

Describing & Differentiating Recreational ATV Rider Preferences

Tony Schoenecker, M.S. & Ingrid E. Schneider, Ph.D.

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Introduction & purpose

All-terrain vehicle (ATV) use is of major interest at national, state, and regional levels due to its growth as a recreational activity and associated use impacts. Nationally, sales of ATVs have increased over 280% since 1994, and in MN participation is projected to grow more than 250% by 2014.

To effectively serve and manage the growing population of ATV recreationists, understanding their preferred experiences is critical. While many studies have examined both recreation preferences and recreation specialization of a wide array of recreation activities, and such studies provide a valuable means of gaining understanding towards better management, empirical research is lacking on ATV recreationists' preferences. Further, no study has explored specialization within this activity. Thus a research gap exists to understand ATV experience preferences and if or how they differ by recreation specialization.

Therefore, this project sought to understand these aspects of MN ATV riders through two objectives:

- 1) Assess important attributes for recreational ATV riding experiences, and
- 2) Identify whether differences exist among MN ATV riders by recreation specialization - specifically, between those of intermediate and advanced riding skill levels.

Methods

Sample: MN registered ATV households systematically sampled (n = 280)

Instrument: 7-page mail survey (below)

Response rate: 40.2% (Non-response check indicated non-respondents owned statistically fewer # of ATVs)

Analysis

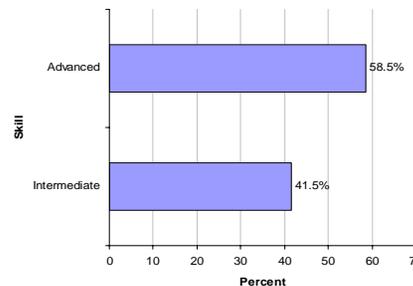
Data were entered, cleaned, & analyzed in SPSS

Results: Respondents

Respondents are, on average, male, non-Hispanic whites, who are mid-forties in age, possess less than a college education, and earn an annual income = or > \$50,000.



Results: Self-assessed skill level ~ Specialization



Results: Respondent riding experience

Experience use:

- 47.2% started ATV riding ≤ 1990
- # of miles rode in typical ATV ride: 37.8
- # times ride in last 12 months: 26.3
- # of hours duration of typical ATV ride: 4.2

Typical makeup of riding groups: 43.8% Family & friends

Number of persons in typical ATV riding group: 3.6

Results: Attribute assessment

Importance in general when recreational ATV riding	M ¹	S.D.
Being with friends and family (n = 231)	1.6	0.9
Being in a natural area (n = 230)	1.7	0.8
Relaxation (n = 231)	1.7	0.8
Getting away from it all (n = 229)	1.7	0.9
Feeling in control of the vehicle (n = 231)	1.8	1.0
Seeing exhilarating scenery (n = 230)	1.8	0.9
Having exciting experiences (n = 227)	2.0	1.1
Seeing new areas (n = 231)	2.0	1.1
Variety of terrain (n = 231)	2.2	1.1
Riding to destinations (n = 228)	2.4	1.1
Riding trails only (n = 231)	2.5	1.1
Length of ride (n = 231)	2.5	1.1
Access to intensive use areas (n = 229)	2.8	1.2
Location of restaurants/entertainment along trail (n = 230)	3.0	1.2

¹ Rated on scale from 1-5, where 1 = very important and 5 = very unimportant

Results: Experience preferences by skill

Importance in general when recreational ATV riding:	Intermediate M ¹	Advanced M ¹	t
Seeing exhilarating scenery	2.02	1.63	3.2*
Feeling in control of the vehicle	2.10	1.53	4.1*
Having exciting experiences	2.32	1.79	3.6*
Variety of terrain	2.44	1.94	3.5*

¹ Rated on scale from 1 to 5 where 1 = very important and 5 = very unimportant
* Statistically significant difference @ p .003

Discussion

Minnesota's participants in recreational ATV riding reflect similarities to other state & national ATV research studies in terms of : demographic profile, annual number of times riding, & length of ride. With the exception of "feeling in control of the vehicle", those attributes most important to ATV recreational riding are non activity specific, pointing to the activity's capacity to offer a similar range of benefits with a variety of other outdoor recreational pursuits.

Analysis with conservative significance measures indicates that a few important experience preference differences exist by skill. Area managers that hope to meet needs of a breadth of participation styles should consider all attributes important. However, four of the most important attributes did differ by skill categories and therefore, have meaningful implications for managing, planning & marketing ATV riding opportunities: seeing exhilarating scenery, feeling in control of the vehicle, having exciting experiences & variety of terrain. Future research will examine in detail factors that lie behind these attribute preferences.

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and Natural Resource Sciences

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