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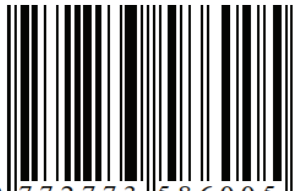
Men vs Women
A Genetic Perspective

***Outdoor
Recreation***
Trends among Youth

***From Jogging
to Ka-Ching!***



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Perspektif

Trends in Outdoor Recreational Activity Among Youth

By

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DEFINITION & BENEFITS

Recreation is an important aspect of human lives involving engaging in activities promoting relaxation, enjoyment and personal growth. Outdoor recreation can be defined as a recreational activity that requires voluntary participation during free time and involves interaction between natural environment and built resources (Beard, J.G., 1983).

Recreation may vary depending on individual perspectives about the types of experiences that they would like to engage in leisure time. From watching movies at the cinema, taking your child to the public park, reading a book, cooking simple meals for your family, enjoying a stroll at the park or whatever activities that one chooses to enjoy during their free time. The diversity and depth of participation in recreation can be illustrated inside a three-dimensional box by representing different types of activities and experiences (McLean & Hurd, 2021).

However, a distinct definition of recreation is much needed to guide the planning process in developing policies and highlighting the importance of recreation participation in the community.

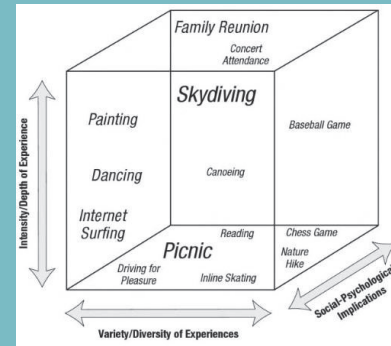


Figure 1. Three dimensional box to represent complexity of recreation and leisure experiences (Adapted from: McLean & Hurd, 2021)

Outdoor adventure activities are a variety of recreational activities comprising elements of physical risks producing a positive human experience by overcoming obstacles (Ewert, 1989). People tend to engage in recreational activities during their free time, which is undertaken willingly without being forced or influenced by others.

In today's fast-paced world, recreation has become more important than ever. As people work longer hours, face more demands on their time and energy, and struggle with increasing levels of stress and anxiety, recreation provides a valuable outlet for relaxation, enjoyment and personal growth. Whether engaging in physical activity, socializing with friends or pursuing a new hobby or interest, recreation can help individuals lead healthier, happier and more fulfilling lives.

Recreation has a wide range of advantages. It can boost mental and emotional wellness by offering a vacation from stress and society and physical health by offering opportunities for exercise and physical activity. According to Gaffar V. et. al. (2019), hiking is a significant recreational activity since it strengthens relationships with family and friends and has positive effects on one's mental health. Due to exposure to the natural environment, exercises like walking and running have demonstrated impacts on stress release and restoring mental health.

A study conducted by Schneider et. al. (2009) proved that walking helps in increasing alpha brain waves and stimulates brain relaxation state. Activities such as meditation, yoga and art therapy can also help individuals develop coping skills to manage stress and improve mental resilience.

TRENDS & MOTIVATION

Recreation is an ever-evolving field that reflects the changing interests and lifestyles of individuals. The trends in recreation evolve along with society's ongoing evolution. Trends in recreation activities keep changing due to the external influence that ignites the desire or needs to follow current trends. The emphasis on outdoor activities is one of the current trends in recreation as more individuals spend more time in outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, kayaking and rock climbing. Due to the enjoyment, exercise and self-mastery components of hiking activity, which may be modified based on the participant's physical abilities, it is becoming more popular among young people (Gaffar V. et. al., 2019). With more people looking for opportunities to discover natural habitats and wildlife, this trend also resulted in a stronger emphasis on environmental sustainability and eco-tourism. Karlsson and Grahn (2011) identified the most preferable recreation activities among participants who were in high- stress levels were "resting" followed by "walking" and "animal" related activities such as bringing a dog to stroll in the park.

The integration of technology undoubtedly has impacted yet another trend in leisure. Wearable fitness trackers, mobile apps and virtual reality are examples of how technology is becoming more and more interwoven into leisure activities. These tools enable users to monitor their development, establish goals and connect with others who share their interests. Wearable fitness trackers which can be worn on the wrist or clipped to clothing, help in monitoring heart rate and sleep patterns as well as tracking fitness goals. The application of virtual reality (VR) technology in the leisure industry is gaining much attention especially among youth. VR technology enables people to engage in activities and surroundings that would be challenging or impossible to access in the real world. People can utilize VR technology, for instance, to explore the natural environment or to engage in extreme activities such as skydiving and snowboarding.

Motivation plays a critical role in why individuals engage in recreational activities. Understanding the underlying motivations might help people in creating more fulfilling recreational experiences. A person's internal factors such as motivation, inspiration and attitude thus influences an individual's recreational behaviour (Xiao H. et. al., 2015).

Investigating the motivation that encourages a person to be involved in recreation is a key concept in understanding and determining the reason for the individual leisure process. (Gaffar V. et. al., 2019). Activity preferences are activities chosen willingly by the participants based on various motivations and analysis of the data could be useful for conducting market segmentation (Gaffar V., et. al., 2019).

Other than physical and mental health benefits, people might engage in recreational activities to socialize with others. Recreational activities such as team sports, group fitness classes and community events provide opportunities for individuals to connect with others with similar interests. Socializing with others can help individuals develop a sense of community and belonging, which can lead to increased happiness and well-being.

CASE STUDY: SUNGAI SEDIM FOREST ECO PARK

Sungai Sedim Forest Eco Park is located 33 km from Kulim, Alor Star, Kedah. The park is surrounded by the lowland dipterocarp forest; Gunung Inas Forest Reserve. The forest covers an area of approximately 3,000 hectares and is known for its stunning natural beauty, lush vegetation and diverse range of activities. One of the main attractions of Sungai Sedim Recreational Forest is the Sedim River, which offers a range of water-based activities, including white-water rafting, tubing and swimming. The river is also a popular spot for picnics and barbecues and there are several designated areas for these activities. Another popular attraction in the forest is the canopy walk which is one of the longest in the world, measuring approximately 925 meters in length.

The walk offers stunning views of the forest and the surrounding area and is a unique way to experience the natural beauty of the area.

A study was conducted using structured questionnaires in order to determine the motivation factors of recreational participation among youth and their preferences in adventure outdoor recreation activities. With a total of 100 respondents, tree top walking, flying fox and mountain biking are the most liked adventure activities. It was also revealed that the opportunity to enjoy the natural scenery, well-maintained facilities provided and interesting activities offered is one of the factors that influence the respondents to indulge in the recreation activity. Respondents believed that recreational participation enhances their physical and mental health, is able to contribute to the tourism industry and enhances environmental conservation.

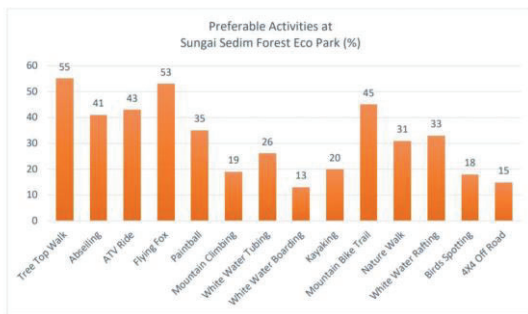


Figure 2: Preferable Activities at Sungai Sedim Forest Eco Park

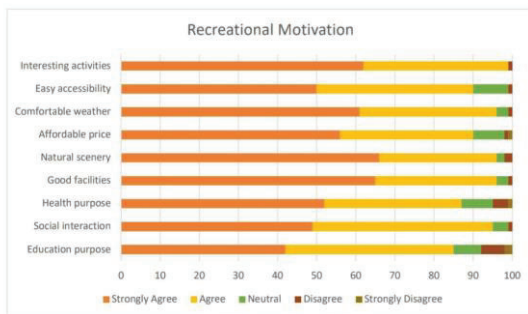


Figure 3: Recreational Motivation

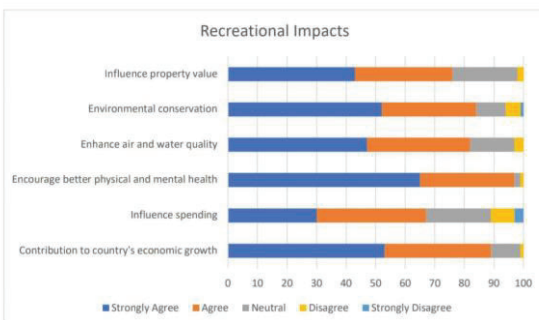


Figure 4: Recreational Impacts

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that the leisure industry in our country is undergoing significant changes, driven by factors such as advancement in technology and a growing awareness of the benefits of recreation. To capitalize on these trends, it is essential for stakeholders in the industry to prioritize the improvement of recreational facilities and services.

Additionally, market segmentation among leisure providers should be carefully considered to cater to the needs and preferences of different segments of the population. By doing so, we can create a more vibrant and dynamic leisure industry that contributes to the health and well-being of our society. It is crucial that we continue to invest in the future of leisure and recreation, as it is essential to building a productive and prosperous future for our country.

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