

.Research Article

Camping Activity Benefit and Suggestion

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Abstract:

Camping is a co-curricular activity that is conducted outside the classroom. For example, jungle tracking, river crossing, hiking, camp fire and so on. There are many benefits of camping activity. In this regard, this article will discuss the benefits of camping activity. In addition, this article will also discuss suggestions to make camping activity more effective.

Keywords: Camping, Benefit, School Students, Outdoor Activities.

Introduction:

Camping is an outdoor. It is usually associated as a recreational activity in which one stays in the outdoors temporarily, normally in tents (Ryalls& Petri, 2013), and generally away from developed areas. This idea opposes the ideas of military camps, prison camps and other related camps. According to (Austin, 2013), camping has its roots traced to a person named Thomas Hiram Holding. He authored 'The Campers Handbook' in 1908 which talked about the basics of camping and established the first camping club in the world, known as 'The Association of Cycle Campers', which is now known as 'The Camping and Caravanning Club'. In modern times, camping is still enjoyed by many, young and old alike. It is commonly done as a group activity, but it can be done as an individual one as well. Its popularity continues to grow across the globe, and it can be done anywhere, and during any of the four seasons. Camping has evolved over the years and it is no longer restricted to just as an outdoor activity in the midst of a natural setting. With the quick urbanization of cities and developing areas, people who still struggle with the discomfort away from the hustle and bustle of the city now have the option to sleep in recreational vehicle (RV), cabin or other type of temporary shelter where the comforts of

home can be enjoyed (Brooker&Joppe, 2014). Regardless, it is still a holistic activity popular to many. This research paper will discuss the benefits of camping, and some suggestions to improve or further complement the experience. It will also only include elements which are relevant to our country geographical characteristics and its accompanying tropical weather, wherever possible.

Differences Between Camping and Other Outdoor Activities:

What distinguishes the camping activity with other outdoor activity is that camping normally requires the individual to spend at least a night away from home. This opposes other recreational activities like picnicking and similar ones which is normally done in a shorter amount of time.

Common Camping Activities:

There is a myriad of activities that can be done on a camping trip, and activities done often depend on the number of participants and their age groups. But regardless of their age and the number of people, there will always be something that everyone can enjoy and be a part of. The following are some (but not limited to) camping activities¹ commonly done on a camping trip:

- Skipping stones (water activity)
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- River crossing
- Exploring the creeks
- Biking
- Fishing
- Sing-a-long/Play musical instruments and sing to tunes (campfire activity)
- Bird watching
- Star gazing
- Chopping wood/Gather wood for campfire
- Hiking/trekking

Benefits;

There are many variations to camping depending on where the activity is being held geographically. Regardless, no matter what shape the camping activity one participate takes, there are benefits to it for everyone. There are many benefits to camping, but the following three benefits are highlighted and discussed: Camping In The Outdoors Help Reset The Internal Body Clock (Circadian Clock) A study by conducted by Kenneth, Andrew, Brian, Brandon, Thomas, & Evan(2013) from United States of America finds that camping outdoors, especially in a setting filled with nature, can reset your circadian clock (Netburn, 2017). In modern times, we are becoming increasingly exposed to man-made electrical lights that come from our electronic devices such as smart phones, televisions, and the like. We also use man-made lights to light up places when it gets dark. All these have disturbed our natural circadian rhythms and contribute to later sleep schedules. Lead researcher Kenneth Wright said that "Late circadian and sleep timing in modern society are associated with negative performance and health outcomes such as morning sleepiness and accidents, reduced work productivity and school performance, substance abuse, mood disorders, diabetes, and obesity," The study found that when we camp outdoors and away from artificial light, our bodies' internal clock would naturally align itself with solar time, whereby our internal biological night begins at sunset, and ends when we wake just after sunrise. Melatonin is a hormone that is released in response to darkness at night to make us feel sleepy. As we are exposed to artificial lights for long hours, melatonin is getting released later than it should be, and this in turn disturbs our bodies' internal body clock.

Therefore, camping outdoors in natural light shifts the release of melatonin earlier and consequently shifts our bodies' internal clock. People who camp outdoors end up sleeping earlier and waking up earlier as well. Hence, the study also suggests that exposing ourselves to natural light would be enough to treat delayed sleep problems, a problem which is fairly common among adolescents and young adults. Helps With Mental Well Being Numerous studies conducted over the years have provided evidence that camping, regardless if it is in a natural environment or not, helps to alleviate stress, depression and anxiety. A study conducted by Wang, Hay, Clarke & Menahan (2012) found that for adolescents, making new friends in camp is a mean of social support and as a protective factor for them, particularly those who suffer from mental health problems such as depression. Such social support has shown to improve their mental well-being. In regards to a natural environment, a separate research conducted by Bratma, Hamilton, Hahn, Daily, & Gross (2015) found that their findings relate to the literature on "restorative" environments, whereby earlier researchers have shown that individuals tend to select favorite environments as a means to transform negative psychological states to more positive ones. These areas tend to be natural environments, although not exclusively so. This literature relates to Bratman and fellows' findings to the extent that they may consider these environments to give rise to a type of positive distraction that has been shown to decrease rumination and negative affect in depressed individuals, and that their findings of point to a possible causal mechanism for the affective benefits of nature experience. Outdoor Activity Like Camping Gives Rise To Personal Development Numerous studies conducted over the yearshavefound that an outdoor activity like camping improves personal development in individuals who participate in it. For example, researchers Garst&Bruce (2003) conducted a study that suggests the positive effects of a 4-H² camp on the development of immediate and short-term life skill behavior in youth campers. From their findings, the youth campers have self-reported that they benefited from 4-H camp participation by making new friends, developing new skills, and becoming more independent and capable of self-care

like taking care of their personal belongings. Parents and guardians thought their children had benefited from 4-H camp in taking care of their own things, sharing work responsibilities, and taking initiative on their own. Both parties have supported that the primary benefit perceived from participating in a 4-H camp was responsibility. Another example would be from the view of much younger age groups like children. (Monkey, 2015) has stated that children learn friend-making skills and have the opportunity to practice them during their camp stay as making friends at camp was constantly stressed as an important part of the experience. Their findings found that children perceive improved social skills as a result from attending camp, given that camp programmers emphasize forming new friendships and rekindling old ones (Monke, 2015).

Suggestions

There are a lot of benefits to camping itself. However, the benefits of camping could only go as far to some certain extent. Therefore, the following are some suggestions on how we can further complement our experiences and its benefits to improve the quality of our camping journey. Green Space Management, And Policies Needed For Better Integration Of Green Space In Urban Area Policy makers from all legislative levels have to step up to create policies and laws, or enforce existing laws and policies, to protect forests and/or natural environment for the conservation and protection from unnecessary or destructive land development for future generations, so that camping may take place in natural environments instead of in temporary shelters like an RV or a cabin. Even if camping is not done in purely natural surroundings, like in man-made structures surrounded by a natural setting instead, there should be a better integration of human health needs into land-use planning and green space management in rural as well as urban areas. Long-term beneficial mental health effects of surrounding greenness, should be taken into account in future urban planning. Further research is needed and policy makers and researchers must work closely with one another to come up with the best policies as we need more detailed information on the characteristics of the green and blue spaces that promote better mental health (quantity, quality and distance) and the mechanisms, which are highly related to the use of

these spaces. Detailed information on these characteristics are crucial to the planning of the area. More Staffs Trained In Counselling And Psychology Needed To Assist Campers As there could be first time campers who camp in the outdoors, and away from urban areas, might not get used to the way of life in the outdoors. Even if they aren't first time campers, the heavy reliance of technological devices in today's world could mean that campers living outdoors are deprived of these devices, and they would not get used to it – this should be given special attention. Besides that, we could be too focused on the coaching and teaching of the technical skills and aspects of camping to campers. But special attention towards the teaching of handling of situations during camping should be given as well. As an example, if a camper experiences shock and finds that the actual situation is not as imagined or expected – they could give rise to stress, depression, anxiety, and/or panic attacks. Hence, we will need special staffs who are trained in psychology and counseling to assist these campers, notably if they are from younger age groups, when they aren't able to cope with such situations on their own.

Conclusion

Camping itself has grown over the years, with many innovative ways springing up so that the individual could have the best experience out of it. It is no doubt that camping itself has a lot of benefits to it. Therefore, further research should be done to further enhance and innovate current camping ideas and forms so as to further cater to the growing change and evolution of today's society, culturally and geographically.

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