

THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND PLACE ATTACHMENT ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF WINDSURFING

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Keywords

Motivation, place attachment, behavioral intentions

Aim of abstract

The number of participants in outdoor sporting pursuits constitute today a rapidly developed segment of the sport tourism industry. Windsurfing, one of the first extreme water sports, emerged in the early 1970s (Jeon & Ridinger 2007). With its unique and dynamic characteristics, windsurfing became very popular worldwide. Research on the role of motives and place attachment on behavioral intentions for a non-organized recreation sport such as windsurfing is limited (Kyle 2004b). This study examined the role of motivation and place attachment on behavioral intentions in the context of windsurfing for active sport tourists. We hypothesized that the participation outcomes would motivate active sport tourists to interact with the environment and facilitate the development of their attachment to the setting which in turn will influence their intention to return to the place.

Theoretical background or literature review*

Researchers in the leisure, sport and recreation domains have recently included place attachment in a variety of decision-making models in an effort to better understand consumer choices and their participation in a variety of sports. Place attachment has two dimensions a) place identity which refers to the emotional investment made by the individual and the length of the relationship with the place, and b) place dependence which refers to the ability of a place to provide specific functions, conditions and amenities in order to satisfy an individual's needs and goals (Jorgensen & Stedman 2001). Several researchers in the leisure, sport and recreation domains have recently suggested that consumer choices are dependent of place attachment (Alexandris et al., 2006). Natural environments provide humans with a variety of desired psychological, social, and physiological outcomes and these outcomes motivate respondents to interact with the environment and facilitate the development of their attachment to the setting (Kyle 2004b). We argue that these outcomes motivate participants and develop their attachment to the place which leads to the development of intentions to return to this place.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

For the purposes of this study 301 randomly selected windsurfers completed a questionnaire (90% response rate) at a windsurfing destination (Samos Island, Greece) to evaluate the influence of their motives and their place attachment on their intentions to return to the specific location. Of the 301 respondents 68.4% were male and 31.6% were women. Their age ranged from 16 years to 68 and the mean age was 42.6 (SD = 12.2). Place attachment was measured with Kyle et al.'s (2004a) two-dimensional model ("place identify" and "place dependence") and motives were measured with Driver's, (1983) ten-dimensional model: a) achievement, b) stimulation, c) autonomy / leadership, d) risk taking, e) similar people / family, f) learning, g) enjoy the nature, h) creativity, i) physical fitness, and j) escape. A 7-point Likert type scale was used.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

Two confirmatory factor analysis showed that motives and place attachment models had good fit indices for a) the motives scale (CFI=. 91, NNFI=. 921, RMSEA=. 066, and $X^2/df = 1.23$) and b) for the place attachment scale (CFI=. 93, NNFI=. 944, RMSEA=. 069, and $X^2/df = 1.34$). The alpha values were all acceptable and ranged from .84 to .89 for motives, .80 for place identity and .89 for place dependence. A stepwise regression analysis was used to investigate the role of place attachment and the motives on the windsurfers' intentions to return to the place. Motives and place attachment predicted a significant ($F=22.16$, $p < .05$) proportion of the variance (58.7%) of the intentions. Place identity ($t= 4.534$, $p < .05$), place dependence ($t= 7.665$, $p < .05$) and only the two dimensions of motives, stimulation, ($t= 2.247$, $p < .05$) and risk taking ($t= 3.129$, $p < .05$) offered significant contribution.

From the analysis of the data it was found that place identity, place dependence, stimulation and risk taking are contributors to the intentions of windsurfers to return to the place. According to Lawler's (1973) expectancy-value model of motivation human behavior is driven by the prospect of personal benefits. If the pursuit of the positive psychological benefits (simulation and risk taking), is associated with the environment may lead to the development of setting attachment, and in turn develop the intention to return to the place. Individuals or organizations should satisfy the needs and facilitate the expected benefits in order to develop the motives of the participants at the place, increase their attachment with it and increase their intentions to return to it.

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