

# PARTICIPANTS' CHOICE OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES BASED ON DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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## Keywords

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY PROGRAMM, RECREATION

## Literature review

Recently, outdoor activity programs have become one fruitful way for participants to spend part of their holidays on (Chroni, S. & Zourbanos, N. 2001). So, Greece has developed sites where these activities can be carried out and participants can now have easy access to them all year round (Woosnam, K., McElroy K. & Van Winkle, C. 2009; Kouthouris, C. 2009). One such area is the region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace where 3 rivers (Strymonas, Nestos & Evros), 2 lakes (Vistonida, Ismarides), 2 islands (Thasos, Samothraki) as well as the Rodopi mountain chain can be found. These are sites of exceptional natural beauty, most of which are protected by the Ramsar Convention and Natura 2000. This alone has helped into making the region one very attractive choice for visitors. If one adds the fact that these areas offer high quality outdoor activities services (canoe-kayak, rafting, sea-kayak, M.T.B, climbing-rappel, flying fox, trekking, jeep rides & special three or four – wheel bike rides, parachuting, mountain/sea skiing, archery, athletic shooting, paint ball etc), then, it is easily understood why this area has become a tourist destination (Kouthouris, C. & Alexandris, K. 2005).

## Aim

The aim of the research was to investigate whether male & female participants in outdoor activities choose a particular activity based on their prior experience or place of residence.

## Methodology

The questionnaires were collected soon after the activities had been carried out by at least two members of the research team. The research was held from 01-01-2013 up until 31-03-2013. 459 people participated in the research (350 men (32 boys included) and 109 women (18 girls included), from 9 different cities of the country. 264 had prior experience and 195 had none. In total, the participants took part in 15 different activities.

## Results

The results of the Crosstabs analysis showed that there was statistically significant difference between the observed and the expected frequencies of both male & female participants regarding their first choice by  $\chi^2=78,10$ ,  $df=13$ ,  $p=,001$ . In a similar vein, concerning their second choice, results showed  $\chi^2=127,22$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=,001$ , while as regards their third choice, results showed  $\chi^2=175,13$ ,  $df=11$ ,  $p=,001$ . In the same line, and as regards their first choice, results revealed that there was statistically significant difference between the observed and the expected frequencies of participants who had prior experience as well as of those who did not by  $\chi^2=164,14$ ,  $df=13$ ,  $p=,001$ . Concerning their second choice, results showed  $\chi^2=121,39$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=,001$ , while their third choice presented us with  $\chi^2=120,30$ ,  $df=11$ ,  $p=,001$ . Finally, concerning their first choice, results showed that there was statistically significant difference between the observed and the expected frequencies of the participants influenced by their place of residence by  $\chi^2=928,77$ ,  $df=104$ ,  $p=,001$ . Their second choice results were  $\chi^2=1010,47$ ,  $df=96$ ,  $p=,001$ , while their third presented us with  $\chi^2=968,89$ ,  $df=88$ ,  $p=,001$ .

## Conclusions

In conclusion, we see that male participant chose more difficult activities than females did. Participants with prior experience chose different activities from those they did in the past and participants who live in urban environment sought to spend more time in contact with nature than those living in rural areas.

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