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MOTIVATION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION AMONG RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES

Hasnizam Ab Dulhamid¹, Mohd Ismail Isa², Badaruddin Mohamed³ & Muhamad Ferdhaus Sazali⁴

*^{1,2,3} School of Housing, Building, and Planning
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA*

*⁴ Faculty of Architecture, Planning, and Surveying
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA PERAK BRANCH, MALAYSIA*

Abstract

Motivation in outdoor recreational participation has an important position as it helps to determine why individuals engage in recreational behaviour, the way individuals do, understand the benefits of participation and serves as basic knowledge in assisting the planning process and environmental management. Each involvement is influenced by motivating factors that can generate behaviour and achievement to experience the pleasure and self-satisfaction inherent in recreation. Thus, the aim of this study was to identify motivating factors influencing outdoor recreational involvement among rural and urban communities. A set of questionnaires was used to obtain quantitative data sets and were distributed to 384 respondents who were among individuals living in rural and urban areas. The analysis revealed four broad categories of motivation using the *Recreation Experience Scales (REP) 'scales'*, namely social interaction, physical health and fitness, rest, and interaction with the environment. Respondents rated activities with family members, relaxing the mind, enjoying a peaceful surrounding area, and improving personal health and fitness as the main motivating factors influencing outdoor recreation involvement.

Keyword: Rural and urban, Recreation motivation, Outdoor recreation

¹ PhD Candidates at Universiti Sains Malaysia. Email:hasni43@uitm.edu.my

INTRODUCTION

The provision of recreational resources is essential for ensuring individuals' social welfare, psychology, and physical health (Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005), improving health and well-being, social fusion, relationships and opportunities for various physical activities (Obinna et al., 2009). Therefore, more individuals are now aware of and appreciate the available of green space (Razali & Shukor, 2022). This proves why outdoor recreational activities have become part of the culture and the primary necessity for daily life among people who live in or outside the city. Recreation managers need to be aware of these population patterns if they want to comprehend and meet the requirements and motivations of their consumers (Whiting et al., 2017). The involvement of rural communities could be more extensive as it is associated with the need for more access, infrastructure and resources to perform physical activities compared to urban areas. Looking from different perspectives, several past working hours have found evidence for an association between reduced stress rates and the length of time in the recreation area.

First, each individual who spends time in recreational parks for more extended periods can generally reduce the stress rate inside (Yang et al., 2012). Second, is that a long period at home make individuals more likely to be faced with unsettled and restless situations. This is due to the limitations of the individual's opportunities for recreation. Third, the decrease in physical activity involvement has increased the number of cases of infectious diseases and caused life expectancy to be shorter. Everything is commonly reported among rural communities compared to urban communities (Althoff et al., 2017). Thus, the factors of seriousness, intense desire and the influence of individual behaviour are the primary motivations for the individual's involvement in recreation. Meanwhile, there are still many who need clarification about the use of recreational areas in rural areas, including areas based on physical activity parks (Shores & West, 2010). At the same time, the use of urban recreational areas, such as provincial and state parks, is under monitoring, for rural recreational areas, such as community parks, have yet to be systematically evaluated. Although a recreation area has similar functions, the main differences in using parks and physical activity cannot be ignored. Thus, it is clear that more physical activity engagement between communities in rural environments and the recreation itself is needed (Shores & West, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

'Recreation' is a phrase commonly used in the community. However, it provides a different perspective between recreation and outdoor activities (leisure) themselves. Although giving different meanings, these two concepts are closely related (Çay, 2016). Previous working hours have often answered questions regarding the meaning of recreation itself. The explanation makes outdoor

recreation more and more necessary for rural and urban communities. It is made more accessible due to the provision of activities and complete facilities. Recreation activities based on physical and mental challenges are the main attraction of consumers and need to be managed sustainably so as not to neglect the state of natural resources (Jaffry & Hasbullah, 2015). Outdoor recreation is expected in particular cultural contexts compared to others (Mercer, 1994). It is a broad, complex activity involving a rational and systematic process and considering all existing social and physical factors. Cordell (1999) also explained that outdoor recreation areas are complex because they include different activities and interests (changes from one activity to another). However, the general understanding of outdoor recreation applies or focuses on physical activity in natural areas and forests, but now, such perceptions have changed and expanded to urban areas (Henderson et al., 2005). The view reinforces this statement by Cordell (1999) that many outdoor recreational activities take place in different settings, each of which has its own set and characteristics.

The involvement of outdoor recreation is generally motivated by various factors, with the primary purpose of meeting the leisure time owned (Kondric et al., 2013). Studies on motivation have explored different aspects of motivation in the involvement of recreational activities (e.g. challenges, exploration, experiencing nature, rest, and social relationships (Graefe et al., 2000). It's also can be seen as an internal force that influences an individual to act in a way that helps them achieve a specific desired experience or outcome (Driver, 1977; Whiting et al., 2017). Driver and Tocher (1970) proposed an "experiential approach" linking settings and leisure activities to outcomes, suggesting that recreation should be understood as an experience in which activities are undertaken in an appropriate setting to achieve specific psychological and physical goals (Manfredo et al., 1996). The experiential approach to recreation research offered insight into how recreation participation could benefit individuals and how this information "could be used in a wide array of planning and management tasks such as clarifying supply and demand, developing management objectives, avoiding conflict, and identifying recreation substitutes" (Manfredo et al., 1996, p. 190).

The body of research identified four domains of desired experiences commonly sought by individuals participating in outdoor recreation. The preference domains, which accounted for specific user types, settings, and activities, were quantified using 'Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scales' (Driver & Brown, 1975). Driver (1977) found significant differences in motivations for different types of outdoor activities, each occurring within different settings. Since then, many studies have used REP scales and shown their reliability in measuring individual recreation preferences.

Rural and Urban Communities Engagement in the Context of Outdoor Recreation

The benefits of recreational activities' physiology, psychological, and social involvement have been well explained in each literature review (Wolch et al., 2014). In addition to physiological benefits, active involvement in outdoor recreation also contributes to positive psychological benefits, such as allowing a person to raise awareness of the environment and providing opportunities for sociological and spiritual value (Jenson, 1995). Furthermore, research has proven that maintaining high activity levels and active involvement benefits psychological and biological (biomedical) aspects (Longbottom et al., 2010). It has also long been recognised that a correlational relationship exists between increased physical activity and physiological health (Duvall, 2011) and maintaining the individual mental well-being (Cai, Tedong & Zainol, 2022). Involvement in outdoor recreation is closely related to reducing stress levels (Tyrväinen et al., 2014), away from urban noise disturbances, and creating an atmosphere of calm and peace. Despite this, the results of previous research explain that outdoor recreation benefits individuals when the involvement is more frequent and lasts for an extended period (Ezebilo et al., 2013). This means that involvement in outdoor recreation is a concept that provides individual physical (psychological) renewal and positive impact, such as gaining valuable new experiences for individuals directly involved with recreational activities and affects the level of health (Hayir-Kanat & Breuste, 2020). From the perspective of Beard & Ragheb (1983) and Gaffar et al. (2019), four main categories are the reasons why individuals like to do recreational activities, among them are: Intellectual factors, skills, mind force, learning and creativity; the factor of stimulation avoidance, relaxing, avoidance activities and not being in urgent situations; social factors related to close relationships and friendships; and factors of competence or mastery, association with achievements, capabilities, challenges, and competition. Indirectly, these categories describe how each community group has the opportunity to stimulate themselves through involvement in recreational activities. Thus, sports and recreation are factors towards the unification of society, especially when the involvement comes from cultural and ethnic diversity and is followed by a particular type of activity (synonyms: such as basketballs are very well known for the Chinese and traditional sports of sepak takraw for the Malays). Finally, Each outdoor recreational participant's motivation opens up opportunities for rural and urban communities to experience the environment and improve their well-being and better way of life planning (Yang et al., 2012), self-pleasure in the activities performed (Waldron & Dieser, 2010), to enjoy the satisfaction with life, enhance self-confidence, skills and self-control, and be filled with pleasures (Yang et al., 2012), rectification activities improve individual skills, learning new things, association with friends, success, and health aspects (Waldron & Dieser, 2010).

Motivation Theory

According to Maslow (1970), the concept behind the general motivation theory is to satisfy the fundamental requirements of the humanistic point of view. He has determined that there are five fundamental requirements for a human being, all of which are included in the hierarchy: physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation. The physiological needs are categorised as the higher-level needs in the pyramid, while the basic needs are categorised as the lower-level needs. Therefore, before deciding whether or not to fulfil the following categories or the higher class of needs, all of the needs of the lower class should be satisfied. The definition of "outdoor recreation" has morphed over many years due to the presence of many philosophical resources. Nevertheless, one of the most common definitions and interpretations of outdoor recreation entails voluntarily participating in an activity during one's free time. The activity occurs outside and involves interacting with natural resources and the surrounding environment. Garst, et al., (2001) studied adolescents who participate in outdoor recreation activities and found that the individuals positively impacted their perception while participating in those activities. This conclusion is based on the findings of international research carried out by Garst, Schneider, and Baker (2001).

Bricker & Kerstetter (2002) researched the sense of place gained by white-water boaters. They discovered that a sense of place could generate feelings of meaning and belonging in individuals. This indicates that the outdoor recreationist who participates in various outdoor recreation activities will also receive a value for personal satisfaction. This value is also directly related to the natural surroundings in which the recreationist is directly involved while engaging in activities associated with nature. As a result, it has become abundantly clear that the respondent's participation in outdoor recreation is not solely to satisfy their need for leisure time but also to serve a reason or purpose. Consequently, research on the participation motive for the respondents in Malaysia should also be focused on, and this should be done even though research on recreation in Malaysia is still in its infancy in Malaysia. Recreational activities are said to have a connection with the quality of human life, as stated by Berger and Tobar (2007). By maintaining a healthy lifestyle, improving one's level of physical fitness, and fostering a sense of spiritual fulfilment, an individual can lessen the likelihood of failing in a physical function. This assertion is also supported by the findings of Landers & Arent (2007), who discovered that an upbeat mood will improve an individual's cognitive function and that participating in physical activities will reduce the amount of anxiety experienced by the participant. The will, drive, or emotion that prompts someone to act is known as motivation, and the elements of motivation and emotion are strongly intertwined (Ab Dulhamid, Isa, Mohamed & Sazali). As a result, the study will investigate the factors that motivate people to participate in recreational activities

in urban and rural settings. This study aims to determine the primary factors that encourage people living in rural and urban areas to participate in outdoor recreation during their free time. The purpose of this study was to answer the question of what factors motivate and attract the attention of people living in urban and rural communities to participate in outdoor recreation during their free time.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling Technique and Strategy

Using Raosoft, Taro Yamane and Calculator.net online sample size calculator, the focus group from rural and urban areas was determined. Following the appropriate justification, which is a 95% of confidence level and 5% margin error, the recommended size for the study was 384 (based on the population size of 800 700 (the Ipoh population in 2020). For this study, each respondent was involved in outdoor recreational users residing in Ipoh and the surrounding areas. The selection of respondents from these two areas aims to identify motivational factors that encourage the involvement of outdoor recreation during leisure.

Data Collection

The study used a quantitative approach as the primary attribute to get the correct answers to motivational factors for outdoor recreational participation. The quantitative approach could verify and process information in detail and provide insights outdoors to understand better the phenomenon being studied. In addition, the approach to this method can provide some explanation that may help verify the accuracy and validity of the data that has to do with specific aspects under study. For Patton (2002), this method was also chosen because it allowed researchers to ask questions, understand, and investigate more deeply to discover the reasons for participation motivation and understanding of recreational experiences. The study participants were recreation users from rural and urban areas aged 18 and above. To select the potential respondents, 'Non-Probability Sampling (Purposive Sampling and Snowball Sampling)' was applied to obtain the number of respondents needed in the study. In carrying out this study, the process of collecting study data is to use a form of questionnaire or 'self-administered questionnaire'. Each question in this questionnaire is open and closed, using bilingual Malay and English. These two languages provide understanding and convenience to the respondents to complete the questionnaire, which is done online (Google Form). This questionnaire contains 25 questions and takes 10-15 minutes to complete.

Every recreational user must complete a questionnaire using an online study (Google Form). Analyses in this paper focused on a subset of data collected. Specifically, survey items focused on recreation motivations. Motivations were assessed with an abbreviated 8-item scale based on REP scales (e.g., Manfredo

et al., 1996), and state park managers observed and reported the anticipated range of visitor motivations. In measuring the motivational factors of outdoor recreational engagement, a total of 17 questions in the form of a Likert scale used scale; 1- unmotivated, 2- not very motivated, 3- slightly motivated, 4- motivated, and lastly, 5- very motivating was presented to the respondent. The questions provided are made up of five primary motivational constructs, namely, i) social interaction (togetherness) (5 items), ii) physical health and fitness (4 items), iii) rest (4 items), and iv) interaction with the environment (2 items).

RESULTS

The results showed that 199 respondents (51.8%) represented individuals in rural areas, and the remaining 185 (48.2%) were from urban areas. Of the total, 164 people (42.7%) were male, and 220 (57.3%) were female. Following the statistics, the highest age breakdown of respondents involved in the study was between 18-30 years, and 193 people (50.3%) and the lowest was aged 61 years and above, with a total of 4 people (1%) for both samples of the study area as a whole. While for the ethnicity or races involved in the study, the majority of the participants were Malays with 344 people (89.6%) and followed by Chinese 18 people (4.7%), Indians 19 people (4.9%), and others (Bumiputera) 3 people (0.8%). On average, all respondents were seen as having a high level of education, with 158 people (41.1%) being Diploma graduates and 159 (39.1%) Degrees and Post-Graduates. The amount of respondent involvement obtained from both sample groups of this study is almost balanced, providing a significant outcome.

Motivational Factors for Outdoor Recreation Involvement Among Rural and Urban Communities

Overall, the focus of the study was on assessing the four motivational domains of outdoor recreational engagement based on (REP) scales. The Relative Important Index (RII) score value has been used in context to measure the motivational factors that are a priority for the community towards outdoor recreational engagement based on rankings. In addition, the results were the result of an individual assessment (respondent) on the questionnaire of the distributed study.

Table 1: Ranking and RII Score Value for Motivational Factors of Outdoor Recreation Participants Among Urban and Rural Communities.

Rank/ Area	Rural Area			Urban Area		
		Item Scale	RII		Item Scale	RII
1	p.	<i>Enjoy the peaceful environment</i>	0.861	m.	<i>To relax the mind</i>	0.876
2	m.	To relax the mind	0.86	d.	Outdoor activities with the family	0.872

3	d.	Outdoor activities with the family	0.857	f.	Enjoying natural environment	0.87
4	o.	Enjoying natural environment	0.855	g.	Improve personal health/fitness	0.867
5	f.	Improve personal health/fitness	0.854	o.	Staying physically active	0.862
6	g.	Staying physically active	0.852	p.	Enjoy the peaceful environment	0.861
7	k.	To relax	0.851	k.	To relax	0.858
8	j.	Escape from routine activities of life	0.842	i.	Engage with passive activities (light)	0.852
8	i.	Engage with passive activities (light)	0.842	n.	Exploring the environment	0.847
8	n.	Exploring the environment	0.842	e.	Increase level of self-confidence	0.835
11	e.	Increase level of self-confidence	0.829	c.	To be with people of similar interests	0.834
12	c.	To be with people of similar interests	0.817	h.	Engage with active activities (heavy)	0.831
13	h.	Engage with active activities (heavy)	0.8	j.	Escape from routine activities of life	0.825
14	a.	Spending time with friends	0.782	l.	To be alone	0.793
15	l.	To be alone	0.782	a.	Spending time with friends	0.792
16	b.	<i>Socialise with club/association members</i>	0.704	b.	<i>Socialise with club/association members</i>	0.738

Table 1 shows that the RII score value for all motivational factors of outdoor recreational engagement is at the highest level, as the value of each index of the RII score obtained for each item is more than .50. The acquisition of the RII score proves that there is a difference in motivational factors between the rural community and the city itself. Looking at rural areas, the motivating factor that earned the majority and the highest RII value was the 'tranquillity', i.e. item 'p' 'to enjoy the peaceful environment' with an RII value of 0.861 for rural. Besides that, the most important motivational factor for the urban area was the 'rest' i.e item 'm' 'to relax the mind'. Based on this score, it is believed that individuals and the society are constantly struggling with various stress factors due to the higher burden of daily routine activities, such as getting stuck in traffic

jams and threats of pollution. Therefore, a visit to the recreational area is an opportunity for individuals to relax and connect with nature in increase their energy and improving their fitness. Thus, the involvement of outdoor recreation plays a vital role in providing a free mind, reducing stress, generating enthusiasm and motivation, as well as positive emotions. Followed next as the second highest factor of choice is the 'social interaction' domain or item 'd', i.e. 'doing outdoor activities with family', with an RII value of 0.872. These finding indirectly reflects that outdoor recreation engagement is also one of the best platforms to create opportunities for togetherness and forming quality time for family members. Furthermore, these results show that the involvement of outdoor recreational activities also serves as a platform for better relationships between family members.

A peaceful surrounding area usually refers to a natural environment that is a source of recreation (e.g. forests, lakes and rivers), free from any form of pollution; this element is a space found only in rural areas. Therefore, the availability of natural recreational resources and high opportunities for involvement are among the reasons that are likely to make item 'o' achieve a high-value score among rural communities. What is interesting about the results of this study is that it is also in line with other previous studies which highlights the factor of wanting to enjoy natural environments as the main purpose of recreational society (Walker et al., 2010; Whiting et al., 2017). This motivating factor is slightly different for the community in urban areas where they describe the 'f' item as to 'increase the level of health/self-fitness as a motivation that encourages outdoor recreational engagement. The selection of health/fitness level enables each individual to lead a healthy life, mind, and constant exercise while maintaining a physically active self. Finally, what draws attention from this analysis is that the RII score value of item 'b,' i.e. 'socialising with club/association members,' is among other motivating factors that are also considered necessary. However, the score value is low compared to other factors (RII score value of .704 rural and .738 urban). Therefore, it is considered as a less important factor in recreational involvement for both study samples. To support the findings of this analysis, Zeidenitz et al., (2007) has presented the view that the search for pleasure from recreational involvement has become as unimportant among the community as is often assumed/thought when doing recreational activities. This means that each community's recreational involvement is more directed towards psychological factors (self-expression and appreciation of natural resources), physical aspects (such as health and fitness) and physiology (feelings and emotions) as a medium in the formation of better- and better-quality life patterns.

Therefore, the overall results proved that there was a difference between the motivating factors for the two study samples. Urban communities have made the 'tranquillity' factor (the item of enjoying a peaceful surrounding area) a

motivation for outdoor recreational engagement compared to their urban counterparts, which makes the 'rest' factor (an item to relax the mind) as the primary motivation. From a different point of view, reverting to the goal of recreational engagement, although the motivational factors of choice between the two areas are slightly different, they are still closely related to natural environmental factors. This is because the availability of a natural environment provides the space and opportunity for the community to enjoy and experience a peaceful environment and thus, become the best space and platform to relax and restore the mind and body in order to escape from the burdens of daily routine activities.

DISCUSSION

The reason why people in both urban and rural areas participate actively in outdoor activities is that they take pleasure in sharing those activities with their families. In most cases, spending time with family is the most critical factor in determining a person's level of interest in and enthusiasm for participating in outdoor activities. The urban respondents are entirely swamped with their respective workloads. Because they take on more specialised and high-profile responsibilities, they are expected to demonstrate a more remarkable dedication to their work. Due to their high commitment to the job programme, while they are on the clock, they only have a little spare time to participate in activities that provide them with a recreational experience. As a result, they gravitated toward the recreational pursuits available to them within the recreation centre areas since those areas offered more accessible access to the respective recreational regions. As a result, urban parks require serious consideration on the part of their planners and managers to maintain the quality for patrons (Rosli, et al., 2020).

This indicates that the programme in the remote and undeveloped forest areas is not their top priority for outdoor recreational experiences. Instead, they prioritise the modern or developed recreational areas available to them. They were also aware that leading a healthy lifestyle was necessary to keep up with the demands of their busy lives; consequently, they participated in activities that took place outside to maintain the healthy lifestyle practices that were already a part of their lives. The respondents strongly desire to participate in activities outside, whether in an urban or rural setting. According to Shobri et al., (2021), the preferred passive activities of the adult who is reporting stress are enjoying peace, resting and relaxing, appreciating the fresh air, letting go of stress, appreciating nature, and taking pleasure in the sun and the sound of birds. They enjoy being outside and doing physically demanding things, making them more willing to participate in challenging activities. In addition, they want to increase their self-confidence as a component of their overall personal growth and spiritual fortitude. They also believe that engaging in activities that take place outside can help them maintain a healthy body. Therefore, their outside activities serve as a

form of physical training. Indirectly it will be able to diversify the functions of the area, as well as offer another added advantage to the public (Isa, 2020). In general, urban and rural respondents are motivated to participate in activities outside as part of recreation. In this particular scenario, the respondents' motivation to participate in outdoor recreation activities is significantly higher. Despite this, they still need to participate in outdoor recreation to keep up with healthy lifestyle practices because it is a requirement for living.

The respondents are highly motivated to participate in outdoor recreation. They are interested in participating in challenging outdoor recreation activities to gain recreational experiences, improve their self-confidence, and get physically fit. In the meantime, they take pleasure in themselves while they are engaged in natural settings. In light of this, extreme forms of outdoor recreation should be made available in order to satisfy their desired forms of outdoor recreation. As a result, the concept of leisure recreational activities and contemporary forms of outdoor recreation ought to approach. In addition, the outdoor education concept should be implemented during the respondent's participation in outdoor recreation activities to guarantee that the activities are beneficial and that the respondents can experience the highest possible level of satisfaction while participating in the outdoor recreation activities.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to determine the reasons why people from both urban and rural communities participate in outdoor recreation activities. It is essential to know, and the purpose of this study is to learn, that the participation motive for both urban and rural communities in Malaysia still needs to be improved in the field of research. Nevertheless, providing sufficient facilities is necessary to ensure that the recreational facilities live up to the anticipations of the visitors (Anuar & Muhamadan, 2018). Even previous research in outdoor recreation has been looked into, but this time it will only focus on the other group of people. In addition, there needs to be more research conducted in Malaysia on recreation in urban and rural communities. This is due to several limitations, including demographics and the social economy.

The rural community needs access to fully equipped facilities for various sports and recreational pursuits. Their location is in the heart of the recreation centre district; however, they need more space to provide all sporting and recreational amenities. However, motivation is significant in outdoor recreation studies because it helps to determine the reason people participate in leisure behaviour in the manner they do, and it assists in understanding the consequences of recreation participation. Studies of motivation for outdoor recreation can provide underlying knowledge in planning processes and environmental management, and may help practitioners and managers when

planning programmes to minimise conflict between users or to minimise the impact of outdoor recreation activities on the natural environment.

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