

Are Green campers different?

A comparison of demographics, attitudes and behaviours among campers

Abstract

Consumers have been slow in realizing the impact of their tourism-related behaviours and choices on the environment. Today, green options are playing a growing part in the buying process. This article aims to identify demographical, attitudinal and behavioural differences between environmentally responsible campers and regular campers. Through an analysis of 718 questionnaires, eight hypotheses related to age, gender, decision-making criteria for choosing a camping ground, motivations for camping, intention of paying for an environmentally responsible service, willingness to compromise for an eco-friendly label, Internet use and consuming habits such as the frequency of camping trips and expenditures are tested. Contributions of this article can be used by researchers interested in camping and the hospitality industry, as well as owners and managers of campgrounds and other types of rural accommodation to better segment their market and adapt their offer to the needs of the targeted clientele.

Résumé

Les consommateurs ont été lents à réaliser l'impact de leurs comportements touristiques sur l'environnement. Aujourd'hui, les options vertes jouent un rôle de plus en plus important au sein du processus d'achat. Cet article vise à identifier les différences démographiques, attitudinales et comportementales entre les campeurs écoresponsables et les campeurs réguliers. L'analyse de 718 questionnaires permet de vérifier huit hypothèses portant sur l'âge, le genre, les critères décisionnels de choix d'un terrain, les motivations à camper, l'intention de payer pour un service écoresponsable, la prédisposition à faire des compromis pour un label vert, l'utilisation d'Internet et les habitudes de consommation dont la fréquence de voyages en camping et les dépenses par voyage. Les contributions de l'article peuvent être utilisées par les chercheurs intéressés par le camping et l'industrie de l'hospitalité, mais aussi par les propriétaires et gestionnaires de terrains de camping et d'autres types d'hébergement rural afin de mieux segmenter leur marché et adapter plus précisément l'offre aux besoins de la clientèle ciblée.

Keywords: Camping, Green, Hospitality, Segmentation, Tourism

Mots-clés : Camping, Écoresponsable, Hébergement, Segmentation, Tourisme

1. Introduction

The tourism industry is estimated to be responsible for 5% of the world's total CO₂ emissions (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2010; UNEP and UNWTO, 2011). Within this context, the hotels and accommodation sector, which includes camping grounds, produces 21% of toxic releases (ILO, 2010; UNEP and UNWTO, 2011). These numbers are largely attributable to the lodging sector's high demand and use of energy, water and other natural resources (e.g. for heating, cooling and electrical needs, for construction and landscaping) and the large volume of non-reusable nor recyclable waste produced (UNWTO and UNEP, 2008; UNEP and UNWTO, 2011). Understandably, the accommodation sector has a negative impact on the environment (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Robinot and Giannelloni, 2010).

Despite the waste-producing and high-intensity energy demands, and because the negative effects are not immediately visible to users of these facilities, tourists have been slow to realize the extent of the accommodation sector's impact on the environment (Hawkins and Bohdanowicz, 2012). However, as consumers and observers become increasingly aware of this industry's impact on the environment (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Millar and Baloglu, 2012), businesses are making changes to become sustainable, green, or environmentally responsible (Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007; Pizam, 2009).

How are consumers reacting to these changes? Are they responding positively? Are consumers ready to pay for these changes? Do these changes affect all clients in the same way? Which consumers are more inclined to appreciate, and thus pay for, these changes?

The delayed awareness observed in tourist behaviour with regards to environmental issues in this sector is reflected in the research done on green lodgings and the consumers who frequent them. As such, questions regarding specific types of consumers, like tourists, have yet to be exhausted. Furthermore, the existing literature concerning the latter and their relation to eco-friendly accommodations is mostly restricted to an urban setting (Han *et al.*, 2009 and 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2010; Lee *et al.*, 2010; Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007; Millar and Baloglu, 2012; Ogbeide, 2012).

This article seeks to add to the growing body of research by focusing on environmentally conscious tourists in a rural context such as the camping ground. The interest in this particular type of tourist and accommodation is drawn from the observation that rural hospitality establishments and businesses are not necessarily ecologically responsible ones. Moreover, accommodations set in more natural settings do not inherently attract environmentally conscious guests and users. In addition, while there is a general wealth of literature on green consumers, including eco-friendly lodging customers, information is insufficient to enable type-specific accommodation segmentation such as camping and campers.

The focus, in this research, will thus be on tourists as campers, specifically environmentally-active users of camping sites. The objective of this article is to identify demographical, attitudinal and behavioural differences between environmentally responsible campers and regular campers. The article has three specific contributions for researchers. First, to our knowledge, this study is the first to integrate factors of three well-known segmentation bases in camper behaviour

(demographic, psychological and behavioural). Second, this is an original way to understand environmentally-active campers: it is not based on attitudes but on actual behaviours (number of green practices used in camping on a regular basis). The bias, when responding to this kind of sensitive question, should thus be reduced. Third, camper expenditures are included in the study. This gives a more precise and accurate account of the actual spending behaviour of customers. Contributions of this article are not only aimed to researchers, but also and mainly to campground owners and managers. The findings will provide them with information that can potentially influence their responsible marketing strategies as well as their investment decisions regarding infrastructure and future growth or expansion plans.

To better understand the importance of the green tourist, a literature review of the existing research is presented below. The proposed hypotheses are built upon this review leading to the conceptual framework. Methodology is then presented, and results follow. The article ends with a discussion on contributions, limits and possible future research projects on the camping market.

2. Literature review

Since the late 1960s, various research and studies have taken an interest in the “green consumer” and yielded mixed results (Laroche *et al.*, 2001; Millar *et al.*, 2012) as each one attempts to determine which variables are consistent enough to establish a coherent and ideal consumer profile. Indeed, the segmentation process of potential and actual consumers in the green products market is wrought with contradicting information (Berezan *et al.*, 2013; Laroche *et al.* 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2010; Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007).

When trying to explain environmentally friendly consumer behaviour, many authors have identified psychographic and behavioural indicators such as knowledge, values, level of involvement and/or environmental attitude as relevant variables in understanding the segment (Banerjee and McKeage, 1994; Brooker, 1976; Chan, 1999; Han *et al.*, 2009; Laroche *et al.*, 2001; Millar *et al.* 2012; Webster, 1975). These studies suggest that when it comes to evaluating consumer expectations regarding sustainable tourism-related products such as accommodations, traditional segmentation variables such as age, gender and income do not necessarily influence tourists as they do for other products and services (Millar and Baloglu, 2012).

One way of sorting through the abundance of information is to consider all these variables as part of the green consumer’s behaviour. When it comes to consumer behaviour, many factors can influence the decision-making process leading to a purchase (Daghfous and Filiatrault, 2015). These factors can be used for market segmentation, which leads to a better adaptation of the marketing mix for each targeted segment (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2014). Four bases are used in consumer market segmentation: geographic (e.g.. region, country), demographic (e.g. age, gender), psychographic (e.g. lifestyle, personality) and behavioural (e.g. benefits, user status) (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2014). This literature review and resulting hypotheses address these segmenting bases – except for the geographic basis, which is beyond the scope of this article.

2.1 Demographic factors

Considered to be the more traditional factors when constructing a consumer profile, these indicators are also relevant when it comes to identifying the green clientele. Recurring demographic factors include age (Anderson and Cunningham, 1972; Berkowitz and Lutterman, 1968; Han, 2009; Sandahl and Robertson, 1989; Van Liere and Dunlap, 1981; Vining and Ebreo, 1990), gender (Anderson and Cunningham, 1972; Berkowitz and Lutterman, 1968; Han, 2009; McKeage, 1994; McIntyre *et al.*, 1993), income (Henion, 1972; Sandahl and Robertson, 1989) and education (Sandahl and Robertson, 1989). Yet, despite the large body of work dedicated to identifying common demographic variables amongst green consumers, results have not always been conclusive (Roberts, 1996). However, Laroche *et al.* (2001) assert that these types of indicators can “exert a significant influence” and should be taken into account nonetheless. Most notably, the variables of ‘age’ and ‘gender’ have been shown to exert a more significant influence on eco-friendly purchasing decisions than others (Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009; Han *et al.*, 2011; Laroche, Bergeron and Barbaro-Forleo, 2001).

As mentioned, age is an oft cited indicator in studies on the green consumer, yet it remains an inconsistent variable through time. The general perception is that younger people are greener than their older peers (Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009). Interestingly, Laroche, Bergeron and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) observed that, while this idea was proven in studies carried out in the 1960s and 1970s, later studies dating from the late 1980s and 1990s have concluded that the green consumer tended to be older than average. The documented growing demand for greener products and services may thus reflect the desires of the larger and older population, rather than those of the smaller, younger demographic proportion (Deloitte, 2008; EuroMonitor 2012). According to a detailed comparative study that analyzed the evolution of the correlation between age and green behaviours using data and findings from research carried out between 1970 and 2010, there may indeed have been a reversal of the age trend (Wiernik, Ones and Dilchert, 2010). The authors suggest that the generation of the 60s and 70s, having experienced the birth of the green movement, witnessed the energy crises of the 70s and felt the effects of their generation’s excesses in the 80s and 90s, ended up maintaining their environmental consciousness and are now actively seeking to contribute to various conservation efforts. The same authors suggest that, because younger generations were not exposed to the initial shock of learning about the extent and increase of the negative environmental effects in the 80s and 90s, they seem to simply comply with existing green norms without necessarily exceeding them (Wiernik, Ones and Dilchert, 2010). Have green consumers simply aged (Laroche, Bergeron and Barbaro-Forleo, 2001)? Is the younger generation really less environmentally responsible? Is age a significant factor when considering camper behaviours? These studies are the basis for the first proposed hypothesis (Sandahl and Robertson, 1989; Vining and Ebreo, 1990; Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009):

H1 – Green campers are older than Regular campers

The second demographic variable that has repeatedly been shown to exert a significant influence on green behaviour is gender (Han *et al.*, 2011). Gender-based studies of green consumers have regularly found that there is a noticeable difference between men and women in this respect. The latter are often identified as more environmentally concerned than the former (Banerjee and McKeage, 1994; Berkowitz and Lutterman, 1968; Han *et al.*, 2009; Laroche *et al.*, 2001; McIntyre *et al.*, 1993; Webster, 1975). One study attributed this trend to certain personality traits that tend to be more common for women than for men, “agreeableness” in particular (Luchs and

Mooradian, 2011). John and Srivastava (1999) define “agreeableness” as having a propensity to being altruistic, warm, open to new experiences and trusting toward others. These traits are tied to values of universalism and goodwill (Olver and Mooradian, 2003) and are reflected in attitudes of social compassion and socio-political equality (Eagly *et al.*, 2004), which in turn can partly explain why women are consistently shown to be more environmentally responsible. Conclusions, however, are not always consistent or significant.

This does not imply that men are disinterested in environmental problems. Balderjahn (1988), for example, found that while fewer men displayed environmentally conscious attitudes than women, they were more likely to use eco-friendly products than women with the same attitude. Thus, while both genders may feel affected by environmental issues, they display their concern differently in their purchasing behaviours. Nonetheless, the more consistent of the reviewed findings is reflected in the following hypothesis:

H2 – There are proportionally more female campers among Green campers

2.2 Psychological factors

In terms of psychological indicators, several authors agree that knowledge, values and/or attitudes exert more influence on consumers than other variables when it comes to general eco-friendly products and services purchasing behaviours (Laroche *et al.*, 2001; Banerjee and McKeage, 1994; Brooker, 1976; Chan, 1999; Webster, 1975). Moreover, consumer attitudes (Han *et al.*, 2011; Laroche *et al.*, 2001; Millar *et al.*, 2012), as well as past or at-home green behaviours (Millar *et al.*, 2012) have consistently been found to be relevant predictors of consumer expectations and behaviour. It is important to note, however, that despite frequent positive results in research, consumer intentions do not always translate into concrete actions.

Numerous psychological factors are deemed influential when considering consumer behaviours and attitudes. In order to focus on the subject at hand, a study addressing the concerns of campground owners (Transat Chair in Tourism 2013) was used. On the basis of this study, four psychological factors were identified as relevant when considering campground users: decision-making criteria when choosing a campground, motivations to camp, readiness to pay for a green service and willingness to compromise for a green certification. These factors are crucial when adapting a targeted offer to consumers.

The criteria used by consumers when choosing where to camp can be different, depending on whether they are environmentally responsible campers or not. In the accommodation sector, one’s level of concern with environmental problems and green actions was found likely to affect consumer expectations regarding eco-friendly products and services (Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009; Millar, Mayer and Baloglu, 2012). Here, a greater concern for the environment translated into higher expectations in terms of sustainability for products and services (Millar, Mayer and Baloglu, 2012). Thus, the greener tourists’ decision-making process appears to be influenced by their level of concern for the environment, which in turn may affect which criteria are considered when choosing a service or product. Based on these findings, the following third hypothesis is proposed:

H3 – Green campers use different decision-making criteria when choosing a campground

While campers are motivated by many different factors to go camping, according to the aforementioned study (Transat Tourism Research Chair 2013), three main reasons can be identified as significant: to rest, to enjoy nature and to socialize. Knowing the three most common motivations to go camping is essential to create an adapted offer for consumers. They should be taken into consideration when making investment and development decisions regarding said offer. Thus, the fourth proposed hypothesis follows the previous studies' reasoning that one's level of environmental awareness has an impact on consumer behaviour:

H4 – Green campers have different motivations to go camping

When it comes to translating attitudes into actions, there are numerous market studies that point to a growing demand for environmentally responsible products and services (Deloitte, 2008; Euro Monitor, 2012). Further research, however, reveals contradicting conclusions regarding consumer willingness to pay for green tourism products and services (Berezan *et al.*, 2013; Laroche *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2010; Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007). Some studies, for example, found that a majority are indeed willing to pay more for green accommodation (Berezan *et al.*, 2013; Susskind and Verma, 2011) while others concluded that tourists are ready to choose a green option if price is the same or lower than a non-green option (Ogbeide, 2012; Manaktola and Jauhair, 2007). Yet another study demonstrated that guests are not ready to spend more for eco-friendly lodging (Lee *et al.*, 2010). Despite this confusion, one study has found that consumers who are more concerned with environmental issues and are satisfied by what is offered will want to use that business, will more likely recommend the service and will more likely pay more for such a service (Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009). Based on the latter, the following fifth hypothesis is proposed:

H5 – Green campers are willing to pay more for an environmentally responsible campground than other campers

Considering the uncertainty surrounding consumer willingness to pay more for a green service and the expenses that compliance with most green certifications entail for one's business offer, it can seem feasible to ask consumers to compromise on their overall experience to offset the costs. This option is proposed based on studies showing that consumers are willing to choose the greener option as long as the latter is not of lesser value or quality than the regular option (Lee *et al.*, 2010) or if the overall experience is not lessened in comparison (Berezan *et al.*, 2013). While only a few green consumers are ready to pay more as well as undergo added discomfort for the sake of an eco-certified business (Maibach, 1993; Roberts, 1996), it has also been shown that environmentally concerned clients are willing to compromise on certain specific aspects of their overall experience (Creyer and Ross Jr., 1997). Considering this last study, the following sixth hypothesis is proposed:

H6 – Green campers are more open than other campers to certain compromises for the sake of choosing a certified “green” campground

2.3 Behavioural factors

This segmentation basis is about actions. Since demographics result in less stable segmentation than before, behavioural factors such as usage rate and loyalty status are known to be better starting points to divide a market into subgroups (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2014).

Internet is well established in the decision-making process for today’s buyers. In the tourism industry, it can be used to many ends – to get commercial information, to provide personal comments, to do comparative shopping or to have social interactions (Thébaud, Picard and Ouedraogo, 2013). Technological changes happen faster than before, and some consumers struggle to keep the pace. Age has a role in the phenomenon. For example, most seniors who participated in a study struggled to immerse themselves in the Web 2.0 culture (Thébaud, Picard and Ouedraogo, 2013). Since Green campers are supposed to be older than Regular campers (Wiernik, Ones and Dilchert, 2010), the seventh hypothesis posits that:

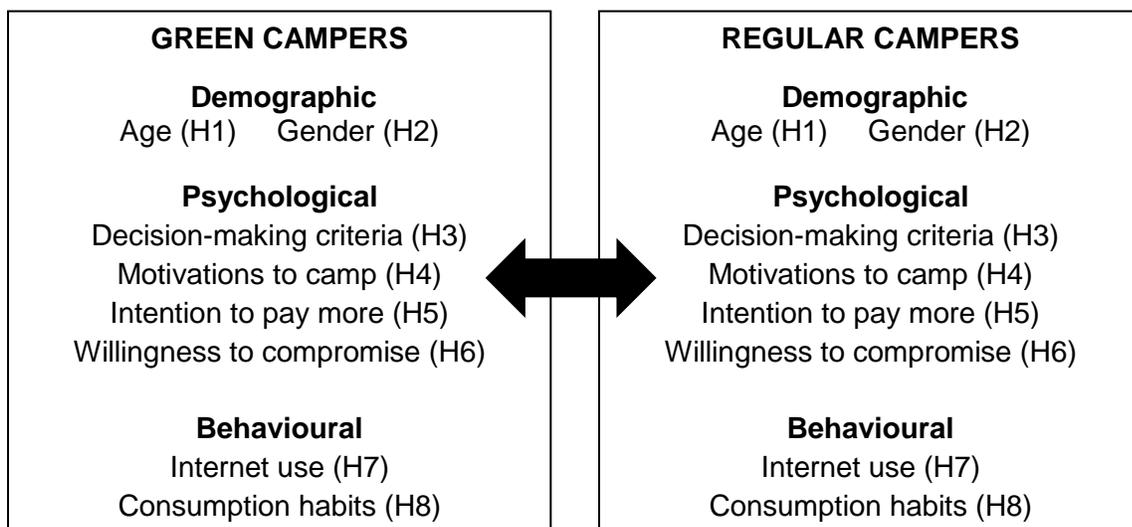
H7 – Green campers are less likely to use Internet in their buying process

It is also relevant to look at consumption habits. These can easily be related to managerial decisions and direct profitability – heavy usage index to identify frequently returning customers, or the amount spent during a trip to target high-spending customers. Ecotourists are known to be experienced travellers (IES, 2008 in Jakovic, Krasevac and Sebek, 2014). Environmentally active campers should thus camp more often than other campers and should thus be heavier users. They are also deemed to have a higher household income (Galley and Clifton, 2004) and to be ready to spend more during their trip (Wight, 1996). Following these statements, the eighth hypothesis is:

H8 – Green campers have different consumption habits than other campers

Based on this literature review, the following theoretical framework is proposed (Figure 1):

Figure 1: Differences between Green and Regular campers



3. Methodology

To gather relevant information leading to a better understanding of campers and of their relation to ecologically responsible actions and decisions, a survey was developed. The questions comprised in the survey used for the basis of this article are based on a previous study carried out in 2004. The latter was distributed to collect data in order to create a profile of the typical camper. New and adapted questions were created for this particular survey by various key players of Québec's camping industry, such as Camping Québec and the Fédération québécoise de camping et de caravanning (the Québec Camping and Caravanning Federation), as well as marketing research consultants, to generate more recent data with which to update, adjust and enrich what is known about the camper.

For this survey, an online panel representative of the Québec population was interviewed. Since the questionnaire required respondents to rely on their memory, the survey was distributed at the end of the 2012 summer within a relatively short timeframe. To take part in the survey, potential respondents had to answer positively to the following question: "Have you gone camping on Québec camping grounds in the last 12 months?" This allowed the administrators of the study to identify which participants could indeed continue with the rest of the survey. The qualifying respondents went on to answer the sixty questions in the survey.

For the purpose of this article, only non-seasonal campers' (occasional, recreational campers) questionnaires were considered. Non-seasonal campers, as opposed to seasonal campers (permanent, summer-long campers), were chosen because it has been documented that, although they are not as loyal as their counterparts, they are a highly profitable source of revenue for campsites (Transat Chair in Tourism, 2013). Non-seasonal campers were asked to identify which of the listed environmentally friendly actions or practices they had engaged in. The following table presents the frequency of each action:

Table 1: Frequency of environmentally responsible practices

Action/Practice	Frequency	% ¹
Recycling using provided on-site bins	520	72%
Avoiding wasting water and energy	456	64%
Using reusable bags	436	61%
Using reusable water bottles rather than disposable water bottles	333	46%
Bringing back recyclable items when bins are not provided on-site	310	43%
Using biodegradable cleaning products (e.g. dish soap)	240	33%
Composting	74	10%
Using solar energy	48	7%

¹ % of respondents who adopted this practice

A total of 718 questionnaires were answered and completed. To better analyze Green campers, the survey respondents were categorized according to the number of green practices they adopted on a regular basis, as follows: "Regular campers" adopted between 0 and 3 practices, and the "Green campers" adopted more than 3 practices. This way of categorizing respondents is based on behaviours. It is not about how environmentally aware they are, but more precisely how environmentally active they are. The following table provides a general portrait of the two types of campers:

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents

Type	n	Age	Gender	University diploma	Income
Regular campers (0-3 practices)	377	42.0	65% F	27%	\$61,142
Green campers (more than 3 practices)	341	45.7	65% F	30%	\$59,355
Total	718	43.8	65% F	28%	\$60,286

The above table shows similarities, mostly, but also slight differences between both demographic profiles. Comparative analysis is required to better understand these facts and determine if significant differences between Green and Regular campers go beyond the demographic factors, notably in their attitudes and behaviours.

4. Results

The following section presents the results in relation to each hypothesis. Metrics used are specified as needed. Links between findings and literature are underlined throughout this section.

4.1 Demographic factors

The first hypothesis considers age as a significant factor to establish a camper as green. In order to verify this, survey respondents were sorted according to the following generational division: Generation Y (18 to 34 years old), Generation X (35 to 54 years old) and Baby-boomers (55 years old and older).

Table 3: Cross tabulation of age and camper profiles

$X^2= 12.985$; $V=.140$; Sign. .002		Y	X	BB	Total
Regular	Number	131	173	48	352
	% within row	37%	49%	14%	100%
	% of total	20%	26%	7%	53%
Green	Number	89	149	74	312
	% within row	28%	48%	24%	100%
	% of total	13%	22%	11%	47%
Total	Number	220	322	122	664
	% of total	33%	49%	18%	100%

Table 3 shows that amongst Regular campers, Generation Y is the only over-represented group, making up 37% of Regular campers despite counting for 33% of total respondents. Meanwhile, Generation X is distributed more evenly among the two types of campers. Finally, Baby-boomers are over-represented in the Green campers group, making up 24% of it while representing only 18% of the total respondents. As far as Baby-boomers and Generation Y go, a slight trend can be observed and is indeed confirmed by the significant chi-square, but the strength of this association remains low ($V= .140$).

These results are consistent with previous research that found older people likely to be more concerned with environmental issues (Sandahl and Robertson, 1989; Vining and Ebreo, 1990; Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009). The first hypothesis is thus confirmed, with older campers proving to be more environmentally active than younger campers.

The second hypothesis proposes that female campers are more environmentally responsible than male campers. The following table allows for a more detailed analysis of this proposition.

Table 4: Cross tabulation of gender and camper profiles

$X^2= 0.002$; Sign. .968		Male	Female	Total
Regular	Number	131	246	377
	% within row	35%	65%	100%
	% of total	18%	34%	53%
Green	Number	118	223	341
	% within row	35%	65%	100%
	% of total	16%	31%	48%
Total	Number	249	469	718
	% of total	35%	65%	100%

This table produces clear results. Both genders are equally environmentally active. The table presents perfectly distributed proportions (35% M vs. 65% F) within each row. This observation may explain the contradictory and mixed conclusions found in existing research. As mentioned in the literature review, several studies conclude that women are more concerned with environmental issues (Laroche, Bergeron and Barbaro-Forleo, 2001; Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009) while others, albeit in fewer numbers, have found that under certain circumstances, men are more environmentally responsible (Balderjahn, 1988). Here, according to the given results, the second hypothesis is rejected.

Since both hypotheses on demographic factors did not show strong differences between Green and Regular campers, complementary analyses were conducted to confirm whether other factors such as education and family life cycle could explain the demographical segmentation used in practice (do Paço, Alves and Nunes, 2012). Additional cross tabulations produced no significant differences between Green and Regular campers. More precisely, campers with a higher education (university diploma) are not more present among Green campers, nor are households without kids at home or households without young children (0-6 years old). Hence, as in the do Paço, Alves and Nunes (2012) research, only a slight age difference has been significant, and other demographical factors cannot differentiate between Green campers and Regular campers.

4.2 Psychographic factors

The third hypothesis centres on the Green campers' decision-making criteria for a campsite, as opposed to the Regular campers' criteria. A comparison of means was done between each

decision-making criterion and both camper profiles. The criteria are presented in order of importance according to the total average as attributed by the respondents.

Table 5: Comparison of decision-making criteria

Decision-making criteria	Mean ¹	t	Sign.	Intergroup differences	
				Regular	Green
Beauty of campsite	4.23	-3.32	.001	4.14	4.33
Cleanliness of campsite	4.21	-3.70	.000	4.10	4.33
Tranquility on the grounds	4.14	-3.69	.005	4.04	4.26
Available drinking water	4.11	-2.41	.016	4.03	4.20
Safe environment	4.11	-3.20	.001	4.01	4.22
Price	3.98	-0.892	.373	-	-
Intimacy of campsite	3.92	-2.82	.005	3.83	4.02
Staff	3.87	-1.63	.003	-	-
Wooded location	3.81	-3.73	.000	3.68	3.95
User-friendly booking process	3.78	-1.01	.000	-	-
Size of location	3.70	-1.77	.077	-	-
Proximity to sights and/or friends and family	3.30	-0.36	.718	-	-
Presence of recycling facilities	3.30	-7.63	.000	3.00	3.62
Classification rating	3.10	-0.71	.478	-	-
Activities for children and adults	3.10	1.19	.237	-	-
On-site rental services	3.07	1.23	.221	-	-
Recreational activities and animation	2.98	1.02	.309	-	-
Waste disposal station for RVs	2.72	-0.68	.495	-	-
Internet at least in one area	2.39	1.72	.087	-	-
Internet at the campsite	2.31	2.88	.004	2.44	2.17

¹Each item was measured on a five-point Likert scale (Not important at all – Essential)

The table above shows some differences and similarities in the importance of decision-making criteria used when choosing a campground. The first five criteria – beauty of the campsite, cleanliness, tranquility, availability of water and security – are of slightly lesser importance for Regular campers. It should be noted, though, that the order of relative importance of these five criteria is consistent within both profiles.

Among the various criteria, two in particular deserve more attention. First, “Presence of recycling facilities” shows the greatest difference ($t = -7.63$). This is not surprising, since this criterion might be correlated with the way the two camper profiles were established. But given that 72% of the total sample recycles (see Table 1), this is the most popular green practice for all campers. Recycling facilities could have been a universal criterion. Table 4 shows Green campers to consider the presence of such facilities more strongly when choosing a campground.

Second, all criteria generating differences are of greater importance to Green campers, except for the “Internet at the campsite”. These results reflect Millar, Mayer and Baloglu’s (2012) work, in which they found that environmentally responsible people’s decision-making process differed from others’. Results introduce Green campers as a more demanding clientele. Many factors have a mean higher than 4.2, and none of those evaluated by the Regular campers reach this level. The Internet exception is also interesting. Green campers place lower importance on access

to the Internet than Regular campers. Further analysis on motivations to go camping and Internet use may further our understanding of this difference.

Regarding Table 4, while the main differences between the criteria are primarily connected to the most important ones, it is the level of importance that generates these differences, rather than the order of the factors. These results thus partially confirm the third hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis focuses on campers' motivation to go camping. According to a recent study, there are three main reasons to go camping: to rest, to socialize and to enjoy nature (Transat Chair in Tourism, 2013). These motivations were cross-tabulated with the two camper profiles in the table below:

Table 6: Cross tabulation of motivations to camp and camper profiles

$X^2= 24.321$; $V=.198$; Sign. .000		Rest	Socialize	Enjoy nature	Total
Regular	Number	180	78	69	327
	% within row	55%	24%	21%	100%
	% of total	29%	13%	11%	33%
Green	Number	121	58	115	294
	% within row	41%	20%	39%	100%
	% of total	20%	9%	19%	40%
Total	Number	301	136	184	621
	% of total	49%	22%	30%	100%

The above table shows that Green campers are more motivated by nature. Conversely, for Regular campers, resting and socializing are more frequent motivations for camping. Although this association is weak ($V=.198$), the difference is significant. This conclusion echoes previous findings where a difference in attitudes was observed between environmentally responsible people and others (Laroche, Bergeron and Barbaro-Forleo, 2001). Thus, the fourth hypothesis is confirmed.

As seen throughout the literature review, price is also an important variable when studying consumer behaviour. The fifth hypothesis focuses on this variable and aims to find out if greener campers are ready to pay more for an environmentally responsible campsite.

Table 7: Cross tabulation of intention to pay more and camper profiles

$X^2= 29.243$; $V=.202$; Sign. .000		No	1 to 5%	6 to 10%	+ than 10%	Total
Regular	Number	235	107	27	8	377
	% within row	62%	28%	7%	2%	100%
	% of total	33%	15%	4%	1%	33%
Green	Number	144	151	37	9	341
	% within row	42%	44%	11%	3%	100%
	% of total	20%	21%	5%	1%	40%
Total	Number	379	258	64	17	718
	% of total	53%	36%	9%	2%	100%

According to the above table, most respondents (53%) are not ready to pay more to stay at a campground that displays more environmental responsibility. Unsurprisingly, Green campers are readier to pay more, but not much more than 5%. As the results show, slightly more than one third of all respondents (36%) would accept a 1 to 5% price increase, the Green campers being over-represented in this group (44%).

Further analysis demonstrated a significant correlation of $p=0.117$, $sign = .000$ between the number of environmentally responsible actions taken during camping and one's readiness to pay more. This low correlation reflects previous studies where consumer readiness to pay more for green products or services was not shown to be conclusive (Ogbeide, 2012). Nonetheless, the results of this study are consistent with those of Han, Hsu and Lee (2009) and Susskind and Verma (2011), both studies showing that greener consumers are ready to pay more when purchasing products or services. The fifth hypothesis is thus confirmed.

The sixth hypothesis is related to the willingness to compromise for the sake of a green certified service. Respondents were asked to answer the following question: "If price remained the same but certain compromises were required on your behalf, such as shorter showers, what would be your level of interest in camping grounds with a green certification ensuring that the business' carbon footprint was reduced?" Respondents answered this question on a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 represented no interest and 4 the most interest. Table 8 below presents the findings through a comparison of means.

Table 8: Comparison of means of the level of interest in compromising for a green label

	F	Sign.	Intergroup difference
Willingness to compromise for green certification	78.484	.000	Regular (2.80) vs. Green (3.29)

As can be observed, the two camper profiles are distinct. As with the fifth hypothesis, the findings show that Green campers are more open to compromise on certain elements of their camping experience for the sake of environmental issues – in this case, a green certification – as long as the price remains the same. These results, which reflect those of Ogbeide (2012), are interesting because they may point to an evolution in green consumer readiness to compromise over the last 20 years when compared to studies carried out in the 90s, which found that only a small part of consumers were open to this option (Maibach, 1993; Roberts, 1996). Thus, the sixth hypothesis is confirmed.

4.3 Behavioural factors

The seventh hypothesis is about the use of Internet throughout the buying process. To assess if Green campers are different, their use (yes or no) of Internet, social media and other campers' comments to plan vacations, their use of a tablet or a mobile during camping and their sharing behaviour during or after their experience were part of the questionnaire. These usages were

cross-tabulated with the two camper profiles. The table below presents the proportion of respondents who answered yes to each usage, their chi-square and the level of significance:

Table 9: Cross-tabulation of Internet use

	Yes	X ²	Sign.
Using Internet to plan vacations	67%	0.398	.528
Using social media to plan vacations	61%	0.302	.582
Looking for campers' comments	36%	1.316	.251
Using a tablet or mobile during camping	56%	0.317	.573
Sharing pictures or comments	41%	2.126	.145

Table 9 reveals that a majority of campers use Internet and social media to plan vacations and use a tablet or a mobile during camping. Comments from other campers and sharing pictures or comments are not as popular. This may be due to the functionalities of the websites visited by camping communities. Jakovic, Krasevac and Sebek (2014) analyzed campground websites in Europe and found many disparities in the integration of Web 2.0 tools between countries. Usefulness and ease of use play a key role in Internet acceptance as an information source by tourists (Castaneda, Frias and Rodriguez, 2009).

The sector itself may also be a factor of low integration of certain types of communication. Internet and social media struggled to influence customers in the restaurant industry (Litvin, Blose and Laird, 2005). Given that many consider camping to be a worthy way of connecting with nature, the reflex of taking a picture and sharing it may be halted.

Results show no difference between Green campers and Regular campers regarding their Internet use. Even though it was established that the former are older, no significant difference was found. This is in line with the sample description of Castaneda, Frias and Rodriguez (2009) revealing no specific profile for Internet acceptance as an information source. Hypothesis 7 is thus rejected.

The final hypothesis cited differences in consumption habits between both profiles. To verify these, the number of camping trips, campgrounds visited and nights spent camping per year were assessed. Also, total expenditures for the last trip were compared. Table 10 presents the results:

Table 10: Comparison of means of consumption habits

Criteria	t	Sign.	Means by group	
			Regular	Green
Number of camping trip per year	-1.27	.205	5.3	6.0
Number of different campgrounds visited	-1.21	.227	2.6	2.8
Number of nights spent camping per year	-0.27	.788	12.8	13.2
Total expenditure of last trip	0.83	.404	\$453.69	\$422.47
Total expenditure per night of last trip	1.47	.141	\$173.15	\$142.83

Even if environmentally conscious tourists are known to be more experimented (IES, 2008 in Jakovic, Krasevac and Sebek, 2014), Table 10 shows no difference in this area. There is no significant difference between Green and Regular campers regarding the frequency of camping trips, the number of different campgrounds visited in a year or even usage, since both profiles show a similar annual number of camping nights. Green campers are not significantly heavier users than Regular campers.

Looking at expenditures, results show no significant difference between campers. Even if the household income should be higher for the Green profile, results do not support the assumption that they are ready to spend more (Wight, 1996). In fact, maybe they are ready to spend more, but they just don't. Previous studies have shown that, for research about sustainable issues such as environmental sustainability, respondents tend to want to appear as more involved than they actually are (Bohdanowicz, 2005). When taking this factor into account and considering previous research that focused on the discrepancy between results and reality, it has been shown that despite positive results, people are actually not willing to pay more for green or eco-friendly products and services (Hawkins and Bohdanowicz, 2012). Actual results are in line with those of do Paço, Alves and Nunes (2012) demonstrating no link between income and practice of ecotourism. In terms of expenditure, if there were a difference between campers, it would be Regular campers spending a little more than Green campers, but insignificantly so. In sum, Green campers do not have different consumption habits and hypothesis 8 is rejected.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This article's objective was to identify demographical, attitudinal and behavioural differences between environmentally responsible campers and regular campers. Through the testing of eight hypotheses, certain differences and realities have been observed and may prove to be useful for researchers and for managers and owners of campgrounds.

Since it has been found that older campers are more environmentally responsible, it is important to offer infrastructures in which these customers can express their green values and lifestyles. Making recycling bins available is now a given and is expected from most businesses. However, in order to increase the level of satisfaction of a large and aging clientele, companies in the accommodation sector would do well to consider adopting more sophisticated approaches such as composting bins, rain water collection, using biodegradable cleaning products, purchasing local products when possible or providing staff with environmental responsibility awareness training. Putting such measures in place can increase a camping ground's appeal to an older clientele with stronger green tendencies.

Moreover, if campground managers and owners are looking to attract more eco-friendly guests of any age, they should make sure to maintain the ground's attractiveness, keep it clean, and provide a calm and safe environment as these criteria and factors were shown to be more important to greener campers while also being significant for campers in general. Managers and owners should also bear in mind that enjoying nature is the biggest motivating factor for greener campers as this can impact a campsite's infrastructure and layout. Choosing to appeal to this

greener demographic also implies that managers and owners need to be serious in their commitment to create an environmentally responsible business because eco-friendly campers are more demanding, as seen in the results showing a higher average for decision-making criteria for this group. Thus, a real and sincere commitment to providing a quality experience should be adopted.

While Green campers can be more demanding, they were also found to be open to compromises in order to be consistent with their desires and values through their vacation choices. This is useful information for campground managers and owners who are looking to offer a green option but are worried about the often various and sometimes high initial costs incurred when implementing environmentally responsible changes. This study looked at two possible options for camping businesses wishing to become greener or certified, raising prices by 1 to 5% or maintaining prices but reducing operating costs by asking guests to modify their habits during their stay. Even if both options seem feasible, Green campers do not spend more per camping trip. According to this result, the compromise during the stay should be the best option. But the study also pinpointed the importance of a high service quality standard since environmentally campers are more demanding in their decision-making criteria. Although important, price is the sixth factor in the top decision-making criteria. The solution is thus not as clear as it seemed. In sum, both options (light increase and compromises) remain interesting for campground managers and owners.

Since each type of camper uses Internet, campground owners should invest in this channel and even in social media. Many campers use them to plan their vacations and even to share their experience. An increase in these uses is to be anticipated. Most campers use a tablet or a mobile during camping. This should be considered in campground investments for the development of a Wi-Fi access or of a new and richer way to communicate with customers during their experience instead of traditional speaker systems.

Using this study, researchers have access to more details about the role of demographic, psychographic and behavioural factors when building a segmentation in the camping industry. For example, demographic factors, used frequently by marketers, are not very informative in a green camping context. Researchers also have a new way to measure how environmentally-active campers are. This way to assess how truly green customers are is contributing to the body of literature on responsible marketing and may be used in many contexts such as restaurants, accommodations or at-home for commercial or public use. Finally, the amount actually spent by customers is the kind of data rarely measured by or accessible to researchers. This article shows no significant difference in expenditure for greener customers. As this result is not in line with many preconceptions or other studies, it adds a precious contribution to the literature in terms of objective and factual data.

As with all research, this article also has its limits. First, women are overrepresented in the sample. This is a potential source of bias because, as previous research has shown, women tend to be greener and display a stronger sense of environmental awareness. Second, the survey that served as a basis for this article was distributed online and was lengthy. This may have led to respondents becoming tired or weary, which in turn may have left them too tired when answering the last part of the questionnaire. Lastly, this article is based on a survey that polled campers

from a distinct territory only. It would be interesting to repeat the process in other areas so as to compare results and verify the stability of the conclusions.

There are also several interesting directions for future research that can be inspired by the conclusions and arguments put forward in this article. For example, it would be interesting to look into the different possible measures of greenness other than those related to behaviours, as was used here. Is this the best way to identify who the most environmentally responsible consumers are? Another potentially, particularly useful avenue of research would be to further develop the options regarding the raising of prices and the compromising of one's experience for the sake of environmental responsibility. It would be relevant to look at the type of services or aspects of their experience a consumer is ready to compromise on for the sake of the environment and the reasons behind this readiness or lack thereof. Yet another subject deserving interest centres on the reasons why younger generations are less environmentally active than their older counterparts. Finally, as Internet use grows throughout the buying process for today's consumer, it would be interesting to study where camping communities gather on the web and what their virtual behaviours are at each step of their camping experience.

In conclusion, for camping to become a more sustainable, or green, activity, several adjustments should be made which not only would reduce this type of enterprise's ecological impact but also attract a higher volume of environmentally responsible clients who seek out these types of greener experiences. Many of the changes need not be drastic to have a big impact and make a difference for the camper and for the environment. However, all signs seem to point to a growing need for these types of changes which, though they might be small steps at the moment, will likely soon become more and more necessary. Managers and business owners who take the green trend seriously will likely be recognized and rewarded for their forward-thinking.

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