
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN SKI PARTICIPATION IN THE ROMANIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION

In the past few years the east european countries have made an enormous effort to reposition their winter industry as an attractive destination. Although this transformation mainly intends to attract foreign tourists, it is well-known that internal demand plays an important role in the assurance of its viability. The Romanian ski industry is at an early stage of development but it has an ambitious investment program and the ability to attract international events. To the best of our knowledge there are no published empirical studies that characterize the internal ski participation in Romania. In this context, the aim of this research is to verify the sociodemographic differences between participants and non-participants, concerning skiing in Romania.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An individual's participation (or non-participation) in skiing depends on different forms of constraints. Crawford and Godbey (1987) developed a theoretical framework for leisure constraints. They suggested that leisure constraints could be divided into three main categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Gilbert and Hudson (2000) examined the limiting factors for participants and nonparticipants of skiing and concluded that the economic factors were the major limitation. Williams and Fidgeon (2000) added fear as another significant constraint. One of Gilbert and Hudson (2000) objectives was the understanding of non-skiers considering factors, that may arouse their interest to participate in skiing, thus overcoming their constraints. The following intrapersonal constraints were mainly mentioned by non-skiers: skiing is harder to learn than other sports, they suggested that they would feel self-conscious or embarrassed learning to ski; they thought the activity would

make them cold and wet; skiing was considered as a dangerous, expensive, and too stressful sport. Furthermore, it was considered to be an elitist sport and that they were not chic and glamorous “enough” to go. The findings show that 24 out of 30 constraints were rated significantly higher by non-skiers. The only constraint that was more important for skiers than non-skiers was the worry about the lack of snow. Williams and Fidgeon (2000) studied the case of Canadian Ski Council, more specifically, the challenge that organizations face on identifying the non-skier market, converting non-skiers into skiers; and overcoming constraints.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

Data collection was accomplished using a questionnaire. This was adapted from Gilbert and Hudson (2000), translated into Romanian and pre-tested. The 30 items questionnaire contained an explanation of the study’s purpose, along with the statements on constraints; the instrument asked about the skiing experience, likelihood of skiing in the future, and general demographics. An invitation to participate in the study was sent via facebook, e-mail and other social networks. The majority of questionnaires were sent via facebook or posted on group pages (facebook) and forums, limited to inhabitants of Romania. A total of 458 questionnaires were received, 214 skiers and 244 non-skiers. Because of having posted it in several groups and forums, the total number of sent questionnaires cannot be specified. The age range of the responders was between 16 and 56, 47% of them being female. The majority has a university degree (54 %). The study participants mainly live in Galati, Bucharest or Brasov. Differences between the defined sub-samples will be tested using Kruskal-Wallis technique.

RESULTS

At the moment results are not fully available, however it is guaranteed, that they will be presented at the conference.

References

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