EVOLUTION AND PERSPECTIVES OF TOURISM IN GREECE

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a service industry or specifically a mix of industries services (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Tourism as a special form of leisure has its own special characteristics, while another research suggests that specific types or forms of tourism can be verified based on leisure behavior (Moore et al. 1995). Cohen (1972), was one of the first researchers to suggest that tourists could be classified on the basis of similar observable behaviors. He describes four categories: the independent mass tourist, the organized mass tourist, the drifter and the explorer. His work inspired numerous other researchers (Yiannakis and Gibson, 1988; Smith, 1989; Murdy, 2001; Baidal, 2004) and many more and now this research. Yiannakis and Gibson (1992), addressed this issue, specifically devising a comprehensive classification of leisure tourists and they designed their Tourist Roles Preference Scale TRPS (15 roles). The same researchers presented again the latest version of TRPS (18 roles) on 2002, which is used on this study. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the 18 leisure tourist roles devised by Yiannakis and Gibson exist in the Greek context today. The TRPS was also used at a similar research in Australia which indicated that the items of TRPS are significant in representing the tourist roles they are intended to measure (Foo Jo-Ann, McGuiggan Robyn & Yiannakis Andrew, 2004).

METHODS

Sample: The sample of this study will be consisted of tourists of all ages over 17 years old who will visit Greece in summer (June-July-August 2007).

Questionnaire: The questionnaire which will be used in this study includes 86 Likert Questions or closed questions that record: a. description of tourist's activities, b. description of vacation destination, c. examination of major human needs, d. demographical and personal data and e. certain destination preference. The construction of this questionnaire was based on the questionnaire of Gibson Heather and Yiannakis Andrew TRPS (Annals of Tourism Research, Vol.29, No.2, pp.358-383, 2002). Also the questionnaire will be translated in German and in Greek using the expert committee and back to back methods. Having the questionnaire in three languages it will cover the majority of tourists.

Process of Measurement: The questionnaires will be distributed at the two bigger airports in Greece: Eleftherios Venizelos at the capital city Athens and Macedonia airport at the second largest city Thessaloniki. The questionnaires will be distributed to the tourists after the check in at the airport at depart from Greece to their countries after their visit to Greece. In cases of older adults with impaired vision, questions will orally present to them. Depended variables: tourist roles preference and independent variables: gender and age.

RESULTS

First, a confirmatory factor analysis using SPSS will be performed to determine if the model of Yiannakis and Gibson's typology applies to the Greek sample. Then, the data will analyze frequencies, multi-dimensional scaling, crosstabs and logistic regression. Descriptive statistics will be obtained by running a frequency

analysis to determine the demographic composition of the sample. To verify the validity of the TRPS, multi-dimensional scaling models were developed for the entire sample and for males and females. Crosstabs will be used to determine cell size for tourist role preference by gender. Logistic regression will be used to address all research questions. In order to determine tourist role preference, responses to TRPS questions will be dichotomized by collapsing the summed responses to each role into high and low scores based on their frequency distributions.

DISCUSSION

At this research it will be revealed the identification of tourist roles in Greece and it will be compared with the research of Gibson & Yiannakis (2002), who found that there are eighteen tourist roles: Sun Lover, Action Seeker, Anthropologist, Archaeologist, Organized Mass Tourist, Thrill Seeker, Explorer, Jetsetter, Seeker, Independent Mass Tourist, High Class Tourist, Drifter, Escapist I, Escapist II, Active Sport Tourist, Educational Tourist, Nature Lover and Ecotourist. The respondents' stage in the life course is based on Levinson's model (1978, 1996), which is divided into three eras (Gibson, 1994): Early Adulthood (17-39 years), Middle Adulthood (40-59 years) and Late Adulthood (60 years and over). The results of this study have several theoretical and practical implications for the tourism industry. It is very important to know which individuals engage in certain tourist roles, so to determine the needs they are trying to satisfy. Also, Greece destinations could successfully targeting potential tourist populations by maximizing the destination – motivation fit to tourists, aiming to satisfy them.

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