ACTIVE SPORT TOURISM IN EUROPE: APPLYING MARKET SEGMENTATION MODEL BASED ON HUMAN VALUES

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The purpose of this study was to examine if human values sets indicating basic motivational aspects, shared by active sport participants, could be used for the creation of a specific market segmentation model. While the exploration of motivation scales and sport tourist typologies was vast, although limited to small samples, this research constructed a model that tested its applicability and validity on the large general samples. By using data collections from the European Social Survey, the model allowed comparability between surveyed countries by cross-checking multiple psychosocial and demographic factors. The findings identified four main factors that determine active sport tourist values, while at the same time, multiple-discriminant analysis indicated the existence of three active sport clusters, indicating preferences of different sport tourist segments. Furthermore, the study analyzed potential demand markets according to the geographical distribution of active sport segments. The study confirmed that basic human values play an important role in explaining motivation aspects in sport- and tourism-related choices. Overall, the findings may assist marketers in monitoring changes in preferences of sport participants and focus on specific marketing strategies for different segments.

KEYWORDS: *sport motivation; values; sport tourist profiles; market segments*

Being active in sport and tourism is an important aspect of contemporary society. Sport and tourism are represented by highly developed products and are strong motivational factors in choosing a holiday destination. Europe is traditionally a tourism-oriented market, attracting about 51% of shares in world tourism activity (671 million tourist arrivals in 2017) and engaging about 62% of European Union (EU) residents who took part in tourism (World Tourism Organization, 2018). EU countries represent the space for predominantly "holidays, leisure and recreation" purposes of travel (42.2%) and "visits to friends and relatives" (43.7%), with professional business travel having a relatively small share (9.4%). Yet participation in tourism trips differs significantly across European countries, ranging from over 80% of the population in Finland, Netherlands, Luxembourg, and the Czech Republic, to less than 30% in Bulgaria, Portugal, and Romania (Eurostat, 2018).

In line with this, the survey carried out in 2014 reported that about 44% of the EU adult population participated in leisure-related sport and recreation activities at least once a week. However, the practice of sport varies greatly across countries: Nordic countries (Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and Norway) and Austria had over 70% of active sport participants, while Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey had less than 10% of active sport participants (Eurostat, 2014).

The proper theoretical framework on the issue of sport tourism has yet to be determined. The determination of "sport tourist profiles" and defining specific markets has been an open debate within academic circles for over three decades. Underlining the basic connections, similarities, and differences in practicing sport and tourism; defining active and passive participation; explaining differences between "soft" and "hard" sports definitions; active and passive sport tourists: these have all resulted in extracting various motivational aspects with different levels of importance. In addition, the potential of defining specific markets and marketing tools for sport tourism and destination development (sport events, cycle routes, etc), are outlined.

Contrary to this research, the generalized conclusions were made based on different case studies and focused mainly on "convenience samples" (Finn, 2012; Funk & Bruun, 2007; Hodeck & Hovemann, 2016; Hungenberg et al., 2016; Kim & Ritchie, 2012). Most often they were conducted within the country, at major destinations and some mega-events, examining the preferences and travel habits of tourists or participants, or creating typology of sport tourists by using different motivation scales and models (Aicher & Brenner, 2015; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) or focusing on demographic variables affecting tourists' choices (Slak Valek et al., 2014; Weed & Bull, 2009; Yu, 2010).

This study used a random sample with standardized methodology applied on a large general sample, so the results can be considered as a more general and universally applicable contribution to the field. The aim of the study was to examine if human values sets indicating basic motivational aspects, shared by active sports participants, could be used for the creation of specific market segmentation model.