
MEN AND WOMEN PROFILES IN OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND THEIR PARTICIPATION MOTIVES IN GREECE

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary hectic lifestyle and the degraded natural environment that characterize modern cities constitute outdoor recreation and participation in outdoor recreation activities both important and highly necessary (Boulougouris, 2010). Outdoor recreation activity programs do not concern themselves with participants' physical improvement or empowerment, rather with their feelings of satisfaction and pleasure. This results in benefits that arise effortlessly, prompting participants to engage in life-long exercise without making any demands on high performance on their part (Dantsi, Balaska & Alexandris, 2008). According to Tzetzis, (2007), increased interest in exercise helps people enhance its resulting benefits that directly relate to the quality of their lives.

The aims of this research were: a. to explore the participants' profiles based on their prior experience in outdoor recreation activities b. to investigate whether their profiles had any relation to the number of days they would wish to invest in outdoor recreation activities and c. how frequently one is engaged in them. The aforementioned aims were examined in relation to the male/female participants' motives in outdoor recreation activities.

METHODOLOGY

The sample of the research was comprised of participants in outdoor recreation activities held in the region of East Macedonia & Thrace in Greece, from July to October, 2010. 1200 questionnaires were handed out. 727 were returned completed and ultimately, 637 were considered suitable for use in the survey. Overall, there were 339 male (53,22%) and 298 female (46,78%) participants.

Motives were examined by using an adjusted to the survey's needs

version of the REP scale (Manfredo, Driver & Tarrant, 1996). To that end, we conducted an investigative factor analysis and Cronbach's a reliability analyses in its 38 variables. The analysis revealed 9 factors: a. projection $a=.92$, b. improvement $a=.84$, c. risk $a=.86$, d. demonstration $a=.80$, e. contact with the family $a=.88$, f. socialization $a=.87$, g. contact with nature $a=.90$, h. exercise $a=.87$, and i. relaxation $a=.87$. Participants' responses were measured using the seven-point Likert-type scale, 1 being (I strongly disagree) and 7 (I strongly agree).

RESULTS

The results of the multi-variable analysis MANOVA in the Pillai's Trace test were $F(1,445)= 1,791$, $p= ,047$, with "gender" being the independent variable. None of the 9 participation motives as regards to "gender" showed statistically significant differences in "PROJECTION" $F(1,445) = ,003$, $p= ,957$, "IMPROVEMENT" $F(1,445) = 1,893$, $p= ,170$, "RISK" $F(1,445) = ,092$, $p= ,762$, "DEMONSTRATION" $F(1,445) = ,018$, $p= ,893$, "FAMILY" $F(1,445) = 1,091$, $p= ,297$, "SOCIALIZATION" $F(1,445) = 1,397$, $p= ,238$, "NATURE" $F(1,445) = ,091$, $p= ,763$, "EXERCISE" $F(1,445) = 1,735$, $p= ,188$ and "RELAXATION" $F(1,445) = 1,136$, $p= ,287$. On the contrary, there was statistically significant difference in all three factors concerned with male/female participants' prior experience $F(1,445) = 10,919$, $p= ,001$, number of days that would be a satisfactory amount of time to be invested in outdoor recreation activities $F(1,445) = 4,454$, $p= ,035$ and frequency of participation $F(1,445) = 4,646$, $p= ,032$.

DISCUSSION-CONCLUSIONS

Results showed that participants' gender played no role in participation motives as regards to outdoor recreation. They also showed that in relation to prior experience, number of days that would be a satisfactory amount of time to be invested in outdoor recreation activities and frequency of participation, gender did play a significant role, with men outweighing women in all three categories. In particular, men's prior engagement was 11,3 years on average as opposed to women's 8,6 years, men's days of participation were 83 as opposed to women's 63 days and frequency of men's participation was 3,4 as opposed to women's 3,2.

From all the above, researchers concluded that, because of their low degree of competitiveness, outdoor recreation activities are suitable for both genders thus, there were not different motives that prompted participants' engagement in them. In addition, it may be suggested that recreation activity companies should take participants' prior experience into account, as well as the number of days they wish to invest in outdoor activities. Last but not least, frequency of participation should also be considered. These factors may determine the design of differing programs that could meet the needs of the more demanding men on the one hand, and the less involved women on the other.

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