

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CHANGES IN BENEFITS SOUGHT DURING AN OUTWARD BOUND EXPERIENCE

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Participants in an eight-day Outward Bound program were asked about their motivations for participation before the experience began and at the mid-point of the actual experience. Although more anticipated differences were expected, based on motivational theory, only one of the twelve motivational domains was significantly different at the .001 level.

Introduction

As Clawson and Knetsch (1969) pointed out over two decades ago, the actual outdoor recreation activity on the site is not the total recreation experience. Instead, Clawson and Knetsch identified five distinctly different, major phases associated with an outdoor recreation experience. An outdoor recreation experience begins with *anticipation*, including planning. Thinking and planning may be very brief and spontaneous, or may range over several days, weeks or months. "Anticipation may far outrun the later reality. Pleasurable anticipation is almost a necessity But excessive optimism in the anticipatory stage may lead to later disappointment and frustration" (Clawson and Knetsch, 1969:33). Clawson and Knetsch stress that the outdoor recreationist's advance planning needs to be based upon realistic factors. When anticipation and planning lead to a positive decision, the outdoor recreation experience progresses further. The second major phase is *travel* to the actual site. *On-site* experiences and activities are the third major phase of the total recreation experience. These are activities and experiences engaged in on-site and the satisfactions derived from those activities and experiences. *Travel back* is the fourth phase. The fifth major phase of the total recreation experience is *recollection*. Clawson and Knetsch describe the recollection phase occurring after the experience is over, when the person (or persons) concerned recalls to memory one or more aspects of the total experience, and may share these recollections with friends, relatives, and associates. "When the total recreation experience makes a major impression the recollection will be strong and lasting. If the experience is a brief and common one quickly followed by a similar one, then each experience will make only a dim impression (Clawson and Knetsch, 1969:35). Recollection of an outdoor recreation experience can provide a starting point for anticipation of another. Over time, recollection of many experiences builds into knowledge, or assumed knowledge, thus providing a foundation for choosing among different outdoor recreation sites and activities. Clawson and Knetsch state, "In many ways, the whole outdoor recreation experience is a

package deal; all parts are necessary, and the sum of satisfactions and dissatisfactions from the whole must be balanced against total costs. Pleasurable parts of the experience must more than balance the unpleasant parts, if any, if the same experience is to be repeated" (Clawson and Knetsch, 1969:35).

Manning points out that early empirical research in outdoor recreation was primarily descriptive, "focusing on the activities and socio-economic and cultural characteristics of users, and their attitudes and preferences about management" (Manning, 1986:79). Our understanding of outdoor recreation has evolved from this early "activity approach" to a "behavioral approach" which examines why people participate in recreation activities and the experiences gained from such participation. Experiences derived from participation in recreation activities have been prone to a variety of terms such as motivations, satisfactions, benefits sought, psychological outcomes, and experience expectations. The term "motivations" will be used throughout this paper for the sake of consistency. A behavioral approach defines recreation as "an experience that results from recreational engagements" (Driver and Tocher, 1970). Research in recreation activity choice has been dominated by this behavioral approach which theorizes most human behavior as goal-directed, or aimed at some need satisfaction (Driver and Tocher, 1970; Manning, 1986). Grounded in social-psychological expectancy value theory, a behavioral approach suggests that people engage in activities in specific settings to realize a group of psychological outcomes, motivations, satisfactions (Atkinson and Birch, 1972; Lawler, 1973; Fishbein and Azjen, 1974), or multiple satisfactions (Hendee, 1974). Manning states, "Thus, people select and participate in recreation activities to meet certain goals or satisfy certain needs, and recreation activities are more a means to an end than an end in themselves" (Manning, 1986:80). Motivations for outdoor recreation are diverse and are related to the attitudes, preferences, and expectations of users.

An expanded view of the behavioral approach acknowledges four levels of demand for outdoor recreation: Level 1 represents demands for activities themselves; Level 2 demands represent the various settings in which activities take place; Level 3 demands represent people's participation in activities in different settings to realize multiple experiences—satisfactions, motivations, or desired psychological outcomes; Level 4 demands represent the ultimate benefits which emanate from satisfying experiences derived from recreational participation (Manning, 1986:80-81). Such benefits may be either personal or societal, and are individually defined. As such, these benefits are rather abstract and difficult to measure (Manning, 1986). Consequently, empirical study of the behavioral approach to outdoor recreation has focused on Level 3 demands—people's motivations for recreation participation. Empirical tests of the behavioral approach to outdoor recreation indicate there are a variety of motivations for participating in outdoor recreation, and these motivations can be empirically identified (Manning, 1986). Potential recreation motivations are often measured empirically by a series of scale items which represent reasons for deciding to participate in a designated recreation activity (Driver, 1977). These scale items are usually then reduced through cluster analysis to dimensions which can be combined, because of a common underlying theme, to represent domains of more generalized categories of motivations. The goal-directed nature of behavior is the central concept defining the recreation research understanding of motivation.

Kuentzel (1990) points out some of the drawbacks of a goal-oriented approach to outdoor recreation participation by citing

past empirical research. Kuentzel states that response to motive scales may be socialized expressions of popular ideology, rather than a purposeful and articulated calculation of preferences and option (Kuentzel, 1990:2). Kuentzel identifies the following potential problems in the empirical use motive scales: motive scales are insensitive to the measurement of relative motive intensity, the levels of specificity and the semantic interpretation of motives between different people; motive measurement tools cannot reflect the complex nature of a decision-making process; and motive scales cannot predict differences among participants in the same activity at distinctly different settings. Additionally, Kuentzel suggests the expectancy value approach may be deficient in explaining the complexities of motivated behavior in outdoor recreation settings. Kuentzel's analysis suggests that "scaled measurements of motives using a goal-directed approach yield a rather generic description of behavioral phenomena in recreation participation. While these outcome measures can show differences in value and preference, they are not exclusive differences, and do not extricate substantial differences between experiences at different settings and among different activities" (Kuentzel, 1990:12-13).

According to Kuentzel, this motive uniformity conclusion calls for a more detailed refinement of motivation research, with a more careful distinction between experience and outcome. Kuentzel calls for a "process-oriented" approach to recreation behavior, an approach which treats the expressive doing of an activity rather than "the cognitive calculations of benefits versus cost as the motivator for participation" (Kuentzel, 1990:13). While expectancy value theory provides an understanding of attitudes, a phenomenological, process-oriented approach provides an understanding of the expressive action characteristic of recreation participation. Phenomenology recognizes that people may have different perceptions of the same event and essentially draws upon the experiences of individuals as they perceive them, the meaning of these experiences to them and their resultant feelings (Hamilton-Smith, 1990). Utilizing such an approach, people dynamically recreate the meaning of a motive in doing the actual recreational activity. "The motive takes on meaning only as it unfolds within the context of the interaction with the recreation experience, not through retrospective evaluation and objectification" (Kuentzel, 1990:16). Motives exist as entities tied to phenomena external to the individual. An individual draws on an external reality to explain or justify their behavior. A recreationist interactively recreates the meaning of a motive or alters it according to the progressive path of interaction with the recreation experience.

Purpose of Study

Taking this phenomenological, process-oriented approach into consideration, one might expect motivations to change, to be altered through participant interaction, over the course of a recreational experience, especially one that occurs over an extended period of time. The notion of time along with location at which motivations are measured are additional methodological issues as identified by Manning (1986). Thus, the purpose of this exploratory study was to measure motivational changes over the course of a recreational experience lasting over an extended period of time.

Methodology and Research Design

As part of a larger study, 35 college students, participating in an 8-day Rio Grande Outward Bound program involving a variety of outdoor activities such as whitewater canoeing, hiking, rock climbing, camping and outdoor living skills, were asked to rate the relative importance of 40 potential reasons or motivations

for participation. The students were asked to complete the motivation questionnaire twice; the first time approximately two and a half weeks prior to the actual on-site experience, and the second time, four days into the actual 8-day experience.

Survey Design

Driver and associates (1977 and 1983) developed a highly comprehensive list of potential recreation motivations, or reasons for deciding to participate in a designated activity, measured empirically by a series of scale items. This item pool for Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scales is designed to quantify the psychological outcomes desired and expected from recreation participation. Respondents are asked to rate the relative importance of each scale item representing a potential motivation for participating in a designated activity. As previously discussed, these scale items are usually then reduced through cluster analysis to dimensions which can be combined, because of a common underlying theme, to represent domains of more generalized categories of motivations. For the purpose of this study, 11 of Driver's REP domains were included which seemed most appropriate for this particular outdoor recreation experience, along with a twelfth domain which we entitled Fun. Altogether, 40 statements, or scale items, were included in the questionnaires to measure the 12 REP domains.

There are two approaches to utilizing these REP dimensions: 1) each dimension in a preference domain can be used separately to examine specific aspects of the central theme of the preference domain. Driver calls this a molecular approach to domain inquiry, i.e. within the Achievement-Stimulation Domain we could look at the specific dimension of Reinforcing Self-Image, Social Recognition, Skill Development, Competence Testing, or Seeking Stimulation; 2) one could take representative items from each component dimension, i.e. Reinforcing Self-Image, Social Recognition, Skill Development, Competence Testing, and Seeking Stimulation, and combine them to define a single dimension representing the entire central domain theme—i.e., in this case, Achievement-Stimulation. Driver calls this a molar approach to domain inquiry and this second approach is utilized here in this study. Table 1 (see next page) shows the 40 statements, or scale items, representing certain underlying motivational dimensions, which are then combined to reflect domains of more generalized categories of motivations.

Data Collection

During the Anticipation Phase of the Outward Bound course experience, each student completed a questionnaire which asked them to rate the relative importance of the 40 statements related to potential reasons for participation by completing the following sentence, "I'm participating in this Outward Bound program because I want to . . ." The relative importance of each statement was indicated by each student utilizing a 5-point Likert Scale where 1=Not At All Important to 5=Extremely Important. During the Experience Phase, a second questionnaire was administered which asked each student to indicate how important each of the potential reasons for participation was for the rest of the experience by completing the following sentence, "For the rest of my Outward Bound program I want to..." Once again, the relative importance of each statement was indicated by each student utilizing the same 5-point Likert Scale.

Treatment of Data

Utilizing data generated from the two questionnaires, and applying the molar approach to domain inquiry as discussed above, reliability levels (Cronbach alpha) were computed for the REP domains. Table 1 shows the reliability coefficient for

Table 1. Reliability coefficients for 12 recreation experience preference domains.

RECREATION EXPERIENCE PREFERENCE DOMAIN	Anticipation Phase	Experience Phase	Range of Estimated Cronbach alpha for All Items in Dimension ^a
<u>Dimension</u>			
<u>scale item/statement</u>			
ACHIEVEMENT-STIMULATION	.57	.86	.94 - .96
Reinforcing Self-Image			
show myself that I can do it			
Social Recognition			
show others that I can do it			
Skill Development			
develop new skills			
improve my skills			
Competence Testing			
learn what I'm capable of			
Seeking Stimulation			
experience excitement			
LEADERSHIP/AUTONOMY	.83	.73	.88 - .90
Independence			
feel my independence and be on my own			
Autonomy			
be free to make my own choices			
Control-Power			
be in control of things that happen			
have others direct me/be in charge			
RISK TAKING	.71	.90	.70 - .81
take risks			
take chances in dangerous situations			
experience uncertainty of not knowing what will happen			
LEARNING-DISCOVERY	.65	.78	.88 - .91
General Learning			
learn about and get to know a new area			
Exploration			
experience new and different things			
RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATURE	.86	.86	.92 - .95
Scenery			
view the scenic beauty			
General Nature Appreciation			
get a feeling of harmony with nature			
gain a better appreciation of nature			
REFLECT ON PERSONAL VALUES	.55	.89	.88 - .91
Spiritual			
think about my personal values			
Introspection			
learn more about myself			
PHYSICAL FITNESS-EXERCISE	.57	.83	.86 - .93
improve my physical health			
be physically active			
ESCAPE PERSONAL-SOCIAL PRESSURE	.54	.78	.91 - .93
Tension Release			
be able to release built-up tensions			
Slow Down Mentally			
recover from my usual hectic pace			
Escape Role Overloads			
get away from the usual demands of life			
Escape Daily Routine			
do something different			

^a From: Driver, B.L. 1977. Item Pool for Scales Designed to Quantify the Psychological Outcomes Desired and Expected from Recreation Participation. Range of Cronbach alpha from past empirical studies.

Table 1 (Continued). Reliability coefficients for 12 recreation experience preference domains.

RECREATION EXPERIENCE PREFERENCE DOMAIN	Anticipation Phase	Experience Phase	Range of Estimated Cronbach alpha for All Items in Dimension ^a
<u>Dimension</u>			
<u>scale item/statement</u>			
ESCAPE PHYSICAL PRESSURES	.73	.85	.94 - .96
Tranquility			
experience solitude			
experience peace and calm			
Privacy			
be alone			
get away from certain people			
Escape Crowds			
experience open space			
get away from civilization for awhile			
Escape Physical Stressors			
get away from my current routine			
ESCAPE FAMILY/FRIENDS	single	single	.65 - .78
be away from my family/friends for awhile	item	item	
RISK REDUCTION	.76	.81	(not available) ^b
Risk Moderation			
be near others who could help if I need them			
know others are nearby			
Risk Avoidance			
be sure of what will happen to me			
FUN	.89	.95	(not available) ^c
enjoy myself			
have a good time			
have fun			

^a From: Driver, B.L. 1977. Item Pool for Scales Designed to Quantify the Psychological Outcomes Desired and Expected from Recreation Participation. Range of Cronbach alpha from past empirical studies.

^b From: Driver, B.L. 1983. Master List of Items for Recreation Experience Preference Scales and Domains.

^c Twelfth domain added in this study.

each domain during each phase of the study and the range of reliability coefficients from past empirical studies. Reliability levels were found to be satisfactory, although the Cronbach alpha coefficients for Achievement-Stimulation, Reflect on Personal Values, Physical Fitness-Exercise, and Escape Personal-Social Pressure were found to be low for the Anticipation Phase. We do not have an explanation for these low reliability coefficients during anticipation.

Analysis and Findings

Means were computed for both the Anticipation Phase and Experience Phase. Statistical analysis involved performing t-tests on the paired data for the difference of means between these two phases, with regard to the 12 Recreation Experience Preference domains. No statistically significant differences were found for 11 of the 12 Recreation Experience Preference domains (See Table 2, next page).

One domain, Escape Family-Friends, represented by the statement "get away from my family/friends for awhile" approached significance at the .05 level ($p=.054$). The domain of Risk Reduction was found to be significantly different for the Anticipation and Experience Phases ($p=.000$). This domain was represented by the dimension of Risk Moderation, which included the scale item statements of "be near others who could help if I need them" and "know others are nearby" and by the dimension of Risk Avoidance, which included the scale item statement of "be sure of what will happen to me." It appears that the students participating in the Outward Bound program

considered the domains of Escape Family-Friends and Risk Reduction to be significantly more important during the Experience Phase than during the Anticipation Phase.

Discussion and Conclusion

The one significant difference found could be expected, given some of the objectives of an Outward Bound program—stressing the importance of developing each individual's ability to cooperate with others in the group, learning and applying the concepts of teamwork in decision-making and problem-solving situations, building group interdependence, and increasing an individual's awareness of others—all of which contribute to risk reduction in an Outward Bound experience. The increased importance of escaping family/friends back at home or school during the Experience Phase also could be expected given the Outward Bound objectives stated above. For practitioners, in this case Outward Bound instructors, it appears it is possible to "manage the experience" in such a way that the "group" becomes more important for individuals as the experience evolves over an extended period of time.

However, based on the work of Manning (1986), Kuentzel (1990), and others, more statistically significant differences in the Recreation Experience Preference domains between the Anticipation Phase and the Experience Phase had been expected in this study. As motivational theory regarding recreational experience evolves, it may well be that motivations are not only constant across certain activities, but that motives actually remain relatively stable across the various phases of these outdoor recreation experiences.

This study examined one Outward Bound program, an 8-day experience in which 35 college students participated in various recreational activities, and thus, it will take further efforts in this area to determine whether the study results can be

generalized to other activities, and to even similar experiences under different situations, of varying intensity and of various duration.

Table 2. T-tests for the difference between anticipation and experience phases with regard to 12 recreation experience preference domains.

Recreation Experience Preference Domain	Mean Anticipation Phase ^a	Mean Experience Phase ^b	t-value	p-value
Achievement-Stimulation	3.97	3.92	.31	.761
Leadership/Autonomy	3.21	3.31	-.84	.409
Risk Taking	3.37	3.54	-1.23	.228
Learning-Discovery	4.33	4.23	.63	.536
Relationships with Nature	4.19	4.08	.81	.424
Reflect on Personal Values	3.97	3.73	1.15	.259
Physical Fitness-Exercise	3.74	3.73	.08	.934
Escape Personal-Social Pressure	3.55	3.61	-.42	.680
Escape Physical Pressures	3.44	3.40	.32	.748
Escape Family/Friends	2.06	2.57	-2.00	.054
Risk Reduction	2.28	3.08	-4.67	.000
Fun	4.47	4.44	.16	.876

^a Computed means based on a five-point Likert Scale where 1=Not At All Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Moderately Important, 4=Very Important, 5=Extremely Important.

^b Computed means based on same five-point Likert Scale as above.

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