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Human needs and tourist roles

G. Yfantidou¹, G. Costa¹, M. Michalopoulou¹, I. Trigonis¹

¹Democritus University of Thrace, Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, Komotini, Greece

gifantid@phyed.duth.gr

Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the intention of tourist role preference of tourists in Greece among men and women and the three Life Eras based on human needs. Age was recorded according to Gibson's model (1994), in three life eras: **Era 1:** Initial Adulthood (17-39 years), **Era 2:** Medium Adulthood (40-59 years) and **Era 3:** Final Adulthood (60 years and over).

Methods

Data consisted of a stratified sample by age and gender of 1675 tourists from about fifty countries who visited Greece in summer (June-July-August 2007). The range of age was from 17 years old to 80 years old (Mean=36 years). The sex of the participants varied from 773 men and 845 women (missing values 57). Roughly half were married (45.1%), while singles/never married were (43.7%). The majority were employed full time (61.9%), while 18.9% were students. As far as education is concerned, the majority were graduates of university or a 4-year college (32%). Annual family income varied from 20.000-60.000€ for 48.1% of the participants. The questionnaire is based on the "Tourist Roles Preference Scale" of Gibson and Yiannakis (2002), and translated in Greek, German and Russian (control of cross-cultural validity) by Yfantidou, Costa & Michalopoulos, (2007) as Geisinger (1994) and Sperber (2004) proposed. Having the questionnaire in four languages covered the majority of tourists visiting the region. The questionnaire included 89 Likert Questions or closed-ended questions that recorded: (1) a description of tourist's activities, (2) a description of vacation destination, (3) an examination of major human needs, (4) demographical and personal data and, (5) certain destination preference. The questionnaires were distributed at the two main airports in Greece: Eleftherios Venizelos at the city of Athens and Macedonia airport at the city of Thessaloniki. The questionnaires were distributed to the foreign tourists after check in at the airport when departing from Greece, and for Greek tourists in transit to their final destination in Greece after their vacation. The delimitation of this research is that the sample was collected only during summer as security regulations at the airports did not allow for the continuation of the research during other time periods.

Results

Cronbach α was used to examine the reliability of the questionnaire, in particular for the part of tourist roles $\alpha = .81$ and for the part of human needs $\alpha = .85$. Tourist role preference was then dichotomized into high and low preference (low "0" points 1-3 scale chose and high "1" points 4-

5 scale chose), below are the percentages of the 4 highest preferences: 1) SNL 38,2%, 2) ANT 25,4%, 3) ARC 25,1% and 4) ESC-I 33,7%. **Sun Lover:** Interested in relaxing and sunbathing in warm places with lots of sun, sand and ocean. Men 17-39: The need to have control over events and circumstances in your life **B=0,852**. Men 40-59: Safety and personal security needs **B=1,004**, the need to play and have a good time **B=1,410**, the need for home and family **B=0,954**, the need to just get away from everything **B=1,292**, the need to be occasionally taken care by someone else **B=1,074**. Men 60+:-. Women 17-39: The need for freedom, autonomy, independence **B=0,550**. Women 40-59: The need for solitude, privacy **B=1,297**. Women 60+:-. **Anthropologist:** Mostly interested in meeting local people, trying the food and speaking the language. Men 17-39: The need for creativity, self expression **B=1,158**, the need for exploration, novelty, discovery, change **B=0,813**. Men 40-59: The need to have clear goals, a direction in life **B=0,985**, the need to have control over events and circumstances in your life **B=1,383**, the need to feel connected with one's history, roots, the past **B=1,363**. Men 60+:-. Women 17-39: The need for creativity, self expression **B= 0,681** and the need to be occasionally taken care by someone else **B=0,705**. Women 40-59: Companionship needs **B=0,940**. Women 60+:-. **Archaeologist:** Mostly interested in archaeological sites, enjoys studying history of ancient civilizations. Men 17-39: The need for exploration, novelty, discovery, change **B=0,597** and the need to be occasionally taken care by someone else **B=0,693**. Men 40-59: The need to have clear goals, a direction in life **B=1,549** and the need to feel connected with one's history, roots, the past **B=1,021**. Men 60+:-. Women 17-39: The need for creativity, self expression **B=0,911** and the need to be occasionally taken care by someone else **B=0,788**. Women 40-59: The need for creativity, self expression **B=1,007** and the need to feel connected with one's history, roots, the past **B=1,735**. Women 60+:-. **Escapist:** Enjoys taking it easy and getting away from it all in quiet and peaceful places. Men 17-39: The need to have clear goals, a direction in life **B=0,648**, the need to have control over events and circumstances in your life **B=0,940**, the need for variety, excitement, stimulation **B=0,914** and sexual needs **B=0,762**. Men 40-59: The need to play and have a good time **B=1,255** and the need to have control over events and circumstances in your life **B=1,281**. Men 60+:-. Women 17-39: The need for health and well being **B=0,501**, the need for variety, excitement, stimulation **B=0,704** and the need to just get away from everything **B=0,549**. Women 40-59: Safety and personal security needs **B=0,600**. Women 60+:-. ***(p<0,001)**.

Conclusion/Application to practice

As it was revealed age differences are of vital important to distinguish human needs and that means different target groups and plans for each destination in order to satisfy each target. Demographic characteristics showed the profile of tourists and the lack of other tourist target groups. In conclusion, Sun lover, Anthropologist, Archaeologist, and Escapist I were the most famous tourist roles in Greece. Low frequencies, in the remaining tourist roles reveal that a small number of tourists are visiting Greece for reasons other than the aforementioned. This may be the result of inefficient marketing for tourism products, and the lack of organization for promoting new forms of tourism to those who are involved or would like to be involved in Greece at public and private business.