A Study of Campers' Motivations and Preferences of Participating in Camping Activities

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ABSTRACT

Camping has become a popular activity for all ages and occupations in recent years, characterized by a high degree of autonomy, the experience of wildlife, and the connection with nature. The purpose of this study is to explore campers' motivations and preferences for participating in camping activities, taking the campers who were camping in target campsites as research subjects, using the questionnaire survey and interview survey. Finally, 175 valid questionnaires were collected, and feedback from 15 interviewers were taken and analyzed. Regarding participation motivation, bringing friends/family closer together, feeling like having different leisure ways, and enjoying the gathering atmosphere were the main factors; in terms of environmental satisfaction, the facility, space, and the campsite environment were the main factors. The results of the interview survey were about the same, and the natural environment, including mosquitoes, fireflies, wild boars, snakes, and wind, also gave a deep impression on the campers during camping.

Keywords: Camping, Camping Motivation, Camping Preference, Leisure Activity

1. Introduction

Taiwan is surrounded by the sea and stretches of mountains with beautiful and unique natural landscapes, which increases the growth of the domestic outdoor leisure population. Camping activities change as people have higher income, and then came along educational and recreational [17]. Camping is an outdoor leisure activity in that people can stay longer outside to extend their time of "outdoor leisure activity." It is a different enjoyment and experience from tourism or recreation activities. According to the statistics from the Camping Association of the R.O.C., in Taiwan, the regular camping population has exceeded over 2 million [20]; Moreover, as of 2022, there were 1,790 campsites in Taiwan based on the data provided by the Tourism Bureau of Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MOTC) [19]. Nowadays, people live in a high-pressure, hustle and bustle of life; thus, having a better way to release pressure and connect with relatives and friends is necessary. Camping is a popular outdoor activity different from traditional leisure activities through which people can relax, make friends and enjoy nature. The survey was conducted on the campers from RiverBank Camping, Sensen Camping, and Carefree Flower Camping, interviewing them and collecting data by using the questionnaire survey and interview survey, and then analyzing the results through survey statistical analysis, interview recording and collation, and comparative analysis

between questionnaire survey and interview survey. The purpose of this study is to explore the motivation of campers participating in camping activities, discuss campers' preferences for camping environments, and the comparative analysis of questionnaire surveys and interviews survey.

2. Literature Review

In 2003, The Tourism Bureau, MOTC proposed the following benefits of participation in camping activities: 1. to experience nature, enjoy the natural landscape, and observe flora and fauna; 2. to provide outdoor recreation and conservation of natural environment with entertaining functions; 3. to provide healthy holiday leisure environment, training the youths' wildlife skills and community life discipline; 4. to enhance parent-child relationship and peer friendship [12]. Jeng et al. [10] used the concept of Big Data and employed Chi-square statistics to analyze Chinese texts online and to find out the relationship between camping sites and their nearby attractions in Eastern Taiwan. Yang, et al. indicated that the campers' environmental literacy was highly correlated with environmental knowledge, values, and attitudes as well as environmental action experience [18]. Huang and Jhao [8] used the structural equation model to analyze the research structure and explore the impact of experience value on recreation satisfaction. The research made three suggestions based on the analysis results and research conclusions: strengthening the open information on the East Coast camping, improving the frequency of camping hardware installations, and encouraging visitors to share the experience.

Camping is a leisure activity in which campers usually leave the city to camp in the wild with their tents and spend one or more nights, which usually associates with other activities such as hiking, fishing, or swimming. He et al. [7] discussed the benefits of leisure and rest in parent-child camping activities; Wong et al. [16] pointed out that camping is one of the most popular outdoor recreational activities in Taiwan. People not only can experience nature through camping activities but also can enhance their relationships. The results have found that camping motivation positively affects camping trip behavior – the stronger the camper's motivation to camp, the more likely the campers will engage in camping trips. Huang et al. [9] took campers as the research participants to explore whether there are differences in the satisfaction and the importance of campers with different background variables on the service quality elements of camping sites, and the results showed that: 1. campsite safety is the most important concern for campers, and men pay more attention to the safety of the campsite than women; 2. the physical environment of the campsite is the priority for improvement, especially the water source, sanitary facilities, and environmental sanitation have to be clean, complete, and sanitized; 3. the interactive quality of the campsite is less valued by campers; 4. convenience of service is a quality of service that campers perceive as over-provisioned. Also, the impact of camping experience on peer interaction and life satisfaction [15] and the relationship between camping motivation, leisure involvement, and environmental attribute preference has also been discussed [3]. The results of the study found that camping motivation does positively affect camping travel behavior. In addition, this study also found that camping place has a mediating effect on endurance involvement – travel behavior relationship. This study suggests that camping operators should continue to develop and utilize surrounding resources and improve the supporting facilities of the campsite to attract camping enthusiasts to the campsite [12]. Chang et al. [2] points out that both activity involvement and knowledge positively affect participation behaviors. Activity involvement has partially supported by attraction and life centration.

Camping industry involves significant facilities, amenities, and services to attract and retain tourists in their site and at least in their territory. While the industry is growing everywhere in the world not all sites deploy a large stock of recreational facilities and accommodations [5]. Research in camping management has been developing for a few years by linking the demand side and the supply side, while addressing multiple points of interest around the issues of business strategy, competitiveness, and performance analysis [4,6,11,13,14]. Blundell, L. et al. explains that factors that influence families' decision to send their children to a week-long pediatric oncology camp and thoughts about attending camp [1].

3. Research Method and Design

This research includes two methods: questionnaire surveys and interview survey.

3.1 Survey Conducting

3.1.1 Survey period

The questionnaire was conducted from November 18 to November 21, 2022.

3.1.2 Subjects

Firstly, the questionnaire designers referred to the relevant literature and then cooperated with the research team, drafted the questions, and designed it with an electronic (Google) questionnaire. The investigators visited those three survey campsites in person, and the campers were the subjects of the questionnaire survey for this study.

3.1.3 Survey respondents

250 questionnaires were sent out and returned with a recovery rate of 100%, of which 175 (70%) were valid and 75 (30%) were invalid, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey location and survey respondents

No.	Name of the Campsite	Description	Number of Sample
1	RiverBank Camping	It is located in Dahu Township, Miaoli County. It is known for its local Dahu strawberries in January and February, plums in April and May (meanwhile with the Lighting Bug Festival), and sweet pears in June and August.	25
2	Sensen Camping	It is located in Daxi, Taoyuan. Sensen Camping Area is close to Shimen Reservoir and Sankeng Old Street. There are many grass carp or black carp restaurants, so it is convenient for purchasing or traveling.	100
3	Carefree Flower Camping	It is located in Jiaoxi Township, Yilan County. There is a famous travel attraction called Paoma Historic Trail nearby.	125

3.2 Interview Survey

The purpose of the study is to understand the campers' opinions and points of view on camping

issues through interviews and then compare that feedback to the questionnaire survey results.

3.2.1 Interview time

The interview was conducted from November 18 to November 27, 2022.

3.2.2 Interviewees

For convenience, 15 campers were randomly sampled and interviewed. Please refer to Table 2 for the basic information on the interview campsites and interviewees.

Table 2. Basic information on the interview campsites and interviewees

Campsite and Date	No.	Interviewee	Age	Edu. Level	Occupation	Residence	Marital Status	No of Family
	A1	Mr. Hsieh	21	Bachelor	Store clerk	Neihu	Unmarried	4
Riverbank Camping	A2	Ms. Maggie	43	High School	Hair salon	Taipei	Married	3
(A)	A3	Mr. Pan	33	Bachelor	CAD	Linkou	Married	2
111/11/19	A4	Ms. Hua	34	Bachelor	Sales	Taipei	Married	2
	A5	Mr. Huang	28	Bachelor	Pet supplies	Nangang	Married	2
	B1	Mr. Cheng	31	Master	Civil Engineering	Taipei	Married	3
Carefree	B2	Mr. Huang	35	Bachelor	Biz	Taipei	Married	4
Flower Camping	В3	Mr. Lin	33	Bachelor	Civil Engineering	Taoyuan	Unmarried	5
(B) 111/11/27	B4	Ms. Tsai	33	High School	Housewife	Taoyuan	Married	3
	B5	Mr. Tsai	43	High School	Biz	Taoyuan	Married	3
	C1	Mr. Chen	41	Master	Service	Eastern Taiwan	Married	4
	C2	Ms. Hsu	31	Bachelor	Biz	Eastern Taiwan	Unmarried	6
Sensen Camping (C) 112/11/18	C3	Ms. Kuo	35	Bachelor	Military servants, civil servants, and teachers	Taipei	Unmarried	4
	C4	Ms. Chung	33	High School	Military servants, civil servants, and teachers	Eastern Taiwan	Unmarried	6
	C5	Mr. Cheng	23	Bachelor	Service	Taipei	Unmarried	4

3.2.3 Interview questions

This study mainly adopts semi-structured interviews, outlines the design according to the research theme, and drafts the interview questions as follows:

- Q1: Is there any particular campsite you like to visit?
- Q2: What do you usually eat while camping?
- Q3: What's your favorite camping gear brand?
- Q4: The most impressive issue you have while camping.
- Q5: What is the main reason of motivation for camping?

4. Research Results

The results have been separated into three parts: survey statistical analysis, interview record collation, and comparative analysis between questionnaire survey and interview survey.

4.1 Questionnaire Statistics and Analysis

4.1.1 Personal data statistics

(1) Gender

There were 175 respondents, 101 (58%) were men and 74 (42%) were women.

(2) Age Group

The largest number of respondents was 76 (43%) aged from 18-25, and then 33 (19%) aged from 26-30.

(3) Educational Levels

In the statistics, undergraduate students accounted for the most, with a total of 92 (52%), followed by 74 (43%) graduate students, and 9 (5%) of junior high schools (inclusive) and below.

(4) Occupations

The most occupations are students with a total of 75 (41%), service industry with 26 (15%), and housewives with 11 (6%).

(5) Place of Residence

More than half of the respondents live in the north, and the rest 36 (21%) live in Taichung, Changhua, and Nantou.

(6) Marital Status

48 (27%) were married and 127 (73%) were unmarried.

Table 3. Statistical Table of Questionnaire

Question	Options	Number	Percentage	Question	Options	Number	Percentage
Gender	Men	101	58%	Occupations	Student	73	41 %
	Women	74	42%		Service	26	15 %
Age	Under of 18	8	5%		Housewife	11	6%
	18-25	76	43%		Military	9	5 %
					Education		
	26-30	33	19 %		Freelance	11	6 %
	31-40	31	18%		Business	15	9 %
	41-50	17	10 %		Others	30	17 %
	51-60	7	4 %	Place of	Taipei, New Taipei,	46	26 %
				Residence	Keelung		
	Above 60	3	1 %		Taoyuan, Hsinchu,	46	26 %
					Miaoli		
Education	Junior high	9	5%		Taichung, Changhua,	36	21%
	School				Nantou		
	Undergraduate	92	52%		Yunlin, Chiayi, Taina	19	11 %
	Graduate	74	43%		Kaohsiung, Pingtung	12	7 %
Marital	Married	48	27%		Yilan, Hualien,	16	9 %
					Taitung		
Status	Unmarried	127	73%				

4.1.2 Analysis of motivation for participation in camping activities

69% (strongly agree and agree) of campers went camping to satisfy the curiosity of their family members; up to 74% of people chose camping activities to escape from the noise of the city and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere; 59% of the campers would like to cultivate children's interest and enjoy

nature. The above reasons might probably be because our interviewees were mostly unmarried. Enjoying the atmosphere of group gatherings, having closer relationships, and enjoying different leisure activities were the main motivations for participating in camping activities. 74% of respondents thought camping was a different leisure activity from others. Please refer to Table 4 and Figure 1 for details.

Table 4. Table of su		

No	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	To satisfy the curiosity of the family	63 (36%)	59 (33%)	43 (25%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	175 (100%)
2.	Get away from the city noise and enjoy the atmosphere	75 (43%)	54 (31%)	39 (22%)	4 (2%)	3 (2%)	175 (100%)
3.	Cultivate children's interest and enjoy nature	65 (37%)	56 (32%)	48 (27%)	0 (0%)	6 (3%)	175 (100%)
4.	Enjoy the atmosphere of group gatherings	67 (38%)	56 (32%)	46 (26%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	175 (100%)
5.	Have closer relationships	89 (51%)	51 (29%)	33 (19%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	175 (100%)
6.	Different leisure activities to relax	77 (44%)	53 (30%)	39 (22%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	175 (100%)

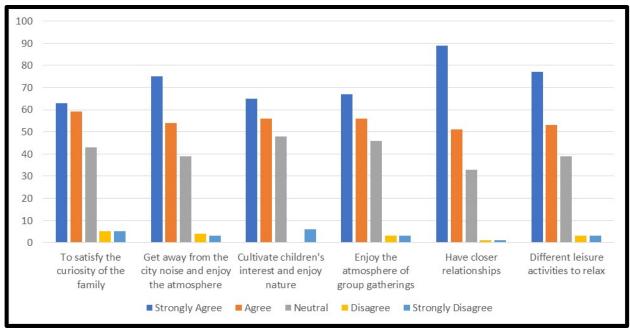


Figure 1. Chart of motivation for participation in camping activity.

4.1.3 Camping environment analysis

69% of respondents were satisfied with (strongly like and like) the campsite environment they chose; 72% of respondents enjoyed the campsite space, and 83% of respondents cared about the campsite facility, which means campers accept and like most of the campsites in Taiwan. However, 25% of the respondents said the nearby scenery and environment were neutral. Please refer to Table

5 and Figure 2 for details.

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No	Questions	Strongly Like	Somewhat Like	Neutral	Somewhat Dislike	Strongly Dislike	Total
1	Campsite	61	59	53	0	2	175
1.	environment	(35%)	(34%)	(30%)	(1%)	(1%)	(100%)
2.	Nearby scenery	63	64	45	1	2	175
۷.	and environment	(36%)	(25%)	(25%)	(1%)	(1%)	(100%)
3.	Campsite space	65	61	43	3	3	175
3.	Campsite space	(37%)	(35%)	(24%)	(2%)	(2%)	(100%)
4.	Campsite	91	54	28	0	2	175
4.	facility	(52%)	(31%)	(16%)	(0%)	(1%)	(100%)

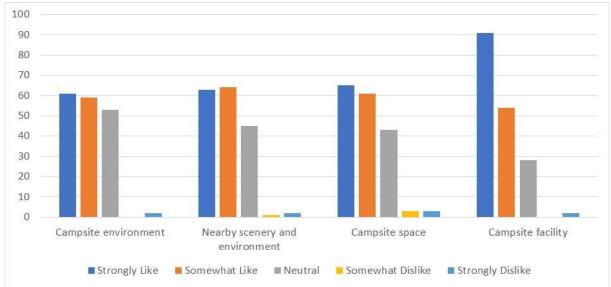


Figure 2. Chart of camping environment survey and analysis.

4.2 Recording and Collation of Interview Survey

We have analyzed the interview questions and answers collected from those 15 interviewers and listed meaningful interview opinions as follows. Please refer to Table 6 for details.

Table 6. Field interview recording and collation.

Q1:	Is there any particular campsite you like to visit?						
Ans.	(1) 5 people have camped less than 5 times, 2 people have camped more than 10 times, and						
	the remaining 8 people have camped 6 to 9 times.						
	(2) Concerned about sanitary environments such as restrooms and bathrooms (C2, C3, C4).						
	(3) Concerned about parent-child activities (B2).						
	(4) Concerned about scenery, view, and environment (A2, A3, A5, C1, C5).						
	(5) For example:						
	• I like VillaHome and Diamond Forest the most because there is a sea of clouds and the						
	scenery is extremely beautiful (A2).						
	• No particular place, but the higher, the better (A3).						

• At Tau Shi Campground, people can see beautiful scenery and enjoy the feeling of being on the mountainside. • When choosing a campsite, bathrooms, and toilets are our first choice (C4) • The view is better on the mountain. The facility in the camping area is also vital (C5). What do you usually eat while camping? Q2: (1) Mostly, we cook by ourselves, but sometimes we will order food delivery. Ans. (2) Typically, we will have hotpot, fried rice, BBQ, instant noodle, etc. (3) For example: • We cook our food, just cook whatever we want, and just be happy (A2). • We usually prepare the soup. It is more convenient to have soup for dinner when it is cold, and bread for breakfast (A4). • On the first day, we usually eat better, like hotpot, and on the second day, we usually have instant noodles, which is more convenient (A5). • We usually prepare food ourselves, and most of us cook instant noodles (C1). What's your favorite camping gear brand? Q3: (1) Most people choose Snow Peak and Nuit, and others include Coleman, Kazmi, Komine (2) For example: • Pay attention to the Cost Performance Index. Sometimes, expensive products are not always good or easy to use (A5). • No specific camping gear brand, as long as it works well (C2). The most impressive issue you have while camping. **Q4**: (1) There are many insects and animals, including mosquitoes (feet will be very itchy if got Ans. bitten, and there is a need to spray mosquito repellent), fireflies, wild boars, snakes, insects, and birds (healing). (2) When the wind is strong, the camp nails will be pulled up, and some Aborigines get drunk and make noise. (3) For example: • See the rainbow and the sea of clouds (A2). • When it rains heavily, the tent will leak; when the weather is too cold, the sleeping bag will not be warm (A4). • Never get enough sleep and usually feel hungry (A5). • Play with friends and family and cherish the time (B3). **Q5**: What is the main motivation for camping? (1) Most of them said that they can relax, get together with friends, get close to nature, and Ans. stay away from electronic products: • When camping, we can relax and forget trivial issues (A1). • Like the feel of sleeping outside, drinking alcohol, and being close to nature (A5). • Let children experience outdoor activities (B1). • Accompanying children or gathering with friends and classmates (B5).

- Nature will make you feel relaxed. It will be better if we camp with friends (C1).
- A way to relieve stress from urban life (C3).

4.3 Comparative Analysis of Questionnaire Survey and Interview Survey

The survey was conducted during two weekdays and one weekend day. The young generation highly accepted Google Survey and another possible reason is that the majority of campers on weekdays are students. Hence, the results were from college students (41%), most of whom were between 18 and 25 years old (43%). Also, three campsites were located in Yilan, Taoyuan, and Miaoli, so most of the respondents were from Northern Taiwan (Taipei, New Taipei City, and Keelung, Taoyuan, Hsinchu, and Miaoli) and Central Taiwan (Taichung, Chunghwa, and Nantou), which accounted for 73%. The interview was conducted on the weekend, and the subjects selected were workers from different industries. Among them, 6 were unmarried (40%), 9 were married (60%), and 3 were between 20 and 29 years old (20%), 9 people aged from 30-39 (60%), and 3 people aged from 40-49 (20%). People aged 30-39 were more likely to accept the interviews. Most of them were from Northern Taiwan, Taoyuan, and Eastern Taiwan. Furthermore, their occupations were store clerks, hairdressers, housewives, etc. As for the age of the campers, based on the comprehensive questionnaire surveys and field interviews, most of the interviewees were mainly under the age of 50, but campers over the age of 50 accounted for only 5%.

In the questionnaire survey on the motivation for participating in camping activities, based on the comparison of "strongly agree," the top 3 were "Bring closer relationships with friends/family (51%)" and "Different leisure activity to relax (44%)", and "Get away from the city noise and enjoy the atmosphere (43%)"; also, in the field interview, "Q5: What is the main motivation for camping?" The interview results were nearly the same. The majority said they can relax, get together with friends, get close to nature, and avoid using electronic products.

In the questionnaire survey on the camping environment, the top 3 answers were "campsite facility (52%)", "camping space" (37%), and "nearby scenery and environment" (36%). As for "Q1: Is there any particular campsite you like to visit?" in the interview survey, the interviewees were concerned about the sanitation environment, such as toilet and bathroom, parent-child activity, scenery, vision, and environment. Thus, the results of the two were almost the same.

5. Conclusions

Camping has become one of the popular outdoor leisure activities in Taiwan, and the number of campsites and participants in camping activities has also increased yearly. Enjoying nature, releasing stress, and relieving tension and oppression are important in the hustle and bustle of life. To understand the motivation and the environmental preferences of campers participating in camping activities, this study surveyed the campers at Riverbank Camping Area, Sensen Camping Area, and Carefree Flower Camping Scenic Area, and concluded: 1. the motivation for participating in camping activities mainly included: satisfying the curiosity of family members; getting away from the noise of the city and enjoying the peaceful atmosphere; cultivate children's interest and enjoying nature; enjoying the atmosphere of group gatherings; having closer relationships; feel like a different type of

way to relax. 2. campers in Taiwan accept and like most of the campsite environment, campsite spaces, and campsite facilities. The study also indicates that most people in Taiwan may generally accept and like most domestic campsites. Besides, according to the interview survey, priorities that campers take into strong consideration include the hygienic environment, such as toilets, bathrooms, scenery, and view. When camping, most of them prepare food and cook by themselves, enjoy the atmosphere of nature and being with their families, enjoy time spent with friends, and the natural environment, including mosquitoes, fireflies, wild boars, snakes, wind, etc. These factors leave a great impression on campers. In a nutshell, the motivations and preferences for participating in camping activities were almost the same as was found in the comparative analysis between the questionnaire survey and the interview survey. This study is mainly limited by the survey time, region and manpower, and the results can only reflect the motivation and preference of campers in northern Taiwan to participate in camping activities. In the future, the survey can be conducted for a longer period of time in a campsite, and the questions can be more abundant in interview survey. We look forward to more detailed and integrated questionnaire survey and interview survey to get more accurate findings.

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