Recreation Benefits Sought by Activity and User Groups

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RECREATION BENEFITS SOUGHT BY ACTIVITY AND USER GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

This research tested the relationships between benefits sought during a recreation experience, recreation activities, and user group characteristics. The data comes from an on-site self-administered survey of visitors to 13 parks in Southeast Michigan. One way analysis of variance, Scheffe's test, and Linear Regression were used to test the research objectives. The importance of different benefits varied according to user group characteristics and activities. Activity variables slightly outperformed group characteristics in predicting benefit ratings, with one exception. Groups with women rated nature enjoyment higher than men. Male only groups rated excitement higher. Socializing was rated more important by larger groups. Trail and winter activity participants sought exercise and nature enjoyment. Visitors engaged in general and water-related activities cited socializing and enjoying nature as most important.

INTRODUCTION

In the last 10 years, the need for more research on the benefits of recreation has been recognized by professionals in the field and initial efforts have been taken to translate this research into useful guidelines for management. As agencies attempt to incorporate knowledge about the benefits associated with recreation into their decision making practices, a better understanding of how these benefits are related to recreation activities and user groups will be helpful.

In the past, most recreation management, planning, and marketing decisions were based primarily on managers perceptions of recreation activities, facilities, and user groups. Managers selected and offered what they considered to be "popular" activities, designed and managed what they perceived to be appropriate facilities, and attempted to serve a wide range of user groups with the programs and facilities provided. However more recently, some recreation practitioners have sought to better understand what their customers are seeking in a recreation experience and to utilize this information in management decisions. By incorporating this type of information, recreation managers can improve the provision of recreation services and the development of recreation facilities (1). When faced with decisions regarding recreation service options, it is important to know not only what benefits people seek from the experience, but also the extent to which a particular recreation experience provides the benefits that people seek. If a recreation participant's motivations are known, the process of selecting and predicting the services people will select is much easier (1).

This 'benefits approach' to recreation management has been described to include a three phase implementation strategy (2): Phase I - Benefit and Opportunity Identification, Phase II - Implementation, and Phase III - Evaluation and Documentation. In Phase I, the recreation agency must identify potential benefits sought by users, determine a core group of benefits which users seek and management can realistically provide, and develop a link between identified benefits and potential activity opportunities offered by the agency. The agency will then analyze and modify the agency mission and goals to reflect the benefits sought by the user and through the activities provided by the agency. In Phase II, the agency sites, areas, and services are modified to produce the targeted benefits. Monitoring instruments are developed and implemented to assess the benefit realization of users. Phase III includes the evaluation of modified recreation services, sites and areas, documenting benefit achievement, and sharing the agency's findings with others interested in a benefits approach to recreation management.

It has taken almost 20 years for the acceptance and practice of this approach in the field of recreation and leisure services. Recreation activities, facilities, and user groups will always be central to recreation management (3), however, the evolution to a benefits approach requires a better understanding of what benefits people gain from recreation and how these benefits may vary across activities, facilities, and user groups (2, 4).

Research Questions

This research will identify the benefits park visitors seek for themselves from a recreation experience and determine how these benefits vary across recreation activities and user groups. The three fundamental research questions directing this research are:

(1) Which benefits tend to be associated with which recreation activities?;

(2) Do benefits vary with user group characteristics?;

(3) How well do demographic variables and recreation activities predict benefits sought in a recreation experience?

For the purposes of this research project, the recreation benefit is defined as personal benefits sought through a recreation experience. Benefits sought are the motivations for pursuing a recreation activity. Benefits sought have also been described as stimuli, reasons, and purposes.

Recreation participants are often classified into some type of user group (5-8). These user groups may be defined by a variety of characteristics, including demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic. The make-up of the group can influence the selection of recreation activities (9-10) and benefits sought through the recreation experience (11-15).

In past research, user groups have been defined by the size of the group (14-17), the familiarity of the group members (17), the relationship of the group members 6), and the gender of the group members (18-21). For the purposes of this research project, user groups will be defined based on size of group, the gender, and age of the participants.

There are literally thousands of recreation alternatives. The recreation activities selected for this research project include those outdoor recreation activities typically found in a general day use outdoor park setting.

Hypotheses

The specific null hypotheses to be tested in this research are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Benefits sought during a park visit do not vary significantly with recreation activities .

Hypothesis 2: Benefits sought do not vary significantly with the demographic makeup of the group visiting the park.

In addition to the three null hypotheses, this research project will test the ability of the demographic makeup of the group and recreation activities to predict the importance of benefits sought during the park visit.

METHODS

The data comes from a 1996 on-site self-administered survey of visitors to a system of 13 parks surrounding the Detroit metropolitan region in Southeast Michigan.   The research questions were tested by comparing the importance ratings for six user perceived benefits of recreation: socializing, exercising, relaxing, excitement, learning, and enjoying nature. User group characteristics included size, gender, and age categories of the user groups. Subjects were also classified into activity groups based on the visitor's primary recreation activity participated in during the park visit: trail activities, general activities, golf, water-related activities, winter activities, touring facilities, and attending special events. One way analysis of variance was used to test for differences in participant recreation benefit ratings across activity and user groups. Scheffe's test was employed to compare pairwise differences in benefit ratings. Linear regression analysis was used to estimate the ability of group characteristics and recreation activities to predict benefit ratings.

Data were gathered in a visitor survey at parks operated by the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA). HCMA is a regional park system (22) that includes 13 parks located in Southeast Michigan. The park user survey was conducted in 1995-956 by Michigan State University's Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources under contract with HCMA (23).

The study population included all visitors to the HCMA parks from December 1, 1995 to November 30, 1996. During the study period, there were 2.7 million visitors to the 13 parks.   A stratified random sample of visitors was taken at all 13 park locations. Visitors were sampled on 42 randomly selected dates throughout the one year period. Visitors to each of the 13 parks were sampled on 10 or 11 different days at each of the 13 parks during each of the four seasons. Approximately half of the dates were weekend days and half were weekdays.   Of 10,127 surveys distributed, 4,137 were returned yielding an overall response rate of 41%. One hundred and six surveys were incomplete and dropped from the analysis, yielding 4,031 useable returns.

Three sets of variables were measured to test the study hypotheses;

- benefits sought during the park visit;
- primary activity participated in during the park visit; and
- group characteristics of park users.

These variables were measured using three separate survey questions.   To measure benefits sought during the visit, subjects were asked to indicate, from a list of six pre-defined benefit items, "how important to you are each of the following reasons for visiting this park today?" The subjects were to choose the level of importance for each benefit on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Extremely Important" to "Not Important." For the purposes of this research,

"reasons for visiting this park" are interpreted as benefits sought. The six benefit sought items cover the most common categories of leisure benefits identified in the literature (24-26): "Spend Time with Friends and Family," "Get Some Exercise," "Rest/relax," "Excitement/thrills," "Develop Skills/learning," and "Enjoy Nature and the Outdoors." (Benefit categories are labeled throughout this article as socializing, exercising, relaxing, excitement, learning and enjoying nature, respectively.)

To determine the characteristics of the group visiting the park, respondents were asked to report the size of the party, and the gender and age categories of each of the individuals in the vehicle. The "group" is defined as all persons entering the park in the same vehicle. Visitor parties were categorized into adult only groups or groups with both adults and children. (Adults were defined as those individuals 18 years of age and older.) Visitor parties were classified into male only groups, female only groups, and groups which have both genders represented.

Park visitors were asked to indicate which recreation activities they, or anyone in their vehicle, participated in during their visit to the park that day. Each subject was also asked, "Which of the above activities was the primary reason for visiting the park today?" This "primary activity" is the variable used in this research to define recreation activity groups. In order to have adequate sample sizes for sub-group analysis, activities were grouped into seven categories. These groups were loosely based on the type of park facility needed for the subject to participate: (1) trail activities, (2) general activities, (3) golf, (4) water-related activities, (5) winter activities, (6) touring facilities, and (7) special event activities. The trail activity category included walking/hiking, bicycling, roller/in-line skating, walking a pet, and running/jogging. Nature observation, picnic, scenic drive, using the playground equip-

ment, sunbathing and playing games and sports (other than golf) were included in a general activity category. Since golfers utilize a unique park facility, they were placed in a category by themselves. Water-related activities included fishing (ice fishing was classified with winter activities), boating and swimming. The winter activities were only available to subjects sampled during the winter season. Winter activities included ice fishing, cross country skiing, sledding, and ice skating. Visiting the Nature Center, Grist Mill, or Farm were labeled as touring facilities. And finally, those visiting the park for a special event were placed in a special event activities category.

A number of limitations should be noted in regards to this research, most importantly, the constraints imposed by a general park visitor survey. First, when gathering information on benefits sought, subjects were asked the "reason for visiting the park today." This reason was interpreted as the benefits sought in the recreation experience as a whole. Benefit data were collected using this question alone, another limitation dictated by the use of a park visitor survey. Using an alternative form of data collection could have allowed for more complex scales of measurement or even multiple approaches to measuring benefits. Second, in collecting information on the benefits sought from recreation activities, subjects were limited to the six pre-established categories. Third, a closed ended question was used for this inquiry, thus not allowing the subject to deviate from the six benefits listed. Other benefits that may have been sought by the subject were not measured and not reported. Lastly, there are numerous types of recreation activities which can fill an individual's free time. The recreation activities selected for this research are limited to outdoor recreation activities typically found in a general day use outdoor park setting.

It is assumed that the subject took into consideration each member of the group, when reporting benefits sought and the primary activity. Although the questions were conveyed in the survey in this manner, some subjects may have indicated their individual preferences.

Activity categories were grouped based on the kinds of facilities required to participate in this type of activity, for example, water-related activities, trail activities and golf. This grouping method permits the results to be more directly linked to management decisions such as designing, developing or enhancing facilities or areas. This method of categorization could have altered the recreation activity variable to also include aspects of the park facility itself. Due to the aggregation of the recreation activities into broader categories, benefits may vary within the activity groups.

The low response rate generated in this research indicates the possibility of under representation of some groups of park visitors. The groups which appear to be under represented are minority groups and groups of lower education and income levels.

RESULTS

Benefits Sought and Recreation Activities

Hypothesis 1: Benefits sought do not vary significantly with recreation activities.

Hypothesis 1 was rejected. The importance of different benefits varied in relation to the primary activity. Means for each benefit item were significantly different at the .01 significance level for each of the seven activity groups (Table 1).

Interpretation of the ANOVA/Scheffe Tables

The exercise benefit and Table 1 will be used to illustrate how the tables and statistical tests are interpreted. In Table 1, the primary activity categories (values of the independent variable) are found in rows and the benefits sought (dependent variables) in the columns. The F ratio of 143.841 is significant at the .001 level, indicating the seven means in the exercise column are not all equal in the population. The highest mean rating for exercise was by individuals engaged in trail activities (4.5). Golf (3.9) and winter activities (3.8) also had mean importance ratings for exercise at or above the overall mean. Ratings for the remaining four activities fell below the overall mean.

Letters following the individual ratings (a-d) indicate the results of the Scheffe test. Scheffe tests for differences in means between each pair of activities. The Scheffe test discloses which activities (or user groups in Tables 2 and 3) differ from one another in terms of benefit ratings at the 95% confidence level. In general, the mean ratings in these tables must differ by at least .3 to be significantly different from one another.

For exercise, activities fall into four different subgroups labeled (a) - (d). Activities with the same letter do not differ significantly in their mean ratings, but are different from activities with a different letter. Thus, individuals participating in trail activities rated exercise significantly different than each of the other six primary activity categories, so only trail activities fall into group (a).

Visitors whose primary activity was golf did not differ in their ratings of exercise. Winter activities fall into both group (b) and (c), meaning the exercise ratings of winter activity visitors do not differ significantly from touring. The exercise rating for visitors touring facilities (c,d) are significantly differ-

ent from golf and trail activities, but not winter (b,c), general (d), water-related (d), and special event activities (d). Other columns in Table 1 and Table 2 are interpreted in a similar fashion.

The importance ratings for learning from the touring (3.4) and golf (3.1) activity groups were not significantly different from each other. Golfers rated learning significantly higher in importance than groups primarily engaged in winter activities (2.9) or those attending a special event (2.9). Visitors whose primary activity was water-related (2.6) or a general (2.4) activity rated learning similar to winter and special event groups. The trail activity group rated learning as the least important benefit (2.2).

Excitement is rated the least important of the six benefits for all primary activity groups. The highest mean score for excitement (2.9) was lower than all the subgroup scores for exercise (3.8), socializing (3.6), enjoying nature (4.3), and relaxing (3.7). Subjects designating winter (2.9), golf (2.7), and water-related (2.6) activities as their primary activity rated excitement as more important than the other groups. Both golf and winter activity groups rated "Excitement/thrills" higher than the other activity groups, and, as may be expected, rated relaxing lowest. Touring groups had the next highest rating (2.3) for excitement, which was not significantly different from either golf or water-related activities. Trail groups rated excitement as the least important benefit, with a mean score of 2.0.

Visitors rated enjoying nature higher than any other benefit item. However, some significant differences existed between activity subgroups in their ratings of enjoying nature. Respondents who participated in touring (4.5), trail (4.4), general (4.4) and winter (4.2) activities rated enjoying nature as more important than other activity groups. Trail, general and winter groups were not signifi-

cantly different from special event (4.2) and water-related (4.1) activities. Golfers (3.8) gave enjoying nature the lowest rating of any activity group. Their rating of 3.8 was significantly lower than all other activity groups with the exception of the water-related activity group.

Groups whose primary activity was touring (4.1), water-related (4.0), special event (3.8), general activities (3.7), or golf (3.6) rated socializing higher than the remaining activity groups. These five activity groups did not differ significantly from one another, but were different from winter (3.6) and trail (3.3) activity groups. General, golf, and special event activity groups also were found to be similar to winter and trail activity groups when rating the importance of socializing.

Relaxing had the lowest F-ratio (F=13.18) of the six benefits tested, indicating a weaker relationship with the primary activity groups than the other benefit sought categories. There was some variation in subgroup means based on the Scheffe test. Subjects who participated in water-related recreation (4.0), general activities (3.9), and touring activities (3.6) rated relaxing as significantly more important than other groups engaged in activities. Those subjects who selected a general or touring activity as their primary activity were also found to be similar to trail (3.5) and special event (3.5) groups. Winter (3.4) and golf (3.3) activity groups rated "Relax/rest" as less important than all other groups, but, were found to not be significantly different than touring and trail activity groups.

In summary, those respondents visiting the park primarily for trail activities tended to be seeking exercise and nature enjoyment in their recreation experience and were least likely to be seeking learning or excitement. The primary benefits cited by visitors engaged in general and water-related activities were socializing, enjoying nature and relax-

ing. Golfers rated exercise as the most important benefit and excitement as least important. Winter activity participants were seeking the enjoyment of nature and exercise. Although subjects participating in winter activities rated excitement as the least important of the benefits they were pursuing, their rating for excitement was the highest of all activity groups. Those subjects coming to tour the nature center, farm or grist mill were most likely to seek nature enjoyment and socializing, and least likely to be seeking excitement. Finally, those who were attending a special event were seeking the enjoyment of nature and not likely to seek learning, excitement, or exercise.

Benefit Sought and Group Characteristics

Hypothesis 2: Benefits sought do not vary significantly with the demographic makeup of the group visiting the park.

Hypothesis 2 was rejected. The importance of different benefits varied according to group characteristics. Means for each benefit item were significantly different at the .01 significance level across the eight park visitor groups (Table 2).

As expected, socializing (Spend Time with Friends and Family) was more important to larger groups, particularly those that included children. Groups of adults and children and the all female adult groups had an average rating for social benefits as "Very Important" or higher, while all male adult groups (3.7) and mixed gender adult groups (3.8) rated social benefits lower in importance. As might be expected, individuals entering the park alone rated socializing significantly less important than the other groups. Socializing was the benefit sought category with the highest F-ratio (F=143.876), indicating the greatest amount of variance between groups relative to the variation within groups.

"Learning/developing Skills" was rated highest by groups of male adults (3.1) and groups of adult(s) and child(ren) (female - 3.0, male - 2.9, mixed gender - 2.8). Males and females alone (2.4), female adult groups (2.3), and mixed gender adult groups (2.2) rated learning as less important.

Male groups rated excitement as more important than female or mixed gender groups (male adults - 2.9, male adult(s) and child(ren) - 2.6). All groups of adults and children were found to be not significantly different (male - 2.6, female and mixed gender - 2.4). Males alone, groups of female adults and mixed gender adults rated excitement the same at 2.1 and were not significantly different from females alone (1.9).

Whether or not children were present in the group is the most important predictor of variations in ratings of exercise. All adult groups rated exercise higher than groups consisting of both adult(s) and child(ren). Adults alone or in groups generally did not differ in their ratings of the importance of exercise, except for male only adult groups (mean scores ranging from 3.9 - 4.2). Groups of male adults (3.8) and all groups with children rated exercise as less important than all other groups. Mean ratings of exercise for groups with children were either 3.5 or 3.6, denoting the average score fell approximately half way between "Important (3)" and "Very Important (4)."

All demographic groups rated "Enjoying Nature and the Outdoors" as important. The presence of a female in the user group seemed to be the distinguishing factor in the importance rating of this perceived benefit. Groups with female members rated this benefit as significantly more important (4.3 - 4.5) than all male groups (4.1 - 4.2).

All the importance ratings for relaxing fell somewhere between a rating of "Very Important (4)" and "Important (3)." Although

the ANOVA test found a statistically significant difference in ratings of "Relax/rest" across types of user groups, the Scheffe test showed no significant pairwise differences.

Of the group demographic characteristics that had the most influence on the ratings of benefits sought in a recreation experience, size of the group was most notable with socializing. In addition, whether or not there are child(ren) in a group was a critical factor with regards to the importance ratings of exercise. Also, groups with women tended to rate nature enjoyment as more important than groups without women.

Linear regression procedures were used to test the relative ability of the primary activity and group characteristics to predict benefit ratings. Activity and group characteristics were converted to dummy variables and entered as sets of independent variables for predicting each of the six benefit ratings. The adjusted R^2 is used as an indicator of the explanatory or predictive power of each set of variables. Group and activity variables each explain between 75 and 90 percent of the variation in visitor benefit ratings across the six benefits (Table 3).

Due to considerable intercorrelation between the activity variables and the group characteristic variables, entering both sets of variables yields little improvement in predictive power. Activities better predict the importance of exercising, while user groups better predict "Spending time with Friends and Family." Otherwise, activity variables only slightly outperform group characteristics in explaining the importance of each of the remaining benefits (Table 3).

CONCLUSIONS

This research has shown for the park users, that benefits sought vary across recreation activities and user groups. However, while some activities are carried out for quite different benefits, others provide similar kinds of benefits. Benefits sought on a particular park visit will depend somewhat on the group make-up. This information can be used to enhance recreation marketing, management, and planning efforts.

In review, several overall conclusions can be drawn. First, activity variables slightly outperform group characteristics in predicting benefit ratings, with the exception of socializing. Second, enjoying nature was rated most important by all activity and user groups with three exceptions, trail users, and golfers rated exercise as most important and socializing was rated as important as enjoying nature to groups of mixed gender adult(s) and child(ren). Third, when comparing mean ratings, the four benefits that were rated highest in importance were enjoying nature, exercising, relaxing, and socializing. Learning and excitement tend to be secondary benefits in that all activity and user groups rated each of the four other benefits higher than either learning or excitement, with only two exceptions. Touring facility groups rated exercise as important as learning and males visiting the park alone rated socializing as important as learning. Excitement was rated as the least important benefit by all activity and user groups with two exceptions, winter and water-related activity groups rated learning as important as excitement. Finally, different user group characteristics tend to influence the importance of different benefits. Group size is most influential with regards to socializing, the presence of children with regards to exercising, and gender with regards to enjoying nature and excitement.

Recreation Management Applications

There are patterns in the data that can help recreation professionals better understand the benefits sought by their customers, that are obtained through the recreation activities

and facilities provided. Larry Allen (2) has suggested a three phase benefits approach to recreation management. The results of this research can assist recreation agencies in a majority of the efforts involved in Phase I, Benefit and Opportunity Identification, of this process. Once the agency mission and goals are adjusted, the implementation phase (Phase II) of a benefits approach can begin. Phase II includes modifying recreation sites, areas and services to meet the target benefits of your user population.

There are several other ways this research may be used in particular management decisions. Recreation professionals can use the information for explaining and predicting recreation behaviors, devising and selecting management objectives and practices, organizing and conducting recreation facility inventories, reviewing options for developing new facilities, and developing visitor information and marketing plans. For example, a park system may have just acquired a set sum of money to expand its facilities or program offerings. The agency's primary options include, a new trail, increasing the number of special event activities, or developing a nature center. After reviewing the goals of the agency and its targeted user groups and the benefits they seek, the park system may desire to provide an additional area in the park for exercise, in this case a trail is the most natural choice. If the park wants to increase the social aspect of the park experience, then the nature center or special events should be investigated.

There are a variety of management decisions that can be supported by the benefit information reported in this research project. Learning customer motivations (benefits sought) and characteristics makes the process of serving the customer more straightforward. With this knowledge, it is easier to understand and even predict the actions of the customer and potential customer. A possible scenario may be that an agency has just learned from a recent visitor survey that the population currently served is made up of 80% adults only groups and 20% groups of adults with children. If the mission of the agency is focused on the promotion of family interaction and socializing, a future objective of the agency may be to implement facilities and programs to increase the percent of groups with children entering the park. This study provides some direction as to which activities or facilities have the best chance of attracting this type of market and what this market is seeking in a recreation experience.

Marketing decisions can also be enhanced using the results of this research. This research summarizes the activities and types of user groups most likely to seek out particular benefits from a park visit. Knowing which benefits their customers are most likely seeking, can provide direction to a marketing campaign. For example, assume that a park presently has two main facilities, a general open area for picnicking and sunbathing and a river with a canoe livery. This study indicates that enjoying nature and the outdoors is a benefit that many park visitors are seeking, so the marketing plan should highlight this aspect. We also know that individuals involved in water-related and general activities are likely to seek relaxation in their park visit, so this too should be highlighted in marketing materials. Based on this study, individuals most likely to seek out these types of park facilities are larger groups of both adults and children, so this is the population that should be targeted.

There has been considerable interest in translating research into useful guidelines for management. A benefits approach to recreation management is a theme that has received some attention (27-29). However, the lack of sufficient knowledge on benefits remains an obstacle to implementing this approach. Recreation management and planning has historically been centered around activities and user groups (30). As agency managers

attempt to give more attention to benefits, a better understanding of how benefits are related to activities and user groups will be helpful. This research shows that benefits can be related to more traditional activity and demographic subgroups. With this information, the benefits approach can more readily build upon existing management and planning models, versus requiring an entirely new philosophy and approach.

In the last 10 years, there has been a growing recognition of the need for more research and information on the benefits of recreation. This research, and other similar research projects, have begun to address this need. However, research on the benefits of recreation is still in the early stages, and although good progress has been made recently, many more well developed and focused research projects will need to be completed before we fully appreciate and understand the benefits of a recreation experience.

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TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF BENEFIT RATINGS BY PRIMARY ACTIVITY

Primary Activity	Mean[2] and Scheffe test[3]					
	Get Some Exercise	Develop learning	Excitement/ thrills	Enjoy nature & the outdoors	Spend time with friends/family	Relax/rest
Trail activities	4.5 a	2.2 d	2.0 c	4.4 a,b	3.3 c	3.5 b,c
General activities	3.2 d	2.4 c,d	2.2 b,c	4.4 a,b	3.7 a,b,c	3.9 a,b
Golf activities	3.9 b	3.1 a,b	2.7 a,b	3.8 c	3.6 a,b,c	3.3 c
Water-related activities	3.1 d	2.6 c,d	2.6 a,b	4.1 b,c	4.0 a,b	4.0 a
Winter activities[1]	3.8 b,c	2.9 b,c	2.9 a	4.2 a,b	3.6 b,c	3.4 c
Touring facilities	3.4 c,d	3.4 a	2.3 b,d	4.5 a	4.1 a	3.6 a,b,c
Special Event activities	3.2 d	2.9 b,c	2.2 b,c	4.2 b	3.8 a,b,c	3.5 b,c
Overall Mean	3.8	3.5	2.3	4.3	3.6	3.7
F	143.841	29.67	20.659	18.774	13.549	13.18
N	2670	2400	2386	2699	2505	2537
Sign.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

[1]Winter activities were only included on the winter questionnaire.
[2]Mean scores are based on the ratings 5=extremely important, 4=very important, 3=important, 2=somewhat important, 1=not important
[3] a,b,c, and d indicate subgroups where means are significantly different at a 95% confidence level, as determined by the Scheffe test.

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF BENEFIT RATINGS BY GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

Group Characteristics:[1]	Spend time with friends/family	Develop skills/ learning	Excitement/ thrills	Get some exercise	Enjoy nature & the outdoors	Relax/rest
Male Alone	2.4 d	2.4 b,c	2.1 c,d	3.9 a,b,c	4.1 b	3.6 a
Female Alone	2.6 d	2.4 b,c	1.9 d	4.2 a	4.5 a	3.8 a
Group Male Adults	3.7 c	3.1 a	2.9 a	3.8 b,c,d	4.2 b	3.5 a
Group Female Adults	4.0 a,b,c	2.3 c	2.1 c,d	4.1 a,b	4.4 a,b	3.7 a
Group Mixed Gender Adults	3.8 b,c	2.2 c	2.1 c,d	4.0 a,b,c	4.4 a,b	3.8 a
Group Male Adult(s) & Child(ren)	4.0 a,b,c	2.9 a	2.6 a,b	3.5 d	4.2 b	3.6 a
Group Female Adult(s) & Child(ren)	4.2 a,b	3.0 a	2.4 b,c	3.5 d	4.3 a,b	3.5 a
Group Mixed Gender Adult(s) & Child(ren)	4.3 a	2.8 a,b	2.4 b,c	3.6 c,d	4.3 a,b	3.7 a
Overall Mean	3.6	3.5	2.3	3.8	4.3	3.7
F	143.876	25.265	16.324	14.868	7.104	3.637
N	3151	2994	2971	3323	3417	3201
Sign.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

[1]Variables labeled "group" include parties of more than one and adults are those subjects 18 years of age or older.
[2]Mean scores are based on the ratings 5=extremely important, 4=very important, 3=important, 2=somewhat important, 1=not important [3]a,b,c, and d indicate subgroups where means are significantly different at a 95% confidence level, as determined by the Scheffe test.

TABLE 3

VARIANCE IN BENEFITS SOUGHT EXPLAINED BY ACTIVITY AND GROUP VARIABLES

Variable(S)	Excitement/ thrills	Develop Skills/ learning	Get some exercise	Spend time with friends/family	Relax/Rest	Enjoy nature and the outdoors
Group Characteristics	0.896	0.875	0.759	0.802	0.784	0.784
Activity Groups	0.897	0.880	0.812	0.751	0.794	0.791
Group Characteristics and Activity Groups	0.901	0.885	0.813	0.811	0.797	0.796