

THE POTENTIAL BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT WOMEN WHO ARE EMPLOYED WITHIN THE OUTDOOR ADVENTURE INDUSTRY FACE.

INTRODUCTION

This current field of research recognises that there are issues in gender inclusivity and diversity. This study aims to continue to provide additional perspectives of women who are impacted by the current state of the Outdoor Adventure Industry (OAI).

Influential research highlighting current perspectives of women's position within the industry:

- “A journey into understanding gendered experiences of outdoor adventure education” (Blaine and Akhurst, 2020).
- “The hidden turmoil: Females achieving longevity in the outdoor learning profession” (Wright and Gray, 2013).
- “The ‘F’ word: Feminism in outdoor education” (Gray, 2016).
- “Outdoor Careers and Motherhood” (Wittington, 2018).

AIMS

- Highlight both sides of the spectrum. Current literature often focuses on the barriers and challenges that women encounter, which are undoubtedly important to address. However, it's equally crucial to recognise and celebrate the progress that has been made and the opportunities that have emerged for women over time.
- Explore the differences in male and female leadership style and approach.
- Highlight the concept of ‘gender roles’ and it’s effect on women’s ability to progress within a male-dominated industry.
- Demonstrate positive progression and opportunities that have emerged as a result of research and raising awareness.

REFLECTION AND ADVICE FOR LEVEL 5 STUDENTS

Research Proposal

- Utilise the support provided and focus on a realistic achievable target.
- Address the correlation between the proposal and dissertation throughout.
- Ensure topic is of pertinent interest and will benefit future practice.
- Consider range of relevant and credible research on the topic to provide depth of understanding and highlight gaps in research.

Dissertation

- Refer to guidance and support as there is sound information on expectations (Moodle). Read these thoroughly to gain a understanding on gaining clarity to be able to focus on each section.
- Attend drop in sessions with dissertation supervisor for support in field of study. Expert guidance in terms of content and structure will ensure success.
- Refer to the timeframe created in the proposal and adhere to it.
- Importance of range within qualitative research when choosing samples.
- Consider the importance of themes and relate these to current literature.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

- **Four female participants** of different ages, career longevity, roles of responsibilities , and experience within the industry.

- **Purposive sampling.** This sampling method ensures a “sample that is representative of the population in terms of both central tendency and range on characteristics of interest.” (Wildemuth, 2017).

- **Males were not interviewed.** Female perspectives was the primary focus. However, upon analysis and discussion a male’s perspective could prove useful in offering an insight into comparisons of the different barriers and opportunities they may face within the industry.

Instrumentation/Data collection

- **Semi-structured interviews.** This approach encouraged genuine dialogue and authentic responses as it provided freedom to adjust the questions as the interview progressed (Wildemuth, 2017).

- **Interviews conducted via Teams** facilitated remote interviews, simplifying the process of establishing a suitable date and time, eliminating the need to travel to a destination. Limitations in capturing the same essence and authenticity whilst interviewing face to face, as well as technical disruptions (Khan and MacEachan, 2022).

- **Interviews transcribed via Teams** provided both options of video recording and transcribing which rendered as an useful tool in ensuring all data was collected accurately.

- **Interviews conducted in English.** Participants preferred communicating in Welsh, their first language. Initially, conversing in English was disconcerting. The application of Welsh phrases mitigated the awkwardness when English terminology proved unfamiliar, reassuring accurate translation during analysis (Coolican, 2019).

Data Analysis

- **Thematic analysis** identifies, analyses and reports patterns within data. These patterns become themes which captures important meanings within the data in relation to the study.

- **Deductive approach to determine themes.** This consisted of familiarisation, coding, searching, reviewing, defining themes, and finally reporting upon the themes within the findings and discussion section.

- **Limitations of using thematic analysis** are issues in interpretation as the data is purely descriptive. These were mitigated by anchoring analytical claims within an existing theatrical framework. (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study examines how societal norms and gender biases shape “the woman’s experience“ within the OAI.

“I mean, you know, women often start a family as well, the HR process in the outdoor sector have not been very supportive of women.”
Person D, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Increasing female representation in policymaking may address gender disparities in leadership.

“the providers are still male dominant... it’s difficult to find female providers.”
Person B, Activities Development Officer

“500 people a year with different national governing body qualifications, and I would say 20% of them were female.”
Person D, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

“So, they've asked me to be on sort of the panel... Because sometimes if you go for an interview and there are just males sitting around the table and it's just you it is quite intimidating.”
Person C, Outdoor development officer

The woman experiences and attitudes highlight the challenges and progression in the differences in leadership approach

“...it's good to have female representation anyway, because obviously females understand how each other goes through stuff that may be the men don't experience. Especially things like menstruation.”

“I had a colleague who was male and we were like chalk and cheese... But actually it was really good because we were sort of strength and weaknesses kind of combined to make a really good team.”
Person C, Outdoor development officer

A lack of consideration towards other minority groups within the study of women’s position within the OAI narrows relatability for women from all diverse backgrounds.

“We're not so diverse in ethnic minorities. So that's something we'd love to work on.”
Person B, Activities Development Officer

Evidence highlights progress in breaking barriers offers increased career opportunities.

“... people [women] are just really grateful that there are opportunities there for them that they can afford and there are people there to improve their confidence, their knowledge, their skills.”
Person D, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

