

4. Satisfaction with facilities and services

Satisfaction with 28 specific facility and service items were surveyed, covering aspects of the tracks, huts, campsites, and information services provided (refer Appendix 1, Question 7). The complete list of responses, summarised in Figure 5, shows there were few expressions of dissatisfaction. Only dissatisfaction with landings along the river (24%), campsite washing-up facilities (16%), and campsite water supply (16%) exceeded the 15% dissatisfaction level. Many responses were also highly neutral, indicating the facility or service was not present, or not considered important. The the main examples of over 40% of neutral responses toward satisfaction are: advice from visitor centres (46%), material from visitor centres (44%), but heating facilities (45%), but lighting facilities (45%), and but drying facilities (41%). These suggest information from visitor centres is not highly used, probably reflecting the relative remoteness of the river. Overall, these results indicate a high acceptance of the existing standards of services and facilities, and by inference, may be indicative of little demand for any additional provision. The high proportion of visitors indicating neutrality towards satisfaction with direct information and advice from visitor centres may indicate further attention to information services is required.

4.1 EFFECTS OF AGE, GENDER, NATIONALITY, AND CROWDING PERCEPTION

4.1.1 Background to analyses

Additional analyses were required to assess whether satisfaction varied significantly according to age group, gender, nationality, and crowding perception. Because it was apparent that patterns of visitor responses were often similar across particular groups or 'clumps' of these satisfaction items, summary scales of these 'clumps' had to be constructed to allow valid statistical analyses. The resulting satisfaction scales, each containing items which had related response patterns, are listed in Table I and shown in Figure 6 (next page).

TABLE 1. SUMMARY SCALES FOR SATISFACTION WITH FACILITIES AND SERVICES (REFER APPENDIX 2).

SCALES	DESCRIPTIONS
Hut conditions	Hut washing/cooking/drying facilities, bunk numbers, relaxation space
Campsite facilities	Campsite washing and drying facilities, rain shelters
Water/conveniences	Water/toilet/other facilities at huts/camps, but heating/lighting
Riverside tracks	Boardwalks, steps, smooth/easy/gentle track surfaces, drainage of water, landing places
Information services	Map/brochure quality, visitor centre information/advice, warden advice, map/brochure information in huts
Route marking/signs	Signposts for camp/hut location, distance/times, riverside track-marking

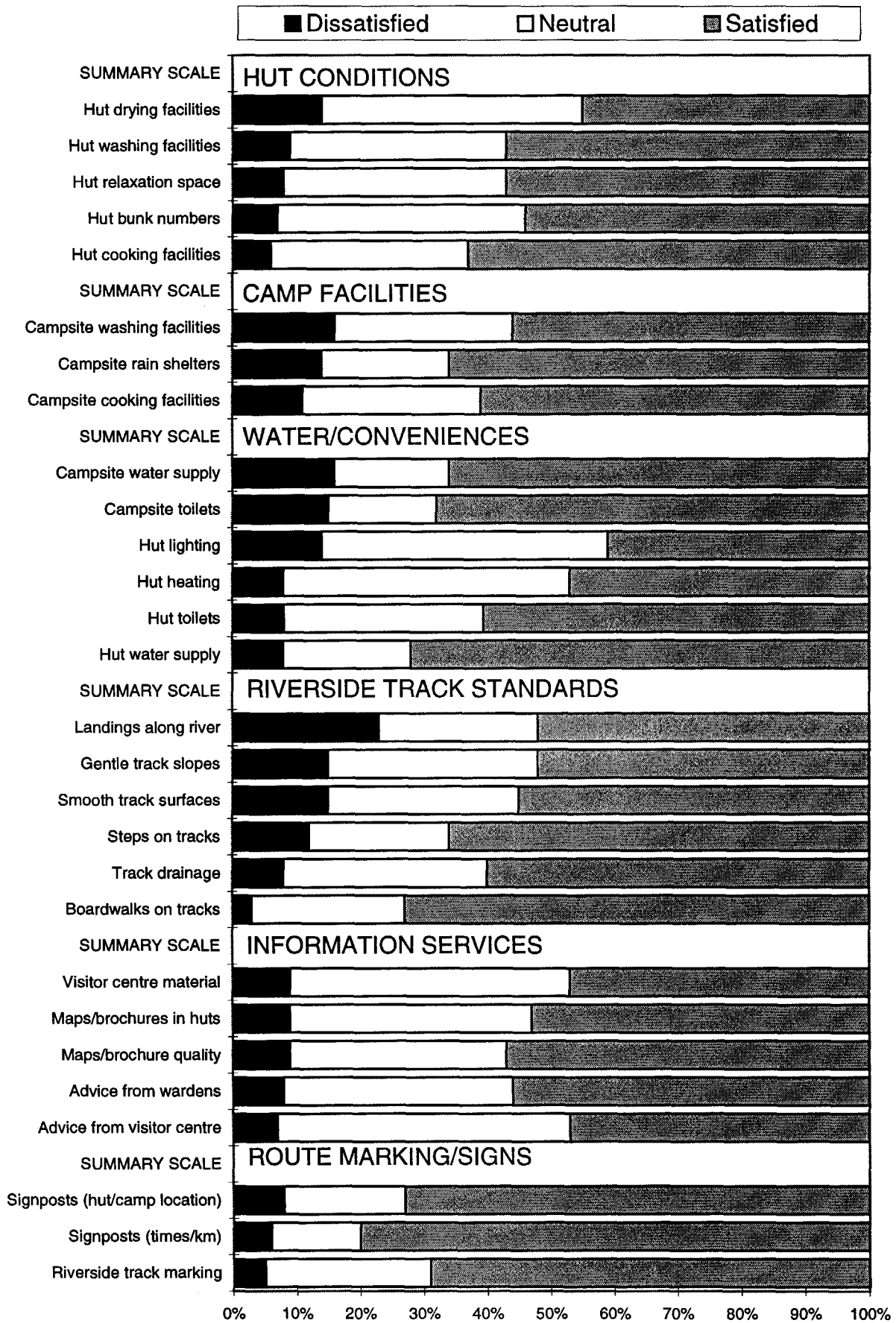


FIGURE 6. SATISFACTION RESPONSES ORDERED IN SUMMARY SCALE STRUCTURE. THIS IS SIMPLY A REORGANISATION OF MATERIAL PRESENTED IN FIGURE 5.

4.1.2 Significant findings

Using the SPSS MANOVA routine, a series of multivariate analyses of variance were carried out on these satisfaction scales (e.g., the dependent variables). Differences in satisfaction scales according to age-group (under and over 40 years), gender (male/female), nationality (New Zealand/overseas), and crowding perception (uncrowded/crowded) were analysed. The same approach was subsequently used for the scales of impact perceptions (Section 5.1) and attitudes toward management options (Section 6.1). However, no significant differences in satisfaction responses were identified between these different visitor groupings.

Mean satisfaction scale responses were also compared directly between camp users and but users, although statistical analyses were limited by the relatively lower number of but users (n = 51). These exploratory analyses suggested camp users were relatively less satisfied than but users overall, and with most specific facilities and services. This distinction was not great, and should be considered a prompt to more investigation, rather than a conclusive finding.

4.2 RELATING SATISFACTION SCALES TO OVERALL TRIP EVALUATIONS

None of the satisfaction scales were significantly associated with the overall satisfaction or use-level evaluations (e.g., crowding). No notable correlations or significant relationships (using SPSS Multiple Regressions) were found. The state of facilities and services experienced on the Whanganui journey did not appear to contribute at all to how the overall trip was evaluated. In particular, the lack of any notable relationships between overall satisfaction and any of the facility and service satisfaction scales indicates these questions represent distinctly different visitor perspectives on visit satisfaction. This is an important distinction to acknowledge. Simply applying a single overall evaluation of satisfaction appears unlikely to highlight any specific-issue satisfaction problems until they are of an order where visit quality may be already highly compromised, and the problems more difficult to manage.

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