

Exploring recreation pattern differences among Taiwanese Hoklos and Hakkas and Anglo-Americans

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Introduction

Comparative studies across different cultures are one of the emerging research trends in forest recreation. A review of literature showed major differences exist between eastern and western cultures. Previously cross-cultural research mainly focused on comparisons between nations. Research comparing cultural/ethnic groups inter-culturally was extremely rare in the literature (Li et al. 2007). Exploring differences between cultural/ethnic groups fosters knowledge from cultural anthropology to recreation studies (Chick et al. 2007). We contend that if recreation differences were found between nations, then those differences derive from differences in culture. Understanding visitors culturally may assist managers in providing niche recreation management and achieving customer satisfaction (Burns and Graefe 2005; Reisinger and Tuner 2003). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the socio-demographics, activities, values, and satisfaction differences among three cultural/ethnic groups: Taiwanese Hoklo, Taiwanese Hakka and Anglo-American forest recreation visitors.

Methods

In 2011, we surveyed visitors to Basianshan National Forest Recreation Area and Aowanda National Forest Recreation Area in central Taiwan as well as the Timberline Lodge Recreation Complex in the Mt. Hood National Forest in Oregon, U.S.A. Because the national forest areas were vast, a simple random sample of all visitors within the setting would not yield an adequate number of respondents for comparisons. Therefore, we used a purposive on-site convenience sampling approach at sites known to be heavily used by visitors. In Taiwan, we mainly focused on locations such as the visitor center, nature center, picnic areas, parking lot and trail head. In the U.S. surveys, we interviewed visitors at the Timberline Lodge Recreation Complex. We adopted a systematically random selected approach, that is, at each site, every third visitor was asked to complete the on-site questionnaire to maintain a random selected manner (Sallant and Dillman 1994). Overall, we obtained 1251 usable questionnaires, with 525 Taiwanese Hoklos, 102 Taiwanese Hakkas and 624 Anglo-Americans.

Results and discussion

The results showed that socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, education and income were significantly different between Taiwanese Hoklo and Hakka and Anglo-American forest recreation visitors. Ten out of the 12 recreation "activities participated in" differed among the groups. For visitor values, 8 out of 9 measures differed among groups. And for visitor satisfaction, the 16 satisfaction measures all differed among groups, with 6 out of the

16 measures showing strong associations, as indicated by the Eta values. We also found the main differences for the measures examined were between the Anglo-Americans and the others. On the other hand, we found, to some extent, the two Taiwanese cultural groups were homogenous in terms of the variables tested. Table 1 showed satisfaction differences among three cultural groups. The findings were consistent with those found between Taiwan and the U.S. visitors (e.g., Huang et al. 2012), confirming the cross-cultural differences between nations as well as between cultural/ethnic groups. Findings have implications for forest recreation management. Managers may take advantage of observed differences from this study and tailor their recreation opportunities for a culturally diverse clientele.

Caution needs to be taken in generalizing the study findings. First, we used convenience sampling method to survey visitors and therefore our data was not a random sample. We suggest future research employ stratified random sampling to survey visitors to national forests. Research can be designed to divide the setting into different zones or divide the survey period into four seasons in a year so that field researcher can survey visitors in each zone and season to obtain more representative samples. Second, despite the differences identified in this study, we doubt whether those differences were real cross-cultural differences. In other words, the differences can be from the systematic response bias in the survey cross-culturally. For instance, Taiwanese groups were likely to respond the surveys near neutral scores, whereas the Anglo-American visitors tended to respond on both ends. We suggest future research control some confounding variables such as the standard deviation for the variables tested to gain the "net" differences between cultures. We advocate future research employ more rigid sampling procedures as well as use more advanced data analysis methods to enhance the research validity and reliability.

Table 1. Mean differences in satisfaction among Taiwanese Hoklo, Taiwanese Hakka and Anglo American groups.

Satisfaction measure	Hoklo	Hakka	Anglo
I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to the destination F=153.36*** Eta=.43	4.10 ^a	4.16 ^a	4.75 ^b
I had the opportunity to recreate without feeling crowded F=18.70*** Eta=.17	4.09 ^a	4.14 ^a	4.40 ^b
I could find places to recreate without conflict from other visitors F=10.94*** Eta=.13	4.22 ^a	4.15 ^a	4.42 ^b
My trip to the destination was well worth the money I spent to take it F=88.89*** Eta=.34	3.78 ^a	3.88 ^a	4.44 ^b
The availability of parking was acceptable F=12.93*** Eta=.14	4.00 ^a	4.01 ^a	4.29 ^b
Recreation activities here were NOT compatible F=131.74*** Eta=.41	2.63 ^a	2.58 ^a	1.66 ^b
I was disappointed with some aspects of my visit to the destination F=85.28*** Eta=.35	2.45 ^a	2.25 ^a	1.59 ^b
I avoided some places because there were too many people there F=24.99*** Eta=.19	2.41 ^a	2.40 ^a	1.93 ^b
The condition of the parking lot area was acceptable F=30.72*** Eta=.21	3.76 ^a	3.76 ^a	4.19 ^b
There is a good balance between social and biological values in the management of the destination F=22.47*** Eta=.18	3.78 ^a	3.90 ^a	4.14 ^b
The number of people here reduced my enjoyment F=16.09*** Eta=.16***	2.36 ^a	2.32 ^a	1.97 ^b
The condition of the roads was acceptable F=84.85*** Eta=.34	3.54 ^a	3.53 ^a	4.29 ^b
The behavior of other people at the destination interfered with the quality of my experience F=55.87*** Eta=.29	2.17 ^a	2.23 ^a	1.52 ^b
The other people here increased my enjoyment F=45.43*** Eta=.26***	3.17 ^a	3.15 ^a	3.76 ^b
The destination and its surroundings are in good condition F=151.75*** Eta=.43***	3.61 ^a	3.75 ^a	4.42 ^b
The availability of maps and signage was adequate. F=52.86*** Eta=.27***	3.72 ^a	3.62 ^a	4.25 ^b

1. *** Significant at $p \leq 0.001$
2. Eta was a measure of association, with values 0.10 or less considered weak, between 0.10 and 0.30 moderate, and 0.30 or higher considered strong
3. Scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree
4. Group means sharing different superscripts differed significantly at .05 level in a post-hoc Scheffe test

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