

# MARKETING STUDY OF DEMAND FOR SPORTS FACILITIES BY ELDER PEOPLE

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to carry out a marketing research about the sports facilities desired by elder sedentary people who are interested in incorporating physical activities into their lifestyles. In a study carried out in Australia (Booth et al., 2000), it was found that finding footpaths safe for walking, and access to local facilities were significantly associated with being active. Furthermore, few scientific studies have been undertaken with particular regard to demand for sports facilities by elder sedentary people (Metcalf, 1983; Hobza & Dohnal, 2008; Ke-yin, Xue-rong, & He-jiao, 2010). In a study carried out by Jiménez-Beatty (2002) focused on where the sedentary people over 65 years old in the Municipality of Madrid (Spain) would like to practice physical activities, it was found that 62% would prefer a sport facility, 18% a leisure centre, 10% would use parks or other public places and 5% would do it at home. Considering the sports facilities mentioned above 61% of the people would attend in the mornings and 30% in the afternoons. The majority (78%) would walk to the sports facilities and only 8% would use the bus. In another study carried out in Guadalajara Province (Jiménez-Beatty, Martínez del Castillo, Graupera, 2006), different results were found: 41.2% would prefer a sports facility, 34.7% at a center with sports facilities (homes and nursing homes); 13% would use parks or other public places and 4% would do it at home in parks, they would 13%, and in the home, 4%. In the above facilities, 45.8% would practice in the mornings, and 43.7% in the afternoon. Most of these people (82%) would come walking to the place of practice, and 5% would use the bus.

The present study has used a quantitative methodology. A cross-sectional study was carried out during 2006 by means of face-to-face interviews to a random sample of 119 sedentary people over 65 years old, living in Spain and

who were interested in participating in any physical activity. Participants were selected through a multistage probability sampling. The inclusion criteria were being 65 years old or more and resident in the sampled streets in Spain. The participants completed a brief questionnaire which included questions about age, gender and variables about sports facilities (p.e. Jiménez-Beatty et al., 2006). Contingency table analysis was performed, including the value of Pearson chi-square and significance ( $p < .05$ ). The phi correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship among sports facilities variables, and the sociodemographic variables.

The results obtained from the study showed that the majority of the people would like to practice a physical activity in a sport leisure centre (56.7%) or in a centre which holds the appropriate installation for it (12.5%). Only 3.3% would prefer to practice at home and 6.7% would do it in a park or in a public place. The relationship between type of sports facility and age was low, but significant ( $\eta^2 = .38$ ;  $\chi^2$  df 5, 17.28;  $p = .004$ ). There was no relationship between type of sports facility and social class or gender. Regarding when they would prefer to practice any physical activity, 45% would prefer to do it in the mornings, 36.7% in the afternoons and 18.3% would do it either in the mornings or in the afternoons. There was no relationship between when they would prefer to practice and social class or gender or age. As to the preference of transport, the majority of them (89.7%) would walk to the place of practice, while other alternatives of moving such as the bus (only 1% would use it) or the car (4.3%) are less considered. The relationship between mode of transport and age was low, but significant ( $\eta^2 = .31$ ;  $\chi^2$  df 3, 11.31;  $p = .010$ ). There was no relationship between mode of transport and social class or gender.

Taking into account the results obtained in the rest of Spain with reference to the sports facilities that elder people would use, it has been found that the results are very similar to those obtained in Madrid. In contrast, in the study made in Guadalajara the results showed that there are less people who ask for sports facilities and more people who would prefer space for physical activities in old people's homes. These differences are probably due to the fact that in this province elder people rarely consider the sports facilities appropriate for their age. Consequently, they expect to practice physical activities in areas they think to be designated for them. Concerning the moment of the day they would prefer to practice physical activities, almost half of elder people in Spain would do it in the mornings, including the elder people from Guadalajara, and especially the population living in Madrid. Such differences could be related to their lifestyles. However, it would be interesting to carry out deeper research studies about this matter in the future. Finally, in these three studies, it has been shown that the majority of elder people would prefer to walk to the sports facilities. These results confirm the importance of having an appropriate location of sports facilities for elder people, already highlighted in the literature.

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