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IMPACT OF LONDON RESIDENTS' SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ON THE MOTIVES FOR VISITING NATIONAL PARKS

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Abstract: The establishment of national parks is motivated by the preservation of natural values and resources or, more precisely, landscape and biodiversity, as well as satisfying scientific, educational, health and recreational, tourism, cultural and other needs. They have two often conflicting purposes: to protect important natural and cultural resources and to offer the possibility to use these areas as well as to enjoy them. People love to travel to protected natural areas just because on a relatively small but representative territory they can see a large number of plant and animal species, as well as participate in recreational activities in a pristine environment. The purpose of this study was to identify the motives and constraints for visiting national parks in relation to age, education level and employment status. The research was conducted among the London residents who are potential visitors of national parks in England. A total of 107 respondents were questioned through an online survey. The results obtained in this study showed that there are differences in motives and constraints in relation to sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. The results of this study could direct the management of national parks to focus more on identifying and meeting the needs of potential visitors because of the increasing popularity of ecotourism.

Keywords: ecotourism; national park; motivation; sustainable development

Introduction

Since the very beginning, people have always relied on nature and its resources. This relationship in the contemporary area is no less significant. No matter what level of economic development a particular nation is on, people depend on natural resources that surround them. At the same time, it affects the nature and its resources, through various forms of their use. National parks are important eco-tourism destinations as well as recreational tourism destinations because they contain pristine environments, often with unique natural forms. In the countries whose level of economic development is not satisfactory, one way of developing tourism activities is establishing national parks (Bimonte & Punzo, 2016). The establishment of national parks is important for the protection and conservation of natural areas, but sometimes their establishment can result in more harm than good. It can cause environmental damage, over-crowding and create visual pollution (Buckley, 2011; Eagles & McCool, 2002; Eagles, McCool, & Haynes, 2002; Newsome, Moore, & Dowling, 2013; Worboys et al., 2005).

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England is a country of beautiful landscapes that inspired many artists to create works of art. Long before they began to talk about ecotourism, England took care of nature and tried to stay as "green" as possible. Nature protection in England started more than 100 years ago, and as a result today in England there are approximately 33,000 km² of protected areas (Evans, 1997). As a very special kind of protected natural areas, national parks of England are representative examples of how the organization and management in national parks should look like. Tourism activities in these areas bring profit to both the state and the local population, which is very important. Almost all the national parks in England have over a million visitors per year, and most of them are domestic tourists. For this reason, foreign tourists should be offered the opportunity to learn about protected natural areas such as national parks in an interesting way, and this could be achieved by better tourism propaganda. Each national park has its own web-site, so people can quickly and easily get information about traffic, natural resources, activities, which confirms that the planners of tourism have recognized the importance of the development of ecotourism and they are dedicated to its promotion. Each national park offers a wide range of activities, from more passive, such as taking photographs and observation, to more dynamic such as cycling, training for survival in difficult conditions or rafting. There are calendars and special activities with indications of whether the activity is suitable for people with special needs, children, adults, as well as with other information about such activities.

What often appears as a problem is that the population of England is not sufficiently educated about the concept of national parks and national parks in England. It often happens that visitors are staying in a national park but they are not even aware that they are in the area of a protected natural asset. Also, amusement parks often lead in the choice between the two types of parks, so families with children or young people rather decide for this form of spending free time, especially if the national and amusement parks are nearby. Big cities that are located in the vicinity on the one hand have an advantage because they can emit a large number of tourists, and on the other hand they have a negative impact on nature and wildlife due to pollution. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake preventive measures wherever negative consequences can be expected from tourism development. Sustaining the balance between tourism and conservation in national parks is more challenging in developing countries than in the developed ones. Economic benefits often overshadow conservation needs in a certain area (Ma, Ryan, & Bao, 2009; Pigram & Jenkins, 2006). In practice, we often encounter different approaches in managing tourism activities and services in national parks. All of these approaches have merit and their practical application usually depends on the level of economic development of the country (Buckley, 2002; Eagles, 2008, 2009). National parks in general, face the continuous challenge of balancing the legally mandated ecological integrity with satisfactory visitor experiences (Cole, 2004; Fredman, Friberg, & Emmelin, 2007; Glorioso & Moss, 2007; Shin & Jaakson, 1997). Successfully balancing nature conservation, tourism activities and economic benefits in protected areas also largely depends on governance authority (Dearden, Bennett, & Johnston, 2005; Ma, Ryan, & Bao, 2009; Pigram & Jenkins, 2006). A more comprehensive study of management approaches in protected areas can assist and improve the management effectiveness in the field (Hawthorn, Kirik, & Eagles, 2002), as well as explain the rationales for choosing a certain management model (Hockings, Stolton, & Dudley, 2000; Hockings, Stolton, Leverington, Dudley, & Courrau, 2006; Ly & Xiao, 2016; Randle & Hoye, 2016). By determining the motives and constraints, according to Saayman (2006), targeted promotional activities can be undertaken and specific factors can be taken into account when marketing strategies are

planned. This study is hoped to contribute to the growing body of knowledge by enriching the understanding of motives and constraints for visiting national parks. Moreover, by identifying the factors which influence visitors' motivation, this research can assist park managers in achieving management effectiveness.

Literature review

So far little research has been done on travel motives and constraints when it comes to national parks. Still, there have been several important studies focusing on this topic (Awaritefe, 2004; Gundersen, Mehmetoglu, Vistad, & Andersen, 2015; Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003; Tao, Eagles, & Smith, 2004; Uysal, McDonald, & Martin, 1994; Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2008). In the study on Australian tourists visiting national parks in the United States by Uysal et al. (1994), five factors were identified: relaxation/hobbies, novelty, enhancement of kinship relations, escape and prestige. Kim et al. (2003) examined the *push* and *pull* factors that influence decisions to visit Korean National Parks. Their results suggest that visitors to national parks in Korea are likely to consider the parks to be valuable recreational resources that provide important opportunities to appreciate natural resources. Study by Tao et al. (2004) focused on Asian tourists visiting Taroko National Park in Taiwan. This study identified two factors: learning about nature and participating in recreational activities.

The study by Awaritefe (2004) focused on tourists visiting national parks in Nigeria and the results indicated that the most significant motives were self-actualization, an educational or cultural context, and recreational or leisure pursuits. The results of the study by Van der Merwe and Saayman (2008) revealed six travel motives: nature, activities, attractions, nostalgia, novelty, and escape. Kamri and Radam (2013) conducted a survey with the aim to identify visitors' motives for visiting Bako National Park. They interviewed local and foreign visitors, and the results showed that there are four motives for visit: challenge excursion, social trip, nature tour and getaway outing. Gundersen et al. (2015) examined visitors' motivation and its connection to attitudes toward management restrictions on use in Norwegian national parks. Their study confirms several previous studies (Fredman & Heberlein, 2005; Haukeland, Grue, & Veisten, 2010), which claim that a set of different components including individual conditions (e.g. personality, preferences, attitudes, lifestyle, and socio-demography), environmental or managerial settings (e.g. restrictions), and social components (crowding, new activities) influence visits or participation in recreation. Tourist motivation for visiting two national parks in Zimbabwe, their wildlife tourism experiences and overall satisfaction with the entire holiday and trip experience was the subject of study which was conducted by Mutanga, et al. (2017). Their study identified four push factors for visiting national parks, such as recreation and knowledge seeking, appreciating wildlife and feeling close to nature and six pull factors such as abundance of wildlife, availability of different animal species, availability of different plant species, wilderness, beautiful landscape and peaceful/quiet experiences. Ma, Chow, Cheung, Lee, and Liu (2018) used sociodemographic characteristics, motivation and satisfaction to predict visitation patterns and travel behaviors. Their findings showed that education level is negatively correlated with tourist' satisfaction as well as a motivation regarding social influence. Also, they found age is positively correlated with the sense of relaxation and nature exploration. Newton et al. (2018) were examining preferences of national parks visitors among different transportation-related attributes, such as wait time at the entrance, availability of parking, speed of traffic and volume of

traffic. Their results showed that there are significant differences between the choice of means of transport and age.

Referring to the existing literature in this field, it was identified that there is a significant difference between this study and other studies in this field. In our study, we examined the motives and constraints for visiting national parks of potential visitors, whereas other authors (Gundersen et al., 2015; Kamri & Radam, 2013; Kim et al., 2003; Newton et al., 2018) based their studies on the examination of motives and constraints of visitors of national parks. Our research is related not only to some particular National park like in most of other studies of this type, but to general motives and constrains for visiting all national parks in England.

Methodology

One of the main goals of this study was to examine the preferences of potential visitors of national parks (company for travel, length of stay, type of transportation), but the main goal is to determine the motives and constraints for visiting the national parks in relation to the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. The basis for this research was found in the existing literature (Arnberger, Eder, Allex, Sterl, & Burns, 2012; Bansal & Eiselt, 2004; Cullinane & Cullinane, 1999; Kim et al., 2003). For the purpose of data gathering, a new questionnaire was created. It consisted of four parts. The first group of questions referred to the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents (such as gender, age, education level, employment status). The second part of the questionnaire was related to the interest of the respondents for certain activities. In respect to the literature review related to the activities in the national parks, several activities could be distinguished, such as cycling, horseback riding, hiking, exploring the wildlife, animal observation, observation of the plants, photographing, swimming, sailing, camping (Cetin & Sevik, 2016; Cohen et al., 2016).

Respondents used a five-point Likert's scale for expressing the degree of their interest in all of the previously mentioned activities. The third part of the questionnaire consisted of two segments. The first segment obtained the closed-type questions related to the respondents' habits throughout the travel (including the length of stay, company for travel, type of transportation, accommodation), which means that all of the respondents had to choose one of the several offered answers. The second segment was related to the motives and constraints of visiting national parks.

Furthermore, five-point Likert's scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *always*) was used for the purpose of answering the questions related to the respondents' motives, but also the limiting factors of their potential visit. The fourth part of the questionnaire was about a probability of visiting the national parks in the following period of 12 months. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested and Cronbach Alpha ($\alpha = .993$) exceeds the recommended value .7 (Kaiser, 1974), which indicates the high reliability of the questionnaire. Accordingly, we conducted the survey research on the sample of 107 respondents from the territory of London. The exclusion question in the questionnaire was whether they visited any national park in England. One of the reasons for taking into consideration only respondents who did not visit any national park in England was an identification of motives and constraints of potential visitors. Among other things, the aim of the research was to find out what factors would influence the most the decision about visiting, as well as what constraints were the main reason why they had not visited national parks so far.

The survey research was conducted in June 2017, through social networks and forums, while the answers of the respondents were processed in the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 23). The sociodemographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

T-test of independent samples was applied with the aim of determining the significant differences between the respondents by gender in relation to their motives and barriers for visiting national parks. Analysis of the variance ANOVA was used for determining the existence (or the absence) of significant differences between dependent variables (motives and constraints of visiting) and independent variables (socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents). Independent variables researched within this study were: age, education level and employment status of the respondents.

As one of the main goals of this study was to determinate which factors might affect the potential visitors when making the decision to visit or not to visit a national park, we proposed the following hypotheses:

- H_0 : There are significant differences in motives and constraints of visiting according to the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.
- H_1 : There are significant differences in motives and constraints of visiting according to the gender of the respondents.
- H_2 : There are significant differences in motives and constraints of visiting according to the age structure of the respondents.
- H_3 : There are significant differences in motives and constraints of visiting according to the respondents' education level.
- H_4 : There are significant differences in motives and constraints of visiting according to the employment status of the respondents.

Results and discussion

Descriptive statistical analysis

The result of the analysis of the respondents' habits while travelling (Table 2) shows that majority of the respondents would come to a national park for an *All day excursion* (a brief recreational trip). When choosing among several means of transport, *Car* was the leading means of transport for most of them. However, there are many who would come by train rather than by bus probably because of a greater level of comfort when travelling by train than by bus. When it comes to the preferred type of accommodation, eco-lodges are intended for eco-tourists and they have minimal

Table 1
Sociodemographic profile of respondents

Demographics	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	42	39.2
Female	65	60.8
Age		
21–30	50	46.7
31–40	28	26.2
41–50	16	15.0
Over 50	13	12.1
Education		
Secondary	9	8.4
College	51	47.6
Master	36	33.6
PhD	11	10.4
Employment status		
Employed	63	58.9
Unemployed	16	15.0
Student	15	14.0
Retired	13	12.1

Table 2

Respondents' answers in percentages

Questions and answers	%
Q1. Length of stay?	
A1. Picnic	24.9
A2. All day excursion	29.1
A3. 1 night	21.8
A4. Few days	24.2
Q2. Transport?	
A1. Car	27.8
A2. Bus	19.3
A3. Train	26.1
A4. Bicycle	11.9
A5. On foot	14.9
Q3. Company for travel?	
A1. Family	23.3
A2. Friends	31.9
A3. Partner	24.1
A4. Alone	15.7
Q4. Accommodation?	
A1. Hotel	31.2
A2. Hostel	17.1
A3. Eco-lodge	18.3
A4. Camp	21.9
A5. Private house	11.5

impacts on the natural environment, but a small percentage of the respondents (18.3%) would actually stay in eco-lodges. They are more interested in staying in luxurious objects such as hotels, but there are those who are more adventurous and would like to camp out. Private houses are not considered a popular type of accommodation in national parks, and neither are hostels. Since company is an important factor when making the decision about travel, the respondents were asked to choose who they would rather visit a national park with. Most of the respondents want to come with friends and the fewest were those who wanted to come alone.

T-test of independent samples

The results (Table 3) have shown that there is no statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level of significance, but this difference is random because the p values for all the activities are greater than .05 so the H_1 was rejected.

Table 3

T-test of motives and constraints by gender

Category	Arithmetic mean		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male (<i>n</i> = 45)	Female (<i>n</i> = 62)		
Motive for visit				
Picnic	3.8000	3.4677	1.027	.307
Holiday	2.3111	2.6935	-1.097	.275
Enjoying the view	4.1556	4.3387	-.861	.391
Observation of plants and animals	3.8444	3.4677	1.296	.198
Visit visitors centers	2.1111	2.0968	.053	.958
Escape from the city	4.2667	4.5161	-1.422	.158
Constraints				
Lack of free time	3.8667	3.2581	1.817	.072
Lack of money	3.8222	3.7419	.365	.716
Lack of interest	1.9111	1.8387	.281	.779

Note. *t* = the sample value of *t*-test statistic; * $p < .05$

Analysis of variance ANOVA

By applying the analysis of variance ANOVA the existence of significant differences among different age groups was tested (Table 4). In the case of the motive *picnic* (short stay in nature, usually during meals), those who belong to the age category 21–30 are less motivated than older respondents.

Holiday in the countryside is one of the main motives for the trip, and LSD post-hoc test showed that the respondents from the age group 21–30 are the least motivated by this factor. As they are older, going on holiday is a more frequent motive for visit.

Table 4
 ANOVA by age

Category	Age				F	p	LSD post-hoc
	21–30	31–40	41–50	Over 50			
Motive for visit							
Picnic	2.6600	4.2857	5.0000	4.0769	15.905	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Holiday	1.5800	2.6786	4.0000	4.0769	16.987	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Enjoying the view	3.8200	4.7143	4.5625	4.6154	6.007	.001**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Observation of plants and animals	2.8000	4.2500	4.8125	4.0000	14.372	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Visit visitors centers	1.3000	2.0714	3.1875	3.9231	30.577	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Escape from the city	4.0000	5.0000	4.6250	4.4615	9.701	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Constraints							
Lack of free time	2.4400	4.6071	4.5000	4.0769	18.475	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Lack of money	3.4200	4.1071	4.6250	3.3846	7.178	.000**	2 > 1; 3 > 1
Lack of interest	1.6000	1.5000	2.5625	2.8462	6.115	.001**	4 > 1, 2

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01

Enjoying the view motivates the fewest respondents from age group 21–30. Observation of plants and animals can be a very strong motive for visiting national parks because in this way visitors can get acquainted with some endemic species and observe their interactions. This factor motivates older respondents the most, and the least those from the age group 21–30. Visitors' centers are multipurpose buildings of simple architecture that are built at the entrance to a protected natural area, in this case the national park. They are equipped with a projection hall, classrooms and a laboratory, exhibition space, information counters and sales stands. Given the great number of opportunities in the visitors' center, it does not motivate respondents to a large extent to visit the national park. This factor least motivates respondents from the age group 21–30, and is of the greatest interest for the respondents from the age group over 50. Life in the modern, rapid world creates the need in people to escape from the city and enjoy nature. To respondents from the age group 31–40 this so-called escape is more important than to older respondents (from the group over 50), but there are significant differences between respondents from age group 21–30 and other groups in the sense that the youngest respondents are the least motivated by this factor. This can be explained by the fact that the respondents from age group 31–40 are mostly working people, busy with their jobs who really need to escape from the city and clear their heads from time to time. This is the factor that largely motivates them to visit national parks, while amongst those who are over 50 years old and retired, this motive is not among the primary ones because they have more free time and can use it however they like. Based on this, it can be concluded that younger respondents are less motivated for visiting national parks than others.

Based on our results we can conclude that the lack of free time demotivates all of the respondents belonging to older age groups than 21–30 because older respondents tend to have less time due to work, family or some other obligations. Lack of money demotivates respondents from the age groups 31–40 and 41–50 more than the respondents from the age group 21–30.

This could be explained by the fact that respondents from the age groups 31–40 and 41–50 are mostly family people who distribute their income to settle all of their family needs, so less is left for travel. To the oldest respondents, money is the lowest barrier for visiting national parks. Lack of interest demotivates respondents from age group over than 50 more than younger respondents. The results of this analysis showed that there are significant differences among the observed groups, which confirms H_2 .

The existence of significant differences among respondents' motives and constraints according to education level was tested by analysis of variance ANOVA (Table 5). The only significant differences exist among the motives *enjoying the view* and *escape from the city*. *Enjoying the view* motivates respondents with secondary school and those with college degrees more than those with PhDs. *Escape from the city* motivates respondents with completed secondary school less than all other. The assumption is that higher educated people are generally busier and they need more changes in their everyday life, i.e. escape from the city, so this is the motive that pushes them to travel more. These results are in accordance with the age of respondents. Older respondents are more motivated by motive *escape from the city*, and those with higher education are usually older, so this confirms the previous results.

One-way ANOVA analysis of variance according to the differences in constraints was applied to compare different education levels of respondents. LSD post-hoc test showed that there are no significant differences between isolated groups. Absence of significant differences among the majority of motives and all of constraints partially confirms H_3 .

Table 5
 ANOVA by education

Category	Education				F	p	LSD post-hoc
	Secondary	College	Master	PhD			
Motive for visit							
Picnic	4.0000	3.7255	3.2778	3.8182	.788	.503	—
Holiday	2.6667	2.8824	2.3056	2.1818	.950	.292	—
Enjoying the view	4.7778	4.5294	4.1111	3.7273	3.280	.008*	1, 2 > 4
Observation of plants and animals	4.1111	3.8235	3.1111	4.0000	2.372	.075	—
Visit visitors centers	2.5556	2.2353	1.8056	2.0909	1.048	.375	—
Escape from the city	3.4444	4.5882	4.3889	4.4545	4.548	.005*	1 < 2, 3, 4
Constraints							
Lack of free time	3.5556	3.8235	3.0833	3.4545	1.307	.276	—
Lack of money	4.4444	3.8431	3.4722	3.9091	2.136	.100	—
Lack of interest	1.8889	1.9020	1.8333	1.8182	.025	.995	—

Note. * $p < .05$

The results of One-way ANOVA analysis of variance according to the differences in motives and constraints among different employment status of respondents (Table 6) indicate that motive *picnic* motivates employed respondents less than all the others. This is probably due to the fact that employed respondents are busier, so they do not have time for picnics, or it is not a sufficient motive for them because it lasts for a short period and they need a longer vacation.

Table 6
 ANOVA by employment status

Category	Employment status				F	p	LSD post-hoc
	Employed	Unemployed	Student	Retired			
Motive for visit							
Picnic	2.7302	4.6250	5.0000	5.0000	24.081	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Holiday	1.4286	3.5625	3.9333	5.0000	51.727	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Enjoying the view	3.8571	5.0000	4.5333	5.0000	9.592	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Observation of plants and animals	2.8413	4.6250	4.8000	4.8462	23.204	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Visit visitors centers	1.3175	2.4375	3.2000	4.2308	49.051	.000*	1 < 2, 3, 4
Escape from the city	4.1905	5.0000	4.6000	4.5385	4.199	.008*	1 < 2
Constraints							
Lack of free time	2.7937	4.7500	4.4667	4.3846	11.720	.000**	1 < 3, 4
Lack of money	3.3968	4.2500	4.6000	4.0769	7.592	.000**	1 < 2, 3, 4
Lack of interest	1.3810	1.9375	2.6000	3.3077	12.990	.000**	1 < 3, 4

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01

The motive *holiday* motivates those in retirement more than students, employed and unemployed respondents. *Enjoying the view* motivates students, unemployed and those in retirement more than employed respondents. *Observation of plants and animals* motivates students, unemployed and those in retirement more than employed respondents. *Visiting visitors' centers* motivates those who are employed less than any others. For the motive *escape from the city* employed respondents are less motivated than unemployed by this motive. In case of constraints, LSD post-hoc test showed that the *lack of free time* demotivates the unemployed, students and those in retirement more than employed respondents. *Lack of money* mostly demotivates unemployed and those in retirement more than employees, which is logical because money is not a major obstacle to travel for employed people. *Lack of interest* demotivates those in retirement more than those that are unemployed and students. By applying the LSD post-hoc test it has been found that there is significant difference between the group of respondents who are employed and all others group in sense that employed gave lower rating than others for all motives and constraints, which confirms H_4 .

Conclusion

Tourism development is constantly on the rise. However, it is also constantly changing and evolving. Eco-tourism, as a relatively new trend in tourism, is a great offer for a number of consumers which satisfy their travel needs by visiting national parks. Therefore, the task of national parks management is to fit tourism in the environment so that they can co-exist in symbiosis, and that tourism activities do not damage the environment but instead, they should serve the improvement of conservation and protection. From all this, it can be concluded that marketing and promotional components of the national parks as tourism products should operate on the principles of sustainable development. This makes them specific in comparison with the general characteristics of mass commercial tourism which has shown very low, usually insufficient care for the environment.

The subject of this research were the factors that motivate and demotivate tourists to visit national parks. During the research, several hypotheses were set. The H_0 was confirmed because this study shows that motives for visit and constraints are different depending on sociodemographic characteristics of respondents. Results of this study are in accordance with previous research (Haukeland et al., 2010; Jensen, 2011; Kim et al., 2003), which also indicates that sociodemographic characteristics have an influence on motives for visit. Our study partially confirmed findings obtained by Ma et al. (2018), which admittedly used other variables but came to conclusion that sociodemographic characteristics have significant impact on motivation for visiting national parks.

Results of this study could direct management of national parks to focus more on identifying and meeting the needs of potential visitors because eco-tourism is a type of tourism niche that is currently on the rise. Also, differences of potential visitors by sociodemographic characteristics need to be understood by park managers in order to develop strategies for attracting visitors and encouraging repeat visits. By understanding the needs of different sociodemographic groups, it can be very helpful for park managers to adapt an offer to their needs and in that way increase their satisfaction. Results of this study showed that younger respondents are less motivated for visiting national parks, so it is fundamental for park managers to recognize this problem and, by better propaganda, attract this market segment. By the implementation of appropriate management strategy, it is necessary to focus on activities that will satisfy the needs of visitors but at the same time limit harmful effects on the environment.

One of the limitations of this study is the number of respondents. Suggestion for future research is to expand research to a larger number of respondents to provide more relevant data of the real motives and constraints of London residents to visit national parks.

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