

MARKETING STUDY OF DEMAND FOR SPORTS SERVICES BY ELDER PEOPLE

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to carry out a marketing research about the main characteristics of sports services desirable by elder sedentary people who are interested in incorporating physical activities into their lifestyles. Demographic studies emphasise the high increase of older adults in the European countries. It has also been considered this segment of the population as a source of opportunities for the leisure market (Sniadek, 2006). Different studies have highlighted the importance of knowing what older adults expect from the physical activities programmes. However, research about marketing studies regarding physical activities and services for older adults is still limited. Among these studies it is possible to find the ones carried out in the Municipality of Madrid as well as in Guadalajara Province (Spain) by Jiménez-Beatty (2002), and Jiménez-Beatty, Martínez del Castillo, Graupera (2006). Due to the differences obtained in the results of both studies it was suggested to carry out a study of older adults in the whole country.

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. The participants completed a brief questionnaire which included questions about age, gender and variables about sports services (p.e. Jiménez-Beatty et al., 2006). Contingency tables related to the goals of the study were obtained with the analysis of the data.

The results obtained from the study showed the physical activities preferred by this segment of the population. Firstly, half of the people would prefer indoors physical activities such as taichi, yoga, dancing, etc. Secondly, one

in three persons would practice aquatic activities. Thirdly, one in ten would practice other sports (p.e. the use of racket). Finally, 6.7% would practice outdoor physical activities such as cycling, petanque, bowling, etc. The distributions and the preferences of the activities obtained are, in general, the same as the one obtained in the studies carried out in Madrid and Guadalajara (Jiménez-Beatty, 2002; Jiménez-Beatty et al., 2006). Regarding how many times a week they would practice physical activities, it was found a high interest in a regular practice, as 84% of the people would exercise two or more hours per week. Similar results were found in the studies of Madrid and Guadalajara. As for when they would prefer to practice any physical activity, half of the older adults in Guadalajara would prefer to exercise in the mornings and half in the afternoons while in Madrid it was found a clear preference for practicing in the mornings. The study that covers the territory of Spain showed a slight preference for practicing in the mornings, but there is also a high percentage of people who would like to exercise in the afternoons. These different results could be due to the differences showed in each geographic market or social changes that have been occurred during the time when the studies were being carried out in Madrid (2002), in Guadalajara (2005) and at the present in Spain (2006). Considering the way in which the physical activities could be organized, the majority of the people would prefer a particular entity to be in charge of the organization. At least 60% would choose any kind of sport entity, particularly the ones in which the Town Hall would be involved, followed by associations, private businesses and in the last position old people's homes. Only 17% would organize their own activities with themselves or with family and friends. These results are very similar to those obtained in Madrid, in Guadalajara up to 30% of the people would prefer to organize their own activities.

Further research is necessary in order to know more about geographic markets especially in reference to cultural as well as economical differences in other European countries and have a broader knowledge to design appropriate programmes for older adults.

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