

# SOCIAL, CULTURAL, & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF ADVENTURE TOURISM: A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

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## Introduction

Within the last decade, Chattanooga has ascended as one of the top multifaceted outdoor regions within the nation. As Chattanooga continues to gain recognition in the area of adventure tourism, little research has been conducted about the attitudes of the locals about the new influx of tourists. The purpose of this study is to answer three primary questions:

- 1) What are the descriptive statistics of adventure-seeking Chattanooga residents?
- 2) How do locals perceive adventure tourism in Chattanooga?
- 3) Which factors influence the locals' attitudes about adventure tourism?

## Methods

This study was conducted at the RiverRocks festival held in Chattanooga from October 2-13<sup>th</sup>, 2013. We formulated two different surveys, one for visitors and one for Hamilton County residents, including questions about spending habits, outdoor activities, and perceived impact of the festival. Volunteers, primarily UTC students, were trained to use the "randomized stint sampling" method and sought out voluntary responses from people either participating in or spectating at 5 of the higher profile River Rocks events. We accumulated 401 surveys, 202 from visitors to the area and 199 from Hamilton County residents. We had a 67% response rate.



## Analyses

- Data were gathered and analyzed to determine if the independent variables (Demographics, activities, etc.) had an impact on the dependent variable of local residents attitudes towards adventure tourism in Chattanooga.
- The majority of the resident spectators were white, with a 93.5% as well as a 52% being females. The mean age across the spectators was 38 years.
- The data were analyzed using a descriptive analysis, a principle axis factor analysis with varimax rotation, and multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA).
- The tables below give a representation of the data for the factors.

Top Activities Participated in by Residents

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Walking	199	0.65	0.477
Hiking	199	0.53	0.5
Camp	199	0.41	0.493
Cultural	199	0.38	0.486
Historical	199	0.38	0.486
Sports	199	0.33	0.472
Running	199	0.31	0.464
Cycling	199	0.3	0.458
Backpack	199	0.29	0.456
Kayaking	199	0.27	0.443
Mountain Bike	199	0.24	0.429

	QOL	Rights	Infra	Identity
Income Class	0.011	0.005	0.167	0.241
Age	2.756*	0.658	1.511	0.502
Children	0.211	3.472*	0.011	0.037
Education	3.880**	4.066**	2.213	2.778*
Years In HC	0.709	0.006	0.993	0.385
Outdoor Exp	0.020	0.037	0.332	0.370
Total Actiities	0.629	0.000	0.951	0.025
Race	0.952	0.413	0.087	0.084
Gender	0.102	0.043	0.025	0.005

\* p < .1, \*\*p < .05

Rotated Factor Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	QOL	Rights	Infra	Identity
Access	.821			
Awareness	.720			
Population	.690			
Environment	.660			
Participation	.546			
Facilities	.452			
Perception	.440			
Sales	.390			
Rights		.724		
Values		.706		
Priorities		.668		
AffAttitude		.524		
Overcrowd			.639	
pollution			.612	
PropertyValue			.579	
LocallIncome			.575	
Safety			.521	
Infrastrctre			.470	
Employment			.444	
Identity				.701
Promotion				.519
AffectCulture				.500
Exposure				.499

## Results

- 1.) The majority (94%) of the surveyed residents were white.
  - Education completed at the B.S. or B.A. level was 48.5% and the M.S. level was 15.5%.
  - Top ten activities for residents in descending order were walking, hiking, camp, cultural, historical, sports, running, cycling, backpacking, & kayaking
- 2.) Through the principle axis factor analysis, we found four factors for attitudes: Quality of Life, Rights, Infrastructure, and Identity.
- 3.) Quality of Life factor showed marginal significance of 0.10 for age and 0.05 significance in education.
  - The Rights factor was affected significantly by education with  $p < .05$ , and residents having children within the household with  $p < .10$ .
  - The infrastructure factor was not significantly influenced by any demographics.
  - Identity was affected by education ( $p = .1$ ).

## Implications

- The vast majority of River Rocks participants were white, reinforcing the idea that outdoor activities are a white, middle class hobby.
- In general, residents perceived adventure tourism as having a very positive affect on the region.
- Older, more educated residents perceived adventure tourism as a positive influence on quality of life
- Number of children in a household positively impacted one's belief that adventure tourism impacts rights in the Chattanooga area.
- More educated residents perceived a stronger impact of adventure tourism on our regional identity.