



**A STUDY OF THE TOURISTS' MOTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE
RECREATIONAL SPORTS OF MAZANDARAN PROVINCE**

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at studying the motives involved in the tourists' decisions for taking part in recreational sports held in Mazandaran province, Iran. The present study is of descriptive-surveying kind whose data were collected through certain questionnaires. The statistical community of the study comprised all the tourists visiting the Mazandaran province in one year. The final samples of the study, the subjects, were, however, randomly selected from among them (n=302). The necessary data were collected through a demographic questionnaire and another one, devised by the researchers, for finding out the motives of the tourists. The latter measured the four parameters of 1- health and physical fitness, 2- social factors, 3- relaxing factors, and 4- personal motives based on the 5-value scale of Likert. Upon a preliminary study and through the use of Cronbach's alpha, the stability coefficient of the questionnaire was found to be $r=0.86$. Based on results from Kolmogorov – Smirnov test and the normal distribution of the data, the study's hypotheses were tested through the use of parametric statistics (the independent t test, univariate analysis of variance and Tukey test, and Friedman test) available in SPSS software. Results from Friedman test well show that the health and physical fitness motive is the most important factor enthrusting the tourists toward the recreational sports and next to it are the relaxation, social and personal motives, respectively. Also, results from independent t test prove that there is no significant difference between the mean values of the motives of men and women toward the sports. Results from univariate analysis of variance suggest that there is no significant difference among the mean values of the motives in terms of the educational level of the subjects. Through their physical and mental needs, today's human

beings have a zest for recreational sports and those that are done at natural sites. Such activities, however, should be done based on careful planning so that they can provide proper attractions and situations for the tourists through the introduction and exploitation of the qualities and capabilities of different regions.

Keywords: Motive for Participation, Tourists, Recreational Sports, Mazandaran Province

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and travelling are among the greatest and most various industries in the world. All through the world, Tourism is a social and economic phenomenon that relates to human need for amusement, contact with nature and zest for visiting new places and cultures [1]. The role of sports and physical activity as potential means for helping the achievement of health, social and economic aims is also of great importance. Public and recreational sports can be relied on for realizing a noticeable part of this potential. Because such sports are amusing, voluntary and selective and, thus, can bring about such outcomes as mental and physical health, leisure and liveliness [2]. Motivation is the key to the success of every action. It can cause, control, enhance and guide the behaviors of people, or reversely keep and bar them.

People's motives for participating in sport events relates to such factors as economic conditions, socio-economic basis, cultural roots, familial outlooks,

personal needs, trainings and advertising [3]. People usually travel because of internal motives such as releasing themselves from daily pressures, amusement, relaxation and adventure, and external ones such as natural and historical attractions, sports, enjoying the fresh air, etc. [4].

One common feature of all the definitions of tourism is temporality. Trip that a tourist undertakes is, in fact, a temporary stay in a place other than one's home for at least one night. Gamon and Robinson have distinguished two sorts of sport tourism. When sport is the main reason for the trip and all other activities done are secondary to it, they use the term Sport Tourism, and when sport is the secondary purpose of the tourist, they use the term Tourism Sport [5].

Ramallal and Gonzalez [6] state that visiting the seacoasts, jogging in natural scenes and watching the natural sights are among the most dominant activities of the tourists in Cost Arica. Miranda , Julian.&Andueza, Juan [7] propose that water sports and jogging ate the most

important factors affecting the development of tourism. In his study on the people's participation in recreational sports of Isfahan, Naderian Jahroomi [3] concludes that difference in the age and gender are quite effective in people's motives toward taking part in sports. Some other studies believe that such motives as entertainment, making new friends, physical fitness, and looking beautiful more often affect women's zest for sports [3].

People usually pursue sport activities for various reasons including amusement, friendly relationships with others, having more control on their lives, expanding their life spans, enhancing their health and liveliness, improving their self-esteem and accessing useful programs [8]. Sports, on the other hand, are a means for helping the development of social relations, getting away from machine life and returning to nature. Such sport activities as jogging, mountain-climbing, matinal exercises in neighborhood parks, local and native plays, are the ones the people can do without much expense. In addition to increasing livelihood and cheerfulness among the people and decreasing social disturbances and addiction, such activities can also greatly help enhance the health of the society and decrease such diseases as diabetes,

cancer, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular disorders [9].

Recreational sports are activities that are performed by both men and women non-professionally. They are equal in status to amateur and public sports. They are mostly performed in one's leisure time [10]. Having such sport and recreational facilities as swimming places, fishing sites, surfing areas, jogging and running on the beautiful coasts of Caspian Sea, and many forest parks are among the factors that have turned Mazandaran province to a great complex for spending the free time doing sports and recreation [11]. The present study, therefore, considers the motives of the tourists visiting this province of Iran.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is of descriptive-surveying kind whose data were collected through questionnaires. The statistical community of the study comprised all the male and female tourists visiting Mazandaran province. As the exact number of the tourists was unknown, we applied the formula of unlimited community of Kukran. 302 ones were randomly selected to form the subjects of the study. The necessary data were collected through a demographic questionnaire and another one, devised by the researchers, for finding out the

motives of the tourists. The latter consist of 24 questions which measured the four parameters of 1- health and physical fitness, 2- social factors, 3- relaxing factors, and 4- personal motives based on the 5-value scale of Likert. Upon a preliminary study and through the use of Cronbach's alpha, the stability coefficient of the questionnaire was found to be $r=0.86$. In analyzing the data thus gathered, descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, etc. were used for presenting the information of the study. Based on results from Kolmogorov – Smirnov test and the normal distribution of the data, the study's hypotheses were tested through the use of parametric statistics (the independent t test, univariate analysis of variance and Tukey test, and Friedman test) available in SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive findings of the study show that of the 302 subjects under study, 55.3 percent (167 ones) were men and 47.7 percent (135 ones) were men. Also, we see that 10.6 percent of them hold degrees lower than high school diplomas, 17.2 have diplomas, 13.2 percent pro-diploma, 39.7 percent of them have B A degrees, 15.6 percent hold M A, and the remaining 3.6 percent have PhD.

Table 1-1. Differences in the means of the motives for participating in recreational sports

Number of subjects	302	motives	mean	rank
Chi square	256.563	Health and physical fitness	3.22	1
Freedom degree	3	Social factors	2.40	3
Sig.	0.000	relaxation	2.73	2
		Personal factors	1.66	4

As the results presented in the table 1-1 and Friedman test clearly show the significance level is less than 0.01 which proves that the zero hypothesis is refuted while the reversed one is approved of. This means that, with a 99% of confidence, one can say that there is significant difference between the mean values of the motives studied. Results also indicate that the health and physical fitness motive ranks the first among the motives having a 3.22 mean, followed by relaxation motive with 2.73 of mean, social factors with 2.40 of mean and personal motives with 1.66.

Based on the data presented in table 1-2, the significance level for the health and physical fitness, relaxation, social and personal motives is greater than 0.05 which indicates that the zero hypothesis is approved of while the reversed one is refuted. This means that with 95% of confidence, we can conclude that there is no significant difference between men and women with respect to their motives

toward participating in recreational sports.

Based on the data presented in table 1-3, the significance level for the health and physical fitness, relaxation, social and personal motives is greater than 0.05 which indicates that the zero hypothesis is approved of while the reversed one is refuted. This means that with 95% of confidence, we can conclude that there is no significant difference between the mean values of health and physical fitness, relaxation, social and personal motives with regard to the educational level of the subjects.

Table 1-2. Differences among the motives of health and physical fitness, social, relaxation, and personal for taking part in recreational sports in men and women

Motive	sub	mean	Difference in mean	Standard deviation	t	Freedom degree	test	Significance level
Health and p. f.	men	4.392	0.042	0.061	0.693	300	Independent t	0.489
	women	4.350						
Social	men	4.085	0.073	0.065	1.126	300	Independent t	0.261
	women	4.012						
relaxation	men	4.193	-0.022	0.062	-0.352	300	Independent t	0.725
	women	4.161						
personal	men	3.797	0.047	0.072	0.645	300	Independent t	0.514
	women	3.751						

P<0.05

Table 1-3. Differences among the motives of health and physical fitness, social, relaxation, and personal for taking part in recreational sports in based on different educational levels of the subjects

Motive	sub	Sum of squares	Freedom degree	Mean of squares	F	test	Significance level
Health and p. f.	Inter-group	2.218	5	0.444	1.640	ANOVA	0.149
	Intra-group	80.079	296	0.271			
	total	82.279	301				
Social	Inter-group	1.519	5	0.304	0.965	ANOVA	0.439
	Intra-group	93.173	296	0.315			
	total	94.693	301				
relaxation	Inter-group	0.393	5	0.079	0.273	ANOVA	0.928
	Intra-group	85.146	296	0.288			
	total	85.539	301				
personal	Inter-group	1.793	5	0.359	0.939	ANOVA	0.456
	Intra-group	113.092	296	0.382			
	total	114.885	301				

P<0.05

CONCLUSION

Results from Friedman indicate that the health and physical fitness motive ranks the first among the motives, followed by relaxation motive, social factors and personal motives, respectively. This finding of ours agrees with those of Islami et al. [12], Naderian et al. [3], and Ramezanejad[13]. Their findings generally indicate that for the subjects, the health and physical fitness, and amusement rank the first among their motives succeeded by improving life and job status, preventing and treating certain illnesses and finally having social interactions. The findings of Islami et al. also suggest that regarding the classification of various socio-economic groups' priorities for participating in public recreational sports, the priority of different socio-economic groups is enhancing health. The amusement and enjoyment motives rank the second or third which accord with our results here. Based on the descriptive findings of this study, the most favorite sport for the subjects was first swimming, next to which were jogging and biking, respectively. This fact accords with the studies of Miranda [7], Kuzulu and Sinko[14] and Ramallal. It was also found that men took part in the sports more often than women did, and this can

mean that for men recreational sports are more important. This finding also agrees with those of Ampofo –Boateng et al [15]. This can, however, be due to the cultural restrictions and barriers that women more often face, and as such accords with the finding of Kuhi[16].

Based on results from t test, there is no significant difference between men and women in their motives for participating in recreational sports. This finding of ours does not accord with those of Ramezanejad and Naderian. The study of Naderian, for instance, differences in age and sex clearly affect people's motives for participation. In addition, the three motives of health and well-being, physical fitness and handsomeness, and gaining physical skills and expertise were more closely similar to the motives in our study than the other ones.

We also concluded differences in educational backgrounds of the subjects did not cause any significant difference in the mean values of their motives. This finding does not conform with those of Razavi [17], Kashgar [18] and Fathi [19], in whose studies it was pointed out that educational levels of the subjects directly affected their participation.

This does not agree with the study of Ampofo –Boateng et al [15], whose study was about the effects of demographic

variables on the people's choice of recreational sports in Malisia, and found that 1- participating in such sports was more important for men than for women, and 2- people of higher educational backgrounds care more for recreational sports.

Recreational sports bring about mental and physical health, and socioeconomic and cultural liveliness. They are highly popular in today's world and many people pursue them throughout the world. As such sports are performed in natural scenes and along the seas shores, they can greatly enhance people's cheerfulness and peace of mind. Therefore, regarding the mental and psychological needs of the people for the sports and activities that are held in natural sites, government officials and authorities should try to find out about the real motives of the tourists for participating in such sports so that they can help the socioeconomic growth and development of Mazandaran province. Through a careful study of the capabilities and attractions of different natural and geographical regions, and well-considered planning, the authorities can also provide the grounds for the attraction of the tourists and their participation in recreational sports.

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