his or her perceived level of ability. This perception is based on a cognitive appraisal of one’s level of competence in dealing with anticipated demands. Outdoor leaders will often work with students who opt not to participate under the premise that “it doesn’t look like fun,” when the real reason lies in his or her personal appraisal of not having the skills or abilities to complete the activity successfully.

Self-efficacy implies a personal appraisal and weighing of both ability and nonability factors such as:

- Perceived ability for the activity.
- Amount of effort to be expended.
- Perceived difficulty of the task.
- Amount of expected assistance to be received.
- Type of situational circumstances.
- Previous patterns of success or nonsuccess.

It should be expected that the participant in an outdoor adventure pursuit will make an appraisal of the potential for success involving some
or all of these components. An efficacy expectation, then, refers to the belief that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the desired and expected changes. These efficacy expectations vary with respect to the magnitude of the task, the degree to which they are generalized or transferred to new tasks, and their persistence in the face of disconfirming or unsuccessful experiences.

In addition, individual efficacy statements can be made and altered by four processes: (1) performance accomplishment, (2) verbal persuasion, (3) vicarious experience, and (4) emotional arousal. These techniques are illustrated in Figure 6.5.

**FIGURE 6.5**

*Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy (1972)*

Performance Accomplishments  
Vicarious Experience  

Efficacy Expectations  

Verbal Persuasion  
Emotional Arousal

Self-efficacy—an individual's perception of his/her ability to perform anticipated demands

Weightings
1. Perceived level of ability
2. Effort needed to perform
3. Task difficulty perceived
4. Aid expected
5. Situational circumstances
6. Patterns of success

Efficacy statements are influenced by:
1. Magnitude (degree of difficulty expected)
2. Generality (degree to which these abilities are transferrable)
3. Strength (persistence)

Of these four, performance accomplishment is the most powerful technique. Performance accomplishment reinforces the usefulness of experiential learning as an educational technique for developing learning situations in which the learner can generalize from one experience to another. Bandura (1977) reports that, while verbal persuasion is the most often used technique for developing efficacy statements, it is
A typical example of verbal persuasion involves an instructor telling beginning rock-climbing students that they can do the climb rather than creating successful situations where the more powerful efficacy source, performance accomplishment, can come into play.

Harmon and Templin (1980) elaborated on the efficacy of performance accomplishments, indicating that they are especially powerful influences because they are based on personal mastery and individual perceived competence. In turn, when these personal accomplishments are perceived to be significant to the individual, they tend to be generalizable to a variety of situations. That is, if a person does something she feels is very noteworthy, and she accomplished the task through her own effort and skill (such as completing an adventurous expedition or finishing an arduous course), the feelings of competence and ability that may arise can often be carried over to other situations and circumstances. Indeed, this ability to carry over feelings of competence to different situations is one of most important outcomes of many outdoor programs.

The assumption in self-efficacy is that successful performance in one group of activities is one of the best predictors of future performances. This assumption relates to another important theory (discussed in more detail later in the chapter), namely attribution theory. Attribution and self-efficacy theories provide congruence because, as individuals gain in ability and self-efficacy beliefs, they move toward internal, stable attributions. These, in turn, can create situations in which individuals participate in a given activity because they feel they are competent and capable.

Within an outdoor educational setting, self-efficacy theory is often applied through the use of rewards and goals. Rewarding experiences inform and motivate while goal setting establishes standards by which one's actions can be focused. In both cases, rewards seem to promote motivation when compared with offering no rewards. In a similar fashion, goals that incorporate specific performance-based standards lead to higher performance than no goals or goals that are too general. If the outdoor educator wishes to develop the self-efficacy feelings of a client through the use of rewards and goal setting, the following guidelines are suggested.

In sum, self-efficacy is a cornerstone of many outdoor pursuits programs. Most practitioners would agree that participants who emerge from a program with feelings of competence and higher perceived levels of skill are more likely to continue in some form of outdoor recreation and, hopefully, be willing to trade some of their mechanical leisure items, such as snowmobiles, for less mechanized and less consumptive forms of recreation.

Ultimately, the success of many outdoor adventure pursuits programs will rest not only on the skills and knowledge imparted to the students,
but, just as importantly, the individual learner will need to feel competent and at ease with the skills just acquired.

However, self-efficacy does not fully explain participation in outdoor adventure activities. An individual may feel that he or she has the abilities to engage in the activity but still chooses not to participate. When considering participation, other factors or attributions must be considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rewards</th>
<th>More Effective Than</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No rewards</td>
<td>Should be tied to actual accomplishments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Goal setting | No goals or very general goals such as "You can do it!" | Use specific performance standards |

| Proximal goals | Distant goals or no goals | Goals that are close and attainable |

**ATTRIBUTION THEORY**

Iso-Ahola (1976) refers to attribution as the process by which an individual makes assumptions about the cause of certain events. Not getting to the top of a peak can be attributed to bad weather (external-situational), poor leadership (external-personnel), or lack of climbing skill (internal-ability). More importantly, these attributions are composed of two dimensions: *internality* and *stability*. Internality refers to intrinsic motivation or how compelled an individual feels toward doing an activity. Is she doing it because she wants to or somebody else wants her to? Stability refers to how likely it is that an individual will continue the activity. Using canoeing as an outdoor adventure example, consider Figure 6.6.

Clearly, in terms of keeping an individual engaged in the activity, the stable-intrinsic situation is preferred. The least desirable situation is someone participating for incidental reasons (unstable-extrinsic) such as being asked by friends to come along when he or she doesn't really want to. While this circumstance may lead to a life-long enthusiasm, it often does not because there is little psychological meaning placed on the event *after* the activity. In other words, the individual may end a white-water canoeing episode feeling excited and energized but without thinking that he or she could be a good white-water paddler. Making the link to internal-stable attributions, that is, "I can be good at this activity," is critically important in outdoor adventure programming—especially when learning new outdoor skills, as there are often moments of incompetence which necessitate the support and guidance of an
outdoor staff member. Attribution theory suggests that, within a supportive environment, attributions can be altered to stable-intrinsic patterns. While learning outdoor adventure skills is a salient component of participation, making internal-stable attributions during and after the activity is necessary in encouraging a new learner to stay with the activity. Letting the experience "speak for itself" can often do an injustice to the participant.

**FIGURE 6.6**

*Dimensions of Participating in Canoeing Using Attribution Theory*

*Adapted from Weiner et al. (1971)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internality Dimension</th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I canoe because I am good at this activity</td>
<td>I canoe because it is a good way to get the family together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I canoe because I like water activities and canoeing is relatively inexpensive</td>
<td>I canoe when my friends happen to invite me along</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXPECTANCY THEORY**

It should surprise no one offering outdoor adventure activities that most participants come with a variety of expectations. These expectations can be divided into psychological (self-concept enhancement, confidence, sensation seeking, fun), sociological (compassion, socializing, respect for others, trust), and physical (fitness, outdoor skills, health, catharsis).

In addition to the expectations previously mentioned, a number of others can be associated with outdoor adventure pursuits. McAvoy (1978) and Progen (1979) suggest that excitement and challenge are two expectations of the adventure experience. Other expectations include individual and group challenges, opportunities for decision making, and participation in a small-group setting. Moreover, these expectations can be categorized into three general classifications of expectancy: avoidances, antecedents, and actual benefits.

Within the rubric of expectancy, what else can a participant expect from a formalized outdoor adventure experience? First, he or she should expect a high degree of safety with a minimum degree of exposure to unnecessary risks. Second, he or she should expect an appropriate meshing of activity with program objectives. If an individual is going on a
Participants in outdoor pursuits come with a variety of expectations, skills, and backgrounds.

### TABLE 6.1
Potential Expectancy Components in Outdoor Adventure Programming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoidances</th>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Getting hurt</td>
<td>1 Money's worth</td>
<td>1 Enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Demeaning treatment</td>
<td>2 Safety</td>
<td>2 Self-concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Unnecessary risks</td>
<td>3 Appropriate activities</td>
<td>3 Physical fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Rigorous work</td>
<td>4 Learning opportunities</td>
<td>4 Socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Failure</td>
<td>5 Souvenirs</td>
<td>5 Self-actualizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Confrontation</td>
<td>6 Reasonable costs</td>
<td>6 Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Illness</td>
<td>7 Quality equipment</td>
<td>7 Personal reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A white-water trip for novices, being required to paddle through Lava Falls on the Colorado River (a technically difficult river) may very well be an inappropriate merging of stated objectives with performed activities.

The term *avoidances* implies items that individuals do not expect or want to have happen. Understandably, they do *not* expect to be injured or killed. Neither do they expect to feel foolish, incompetent, or unworthy.
They probably do not expect to be treated as one of many clients. Antecedents refer to positive or appropriate expectations when participating in an outdoor adventure experience. In other words, the necessary components to achieve a non-negative experience and feelings that one has gotten his “money’s worth” must be present or anticipated to be present. For this to occur, certain perceived “benefits” must be realized. Examples of these benefits might include excitement, personal challenge, learning new skills, and meeting friends. Table 6.1 illustrates these expectancy components within outdoor adventure programming. Obviously, for a program to be successful, staff must stay cognizant of all three expectancy components.

**ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR MIX**

As stated previously, outdoor adventure has moved from the realm of a few daredevils to a much wider acceptance by society at large. This societal trend is manifested in the attitudes or learned predispositions to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner toward outdoor adventure activities. In general, attitude is a product of past experience and can predispose future action or behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1980). Understanding an individual’s attitudes can help explain his or her participation patterns in outdoor adventure activities. To more fully understand the effect of attitude, consider the following “Attitude-Behavior” model adapted from Fishbein and Ajzen (1975).

**Attitude-Behavior Model**

Clearly, the beliefs about the activity and the intentions toward it play important roles in the ultimate behavior displayed. Beliefs about outdoor adventure activities are formulated in two ways: (1) past experience and (2) situational/social influences. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) suggested that an individual will generally hold from five to nine salient beliefs about a given object or activity at any one time. Outdoor adventure programmers would do well to consider identifying a potential client’s specific beliefs about an activity since these beliefs, unless changed, will have a powerful influence on the person’s behavior toward and during that activity. Both beliefs and their consequential attitudes can be changed through two primary mechanisms: active participation and persuasive communication. While active participation is the most powerful method and the raison d'etre for most programs, participants still...
have to be convinced to come to the program, thus often necessitating persuasive communication. This communication is empowered by the perceived trust in the message as well as its strength.

To summarize attitude theory and outdoor adventure—if the purpose is to predict an adventure behavior, such as participation, one should focus on the stated intentions of the participants, with regard to participation. However, if understanding the behavior is the goal, the factors which affect those intentions should be studied. While there are other theories that impact the outdoor adventure situation (such as intrinsic motivation and cognitive dissonance), the previously discussed theories lay a strong foundation for the development of a causal model for outdoor adventure.

**A CAUSAL MODEL**

A causal model attempts to resolve questions about causes and effects. To date, there are a plethora of studies suggesting that participation in outdoor adventure activities can enhance self-concept, stimulate personal growth, and create opportunities for self-actualization (Ewert, 1983). What is needed now is a better understanding of what factors influence these outcomes and to what degree. The ultimate goal is to produce a model of causes and effects (causal) that is consistent with both field observations and collected data. This is critical, as any concept or model without empirical meaning cannot serve any theoretically useful function (DiRenzo, 1967). Without this development of substantiated theories applicable to the field, outdoor adventure will continue to remain a concept analogous to electricity; we know that it works but we do not know how.

Building on the risk recreation paradigm of Allen (1980), the self-efficacy research of Bandura (1977), and the outcome findings as described in Shore (1977) and Ewert (1983), a model can be built around the substantiated attitudinal/behavior work of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). This model attempts to explain the relationship between (a) the dimensions of predisposing conditions (antecedents), (b) beliefs about an outdoor adventure activity, (c) the individual's attitude about the activity, (d) his intention to elicit a particular behavior such as participating in the activity, and (e) the ultimate behavior exhibited by the individual. The framework of these dimensions is depicted in Figure 6.7.

As can be seen, each dimension is made up of a number of variables. When combined, these variables can collectively comprise an overall dimension such as predisposing factors (antecedents) or beliefs. In defining a possible pattern of these relationships, a path diagram is depicted in Figure 6.8, using participation as the outcome behavior.

As can be seen in Figure 6.8, predisposing factors and beliefs influence one another. Both dimensions influence an individual's attitude
### FIGURE 6.7
**Framework Relating Beliefs, Attitudes, Intentions, and Behaviors in Outdoor Adventure Recreation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predisposing Factor¹</th>
<th>Beliefs about Activity</th>
<th>Attitude toward Activity</th>
<th>Intentions to Perform Desired Behavior</th>
<th>Behaviors with Respect to Outdoor Adventure Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality factors</td>
<td>Intrinsic feelings</td>
<td>Amount of affect</td>
<td>Participate</td>
<td>Engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>• Positive</td>
<td>Nonparticipation</td>
<td>Nonengagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preexisting</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>• Negative</td>
<td>Extent of participation</td>
<td>Disengagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td>Perception of</td>
<td>• Neutral</td>
<td>Time/location</td>
<td>Modification of engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributions</td>
<td>risk/danger</td>
<td>Belief strength</td>
<td>Willingness to assume costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/</td>
<td></td>
<td>Expectation values</td>
<td>• Financial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychological</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex role</td>
<td>Risky shift</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>Protective measures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propensity for</td>
<td>Hazard folklore²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>risk seeking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spectrum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ See Allen, 1980
² See Helms, 1984

### FIGURE 6.8
**Conceptual Model of Participation in an Outdoor Adventure Activity**

- Predisposing Factors
- Beliefs about Activity
- Attitude toward Activity
- Intentions for Activity
- Behavior

- Arrows indicate the flow of influence from predisposing factors to beliefs, then to attitude, to intentions, and finally to behavior.
about an activity. Attitude affects the intentions for an activity or can bypass intentions and directly influence behavior. Intentions can also directly influence behavior. For example, an individual may believe that a particular activity is extremely dangerous and formulate the intention of never participating in that activity. In a similar fashion, a person may have developed some very positive attitudes about rock-climbing, through past experiences or collected information. In turn, these attitudes can influence a person to join a rock-climbing class or create intentions to do so. Behavior can also influence attitude, as suggested earlier in the optimal-arousal and attribution theories, by creating the opportunities for active participation, thereby constituting a potential attitude change.

The importance of this paradigm lies in its ability to predict and explain adventure behavior. However, describing a potential model and testing its validity are different things. While model testing can only disconfirm rather than prove (Pedhazur, 1982), the next step is to conduct some empirically based research on the validity of the proposed model.

CONCLUSIONS

Outdoor adventure activities have played an important recreational and educational role for many millions of individuals. The time has come for the field to take a more critical and astute view of what it does. The question needs to be extended beyond the point of "whether" something happens to one of "how" it happens. By exploring the theories that can glue our observations together, the field will be able to better explain how outdoor adventure activities impact an individual. In devising substantiated causal models, the field will move closer to realizing its ultimate goal: a healthier, more vibrant individual and society.

MAIN POINTS

1. Model and theory building are accumulative in the sense that they add to the body of knowledge in outdoor adventure pursuits by constantly verifying or refuting past ideas and beliefs.
2. It is believed that one of the reasons people engage in adventure pursuits is because of the search for optimal arousal or an idealized level of stimulation.
3. Competence-effectance refers to an individual's need to demonstrate an ability to control or effect his or her environment. Outdoor pursuits activities can provide opportunities to meet challenging tasks and a personal testing ground.
4. Individuals formulate ideas about the level of their competency, which are referred to as self-efficacy statements. These self-efficacy statements can be developed by personal accomplishments, verbal persuasion, arousal levels, and modeling.
5. Related to the theory of self-efficacy is the theory of attribution. Attribution theory refers to the process by which an individual makes assumptions about the cause of certain outcomes.

6. Using the attitude-behavioral model of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), a model was developed to help explain and predict the behavior of people engaging in outdoor adventure pursuits.

REFERENCES


