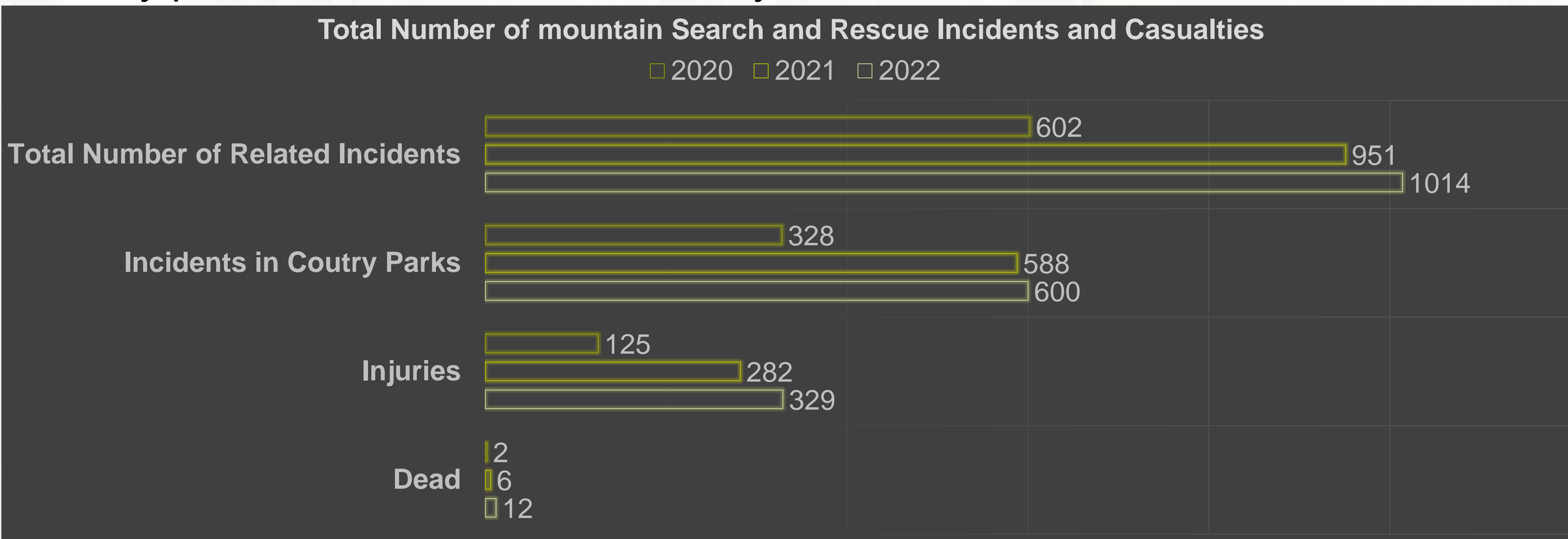


# Visitors' Responsibility, Perception and Preparedness of Risk: A Study of Hong Kong Country Parks

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## 1. Background

Hiking in Hong Kong was popular during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the number of mountain search and rescue incidents and casualties also increased. Although different parties took action to tackle the phenomena, the lack of studies on local country park visitors' characteristics may reduce the effectiveness of their rescues.



Years	Visitors
2019	11.2
2020	12
2021	12.4

(The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Press Releases, 2023) (Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, 2022)

## Research Questions:

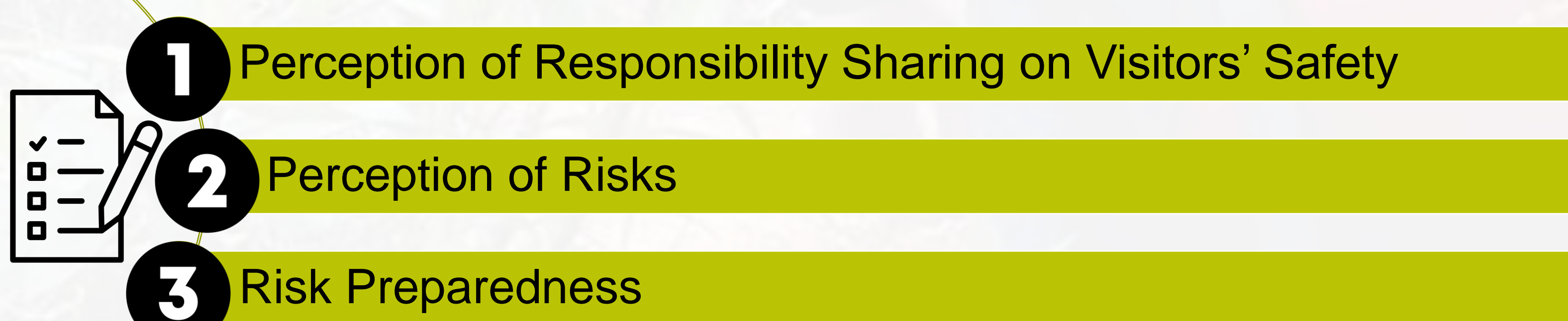
- 1) Is there a difference in the local country park visitors' level of preparedness for risk, perception in sharing of safety responsibilities during the visit, and views of the risks?
- 2) What are local country park visitors' views on different parties, including themselves, taking responsibility for visitors' safety?

## 2. Purposes

- 1) Provide the background for future research on related areas in Hong Kong.
- 2) Provide evidence for the government and other parties to design better public education programs and management strategies to reduce related accidents.

## 3. Methodology

- Systemic random sampling
- Quantitative study (Questionnaire survey in written and QR code via Qualtrics)



### ➤ Target Participants:

Visitors 12 years old or above and visited local country parks between 2020 – 2022.

### ➤ Distribution of Questionnaire:

- 1) WhatsApp
  - 2) Field survey
- Statistical Analysis (SPSS):

127 Questionnaires collected (N = 127)

Descriptive, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis H Test

## 5) Discussions

**Result 1:** Fits the theory from Saunders et al. (2019) and Wickens (1997) on the factors that cause accidents and dangerous behaviour in local country parks.

**Result 2:** Technology advancement lead to park facilities and hiking map being digitalized. More visitors rely on smartphones for their visit.

**Result 3:** Built on existing evidence from Espiner (2001) about visitors having higher acceptance of individual responsibility for visitor safety, which discovered visitors also agreed that the government have responsibility for visitors' safety.

## 4. Results

- 1) Most respondents disagree that local country parks dangerous places for visiting (119 respondents, 93.7%).
  - Local country parks are been well-planned and managed.
  - Factors that caused the park to be dangerous were visitors' misconduct and unpreparedness.
- 2) Few respondents did not make preparation before their visit.

### Action (1)

Collect visit-related information (Weather, route status, etc.)

(3 Respondents, 2.4%)

- Believed that their visit was safe
- Relied on friends who visit with them

### Action (2)

Provide visit plan to third parties (Parents, friends, etc.)

(25 Respondents, 19.7%)

- Believed that their visit was easy to finish in a short time.
- Believed that they could call for help when occur accident.
- Preferred freedom

### Equipment - Top three equipment which respondents did not bring for visit:

- 1 – Compass (70.9%, 90 Respondents)
- 2 – Whistle (67.7%, 86 Respondents)
- 3 – Paper Hiking Map (63.8%, 81 respondents)

### Reasons

- Technological advanced – more often to use online hiking map.
- Comfortable – reduce weight for their backpack.
- Accorded with their experience and route characteristics to decide.

- 3) Respondents supported that the government and individuals have a responsibility for visitors' safety (Mean > 4).

Question Types / Questions	Mean	SD
<b>1) The Government's Responsibility</b>		
2.1.1 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (management authority) should do more to protect visitors from harm during visit country parks.	4.54	1.547
2.1.2 While I am at country parks, my safety is the responsibility of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (management authority)	4.16	1.697
2.1.3 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (management authority) should take action to prevent visitors to access dangerous areas.	5.37	1.516
2.1.4 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (management authority) have responsibility to inform me about all things which may affect my safety during visit.	4.97	1.414
<b>2) Individuals Responsibility</b>		
2.1.7 I prefer to manage my safety by myself during visit country parks.	5.76	1.439
2.1.9 As a country parks visitors, I feel responsible for my own safety.	6.06	1.230