

Quantitative Research Essay

Introduction

This report presents the study of the effects that the outdoors has on a person's well-being. In this study I will look at whether people view the outdoors as beneficial to their well-being, both mental and physical. Mackerron & Mourato (2013, p. 992) state that "Natural environments may be lower in environmental 'bads' that have significant negative impacts on physical and mental well-being, which in turn could affect happiness". I will also look at the age range of people that participate in outdoor activities and what outdoor activities that they do participate in, the reason for me choosing this area of study, is I find the subject of mental well-being to be of utmost importance. I feel that whilst there is ample research on the effects that physical exercise has on helping people to combat poor mental health, there is little on using the outdoors for this effect, a lot of the research I have come across is pointing more towards the environment as opposed to adventurous activities. Mackerron & Mourato (2013, p.998) conclude that "individuals who already feel unhappy may be less likely to leave the home to engage in physical activity or experience natural habitats".

As I am a keen outdoors person, one day I hope to go into the field of using the outdoors to help people maintain both a physical and a mentally healthy lifestyle. I have compiled a list of questions that I will be using in the form of a survey. For this survey I will be using survey monkey (SurveyMonkey, 2019). Once I created my survey, I then posted a link to the survey on my social media page, I have not identified any participants, as I am not looking for a certain type of person as this is more of a generic survey. I am looking for people of all ages, genders and health levels to complete this survey. Once the survey is closed, I will be analysing the data by taking my findings and entering them into SPSS and using cross-tabulation to extract the appropriate data. Once I took the data I will then be looking at age and gender versus time spent in the outdoors and what are the most popular activities that people participate in whilst in the outdoors, I will also be looking at whether or not all of the participants view the outdoors as beneficial to their mental well-being and whether or not they would recommend the outdoors to other people.

Procedure

For the purpose of this essay I will be undertaking a quantitative research method, according to Dawson (2009, p.15), quantitative research generates statistics through the use of large-scale survey research, using methods such as questionnaires or structured interviews. The method that I used to gain the data was that of a survey, I had to come up with a series of dependant and independent variable questions that I could put into a survey. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, pp. 606-607) state that "An independent variable is an input variable, that which causes, in part or in total, a particular outcome", Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011, p.607) also say that "a dependant variable, on the other hand, is the outcome variable, that which is caused, in total or in part, by the input. once I had gained my responses, I would be able to gather the data. Once the data was gathered, I then extrapolated the data from my survey and entered the details into SPSS. Once all the data was entered into SPSS, I then For this assignment, had to compile a list of questions, once I figured out how I wanted to ask the questions, I then entered the questions into survey monkey (surveymonkey,2019). Once I completed the survey, I then attached a link of the survey to my social media page. When I had gained enough completed surveys, I then manually entered the data into SPSS. Once all the data is then in SPSS, I then used the cross-tabulation tool to look at the variables to analyse my data, for this I mostly used age and gender and used them to find out how many hours were spent in the outdoors and out of the males and females who spent the most amount of time in the outdoors, I looked at the most popular activities and then used age versus activity to determine which age group participated in those activities the most.

Data Presentation and Findings

the first bit of data that I analysed was age and gender versus time spent in the outdoors.

age * time Crosstabulation

			time					Total
			0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+	
age	18-24	% within age		50.0%		50.0%		100.0%
		% within time		33.3%		50.0%		20.0%
		% of Total		10.0%		10.0%		20.0%
	25-34	% within age			50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within time			100.0%	50.0%	50.0%	40.0%
		% of Total			20.0%	10.0%	10.0%	40.0%
	35-44	% within age		66.7%			33.3%	100.0%
		% within time		66.7%			50.0%	30.0%
		% of Total		20.0%			10.0%	30.0%
	45-54	% within age	100.0%					100.0%
		% within time	100.0%					10.0%
		% of Total	10.0%					10.0%
Total	% within age		10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within time		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total		10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%

From this data, it is apparent that people over the age of 45 spend the least amount of time in the outdoors. However, this is only 10% of the total amount of people that responded to the survey. People between the ages of 25-44 years of age spent the most time in the outdoors, with a total of 53.3% of the respondents saying that they spend 21+ hours in the outdoors. However, 30% of the participants of the survey say that they spend 6-10 hours in the outdoors.

gender * time Crosstabulation

			time					Total
			0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+	
gender	female	% within gender	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%		100.0%
		% within time	100.0%	33.3%	100.0%	50.0%		50.0%
		% of Total	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%		50.0%
	male	% within gender		40.0%		20.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within time		66.7%		50.0%	100.0%	50.0%
		% of Total		20.0%		10.0%	20.0%	50.0%
	% within gender		10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within time		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total		10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%

% of Total	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
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When I took age out of the equation, I noticed that 40% of the female participants spent 11-15 hours in the outdoors, whilst only 20% spent more time at 16-20 hours doing outdoor activities and 20% spending less than 5 hours in the outdoors. The time spent by males in the outdoors is a little bit even with 40% saying that they spend 6-10 hours and 40% saying that they spend 21+ hours in the outdoors.

For the next bit of data, I analysed age and gender and looked at two different activities and how age and gender fall into that category.

age * walking Crosstabulation

			walking yes	Total
age	18-24	% within age	100.0%	100.0%
		% within walking	20.0%	20.0%
		% of Total	20.0%	20.0%
	25-34	% within age	100.0%	100.0%
		% within walking	40.0%	40.0%
		% of Total	40.0%	40.0%
	35-44	% within age	100.0%	100.0%
		% within walking	30.0%	30.0%
		% of Total	30.0%	30.0%
	45-54	% within age	100.0%	100.0%
		% within walking	10.0%	10.0%
		% of Total	10.0%	10.0%
Total	% within age		100.0%	100.0%
	% within walking		100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total		100.0%	100.0%

The most popular activity was that of walking, with 100% of the participants claiming that they spend time walking in the outdoors.

I also looked at the amount of people that spend time doing Paddle sports (for example: stand up paddle boarding, kayaking and canoeing).

age * paddle Crosstabulation

paddle | Total

			yes	no	
age	18-24	% within age	100.0%		100.0%
		% within paddle	50.0%		20.0%
		% of Total	20.0%		20.0%
	25-34	% within age		100.0%	100.0%
		% within paddle		66.7%	40.0%
		% of Total		40.0%	40.0%
	35-44	% within age	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within paddle	50.0%	16.7%	30.0%
		% of Total	20.0%	10.0%	30.0%
	45-54	% within age		100.0%	100.0%
		% within paddle		16.7%	10.0%
		% of Total		10.0%	10.0%
Total		% within age	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
		% within paddle	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Only 40% of the participants choose yes to paddle sports. Of the 40% this was an even split between the ages of 18-25 and 35-44. As I wanted to know how many people spent time in the water when participating in an outdoor activity, I was very generic when asking my question with regards to paddle sports as this could include many variations of paddle sports (for example, stand up paddle boarding, canoeing and kayaking).

gender * paddle Crosstabulation

			paddle		Total
			yes	no	
gender	female	% within gender	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
		% within paddle	25.0%	66.7%	50.0%
		% of Total	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%
	male	% within gender	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within paddle	75.0%	33.3%	50.0%
		% of Total	30.0%	20.0%	50.0%
	Total	% within gender	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
		% within paddle	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

When I looked at gender versus paddle sports, even on such a small-scale exercise as this, it is apparent that more men enjoy engaging in paddle sports with 60% of the male participants answering yes and only 20% of females answering yes to participating in paddle sports.

When looking at how much time the participants spent in the outdoors and what activities they partake in, the answers I then looked at was whether they viewed the outdoors as being beneficial to them and if they would recommend the outdoors to others for their well-being.

age * benefit Crosstabulation

			benefit		Total
			yes	no	
age	18-24	% within age	100.0%		100.0%
		% within benefit	22.2%		20.0%
		% of Total	20.0%		20.0%
	25-34	% within age	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within benefit	33.3%	100.0%	40.0%
		% of Total	30.0%	10.0%	40.0%
	35-44	% within age	100.0%		100.0%
		% within benefit	33.3%		30.0%
		% of Total	30.0%		30.0%
	45-54	% within age	100.0%		100.0%
		% within benefit	11.1%		10.0%
		% of Total	10.0%		10.0%
Total	% within age		90.0%	10.0%	100.0%
	% within benefit		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total		90.0%	10.0%	100.0%

For this, I chose to look at age rather than gender as this was solely about looking at whether anyone did not see the outdoors as beneficial to their well-being. Looking at the results, 10% of the participants didn't see the outdoors as beneficial to their well-being.

age * recommend Crosstabulation

			recommend		Total
			yes	no	
age	18-24	% within age	100.0%		100.0%
		% within recommend	20.0%		20.0%
		% of Total	20.0%		20.0%
	25-34	% within age	100.0%		100.0%
		% within recommend	40.0%		40.0%
		% of Total	40.0%		40.0%
	35-44	% within age	100.0%		100.0%
		% within recommend	30.0%		30.0%
		% of Total	30.0%		30.0%
	45-54	% within age	100.0%		100.0%
		% within recommend	10.0%		10.0%
		% of Total	10.0%		10.0%
Total	% within age		100.0%		100.0%
	% within recommend		100.0%		100.0%
	% of Total		100.0%		100.0%

However, when I cross-tabulated the age versus whether they would recommend the outdoors to aid a person's well-being, 100% of the participants answered yes that they would recommend the outdoors. This tells me that even though 10% of the participants answered no to the outdoors being beneficial for themselves, they do however, see the outdoors as potentially beneficial for others well-being.

Conclusion/Reflection

Following on from my first essay. I had to approach this essay differently, as with the first assignment I used an interview to obtain the data and then used a recording of the interview to extrapolate the data. When I designed my questionnaire, I wanted to ask more questions about how the outdoors affected a person's mental well-being but as I was limited to the amount of questions I could ask on the survey, and as I am new to this I did not want to ask any deeply personal questions that may be unethical, I felt that it was better that I concentrated more on the amount of time people spent in the outdoors and what activities they participated in whilst spending time in the outdoors. In hind sight I would have approached the questions in my survey differently and I would have asked for them to go into detail of the affects that the outdoors has on their mental well-being. With the questions I asked I struggled to get a good handle on extrapolating the data as with only ten people responding to my survey it didn't give me enough data to gain a conclusive answer. However, the only conclusive answer that I did get was that even though 10% of the participants answered no to seeing the outdoors as beneficial to their own well-being, 100% of the participants would recommend the outdoors to others to help with their mental well-being, with walking being the most popular of the activities.

Word count [1536]

References

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STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the <i>extent</i> to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement. Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills	10	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills	20	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	20	
4. Practical Application Skills	40	
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice	10	

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		%
	Up to 1 week late (40% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		