


8-1-1989

Visitors to Wet N' Wild and Typhoon Lagoon: Focus Groups of Central Florida Residents

Ady Milman
Ady.Milman@ucf.edu

 Part of the [Marketing Commons](#), and the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)
Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/dickpope-pubs>
University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Dick Pope Sr. Institute *for* Tourism Studies at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dick Pope Sr. Institute Publications by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Milman, Ady, "Visitors to Wet N' Wild and Typhoon Lagoon: Focus Groups of Central Florida Residents" (1989). *Dick Pope Sr. Institute Publications*. 28.
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/dickpope-pubs/28>

**VISITORS TO WET N' WILD AND TYPHOON LAGOON:
FOCUS GROUPS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA RESIDENTS**

An executive Summary prepared for:

Wet N' Wild
6200 International Drive
Orlando, Florida 32819

Prepared by:

Dr. Ady Milman
Dick Pope Sr. Institute for Tourism Studies
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida 32816

August 1989

Purpose:

The purpose of the focus group sessions was to identify major areas of concern among Central Florida residents who visited Wet N' Wild and Typhoon Lagoon. In particular, the discussions focused on visitors' experience, similarities and differences between the two parks, perception of value for money, perceived market appeal, return visits, advertising, and accessibility to the parks.

Methodology:

Recruitment of participants in the focus group started three weeks prior to the actual focus group date. Residents of Orange, Seminole, and Osceola counties were contacted by telephone and were asked to take part in the task of visiting Typhoon Lagoon and Wet N' Wild and then participating in a focus group meeting.

Each participant who gave a firm commitment was given four complimentary tickets to Typhoon Lagoon and four complimentary tickets to Wet N' Wild. Participants who had visited either of the parks in the past twelve months were not given tickets to the parks they had visited. Focus group participants were also remunerated with \$25 each after participation in the focus group.

Several telephone calls were made throughout the task period to ensure that the participants visited the parks and were going to participate in the focus group.

Groups' Characteristics:

Two focus groups were conducted in Winter Park, FL on August 17, 1989. The first focus group consisted of teenagers (ages 14-18) and the second focus group consisted of adults (over 25 years old). The teenager group consisted of six males and six females, most of them were in high school or just graduated from high school, but some were also in the work force.

The adult group consisted of 12 participants representing different age groups (26 to 50) and an array of ethnic, educational, occupational, and economic backgrounds. This group also consisted of an equal representation of males and females.

All focus group members have resided in Central Florida for at least two years.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

1. Teenager Group:

General Perception of the parks:

Typhoon Lagoon was perceived to be more "classy," clean, and relaxing. Some participants used the term "Disney atmosphere" to describe some of the above experiences. Wet N' Wild was perceived to be a "fast pace" park where one can have real fun. The park was also perceived to appeal more to local residents than to tourists.

Wet N' Wild was perceived to be crowded compared to Typhoon Lagoon ("Too many people...I couldn't walk everywhere...")

In general, the teenage group was more impressed with Wet N' Wild and said that they would visit the park again. They said that they could stay there all day, while in Typhoon Lagoon "...It's time to go home after sunset...")

Landscaping:

The landscaping at Typhoon Lagoon was perceived to be better than at Wet N' Wild.

The **beach effect and sand** at Typhoon Lagoon was thought to be unique. It was also practical in terms of walking around the park ("...sand was cooler in Typhoon Lagoon. I'd rather walk on sand than hot cement (Wet N' Wild)...")

Some participants suggested that Wet N' Wild should improve its landscaping, in particular to add trees, sand, and water jets through the cement pavement to make walking more comfortable in the hot summer.

Rides and Attractions:

The teenage group preferred Wet N' Wild rides over those at Typhoon -Lagoon. Wet N' Wild was perceived to have more rides with lines that move more quickly. The Wet N' Wild rides were also perceived to be longer and more exciting. Some participants even mentioned that "...The rides were worth the wait in lines..."

Typhoon Lagoon rides were perceived to be to unexciting, "spread out," too short ("...You go on a ride for only two minutes...") and accompanied with long waiting lines ("...You wait in line for an hour..." "...Generally speaking, you shouldn't have to wait in

line more than fifteen minutes..")

Some of Wet N' Wild rides were reported to have "bumps" and some participants called for major repairs of the rides ("...It looks like Wet N' Wild needed to be remodeled...Some of the mats were ripped...") Typhoon Lagoon rides were smooth ("...almost like a pad...")

The **wave pool** in Typhoon Lagoon was perceived to be better than the one in Wet N' Wild, however one participant commented: "...What use is it if you can't surf?..."

The **Shark Reef** at Typhoon Lagoon was not a great thrill ("...I didn't see any sharks...the water was freezing...")

Inner tubes:

It was easier to get innertubes at Typhoon Lagoon ("...you didn't have to rent them...")

Lounge Chairs

Demand for lounge chairs in both parks exceeded supply. In Wet N' Wild the lounge chairs were too close to each other to allow comfortable walking.

Admission Price:

The group thought that local residents should have a discount for local attractions, in particular to the two water parks.

Cleanliness:

Typhoon Lagoon was perceived to be cleaner than Wet N' Wild. Some participants commented on the bad condition of Wet N' Wild bathrooms.

Food and Beverage:

Food was perceived to be too expensive in Typhoon Lagoon ("...They charge \$3.60 for a little sandwich..."). One participant did not like the food quality at Wet N' Wild.

Market Perception:

Wet N' Wild was perceived to be for younger people ("...for kids...for older brothers...for my friends) Typhoon Lagoon was perceived to be more appealing to families ("For my parents...It's better with the little ones...It's more relaxed there...")

Typhoon Lagoon was also perceived to be a tourist park ("...because it is associated with Disney..." and "...its location...")

Accessibility and Parking:

Accessibility to Typhoon Lagoon was a major drawback. First the park was perceived far from Central Florida residential areas ("...To get to Typhoon Lagoon you have to go all the way to Lake Buena Vista..."), and second, road directions ("...we didn't know how to get there...")

Exposure to advertising:

Some of the participants saw Wet N' Wild advertising on TV." A tape that was shown to them was recognized by some participants, however, some said that ("...They forgot to show the lines...")

The Summer Break Nights:

Some of the participants saw commercials of the event, and went to Wet N' Wild during the evening hours. The event was perceived to be "...more glamorous than it actually was...") and some suggestions were given to organize better bands in the future ("...Anything besides country music...")

2. Adult Group:

General Perception of the parks:

Most of the participants attended the parks with family members and friends. Typhoon Lagoon was perceived the best park out of the two because of the landscaping ("decor...the ship wrack..."), its cleanliness, and friendly staff.

Landscaping:

The landscaping of Typhoon Lagoon was evaluated more favorably than that of Wet N' Wild ("...You don't feel cramped...") Typhoon Lagoon is a more shady park, and consequently was perceived to be cooler ("...In Wet N' Wild there is no shade...it's all concrete...")

Rides and Attractions:

The rides at Typhoon Lagoon were perceived to be tame, too short with "...lines longer than the ride...I stood an hour for a five-minute ride...they make you go up and down steps so you don't feel the lines..." Some said that Typhoon Lagoon did not have enough rides. The participants said that the thrill rides at Wet N' Wild were much better than the rides in Typhoon Lagoon (Knee ski is the best skill ride...Der Stuka is the best thrill ride...they ruined it with the Blue Niagara...")

The participants thought that Typhoon Lagoon "copied" many ideas from Wet N' Wild with "some improvements."

The Lazy River of Wet N' Wild and the Castaway Creek of Typhoon Lagoon were favorite rides among the adult group. The surf pools in both parks were also perceived to be similar, although the wave pool in Typhoon Lagoon was perceived to be superior.

The maintenance issue of Wet N' Wild facilities was raised by some participants ("...The chutes seemed too rough...Some sharp things can tear your bathing suit...In Typhoon Lagoon they are a little bit smoother..."). Other improvements referred to algae clean up, additional bridge to get around the wave pool, and changing the entrance to be more convenient from the parking lot.

Typhoon Lagoon seemed to be appealing more to **families** ("It had a separate children's area...In Wet N' Wild my daughter was knocked down...") The water guns at Wet N' Wild's Pepper Park were not very favorable among the adults.

Typhoon Lagoon was not very convenient to families who needed to carry babies in strollers. Some suggested that sidewalks be added.

Many of the participants complained about the insufficient number of bathrooms at Typhoon Lagoon and the general lack of orientation in the park ("...There is no map...")

Music:

The majority of the participants preferred the easy music of Typhoon Lagoon compared to Wet N' Wild music ("...Their music drove me crazy...")

Inner tubes:

The rental policy was not favorable among the participants ("Why can't they give them...especially if you have children...In Disney they are very expensive...\$6 for a raft...")

Lounge Chairs

The participants noticed different types of lounge chairs in the two parks.

Admission Price:

Both parks were perceived to be a value for money.

Cleanliness:

The cleanliness of restrooms at Wet N' Wild was criticized. One participant said that the water in Wet N' Wild was not clean.

Food and Beverage:

The food was perceived to be very expensive at Typhoon Lagoon but of high quality("...A \$1.10 for a can of coke!?!...")

Market Perception:

Wet N' Wild was perceived to be a local resident park ("...more to the Orlando crowd...they are closer...")

Typhoon Lagoon was perceived to be a family park, but many said that they saw parents "dropping teens at the park..."

Accessibility and Parking:

Directions for Typhoon Lagoon were not very clear. The park also had a small parking lot. The parking lot at Wet N' Wild, which is located across the street from the park, was perceived to be inconvenient ("especially at night...")

Exposure to advertising:

The participants were more exposed to advertising about Wet N' Wild than Typhoon Lagoon.

The Summer Break Nights:

One participant visited Wet N' Wild during the event. She did not like it because "it was pretty cold...the kids were pretty wild..."

Safety:

The safety issue was only raised by adult group. Wet N' Wild was perceived to be slippery (...Slippery steps on Mach 5...) and "old and tired." Some participants mentioned exposed wiring and the safety issue of hoses across the sidewalks.

Staff:

The staff at Typhoon Lagoon was perceived to be more friendly ("...In Disney they like their guests...") Wet N' Wild staff offered no help and "they were not very nice...they don't care..."