

Nature sports participation: Understanding demand, practice profile, motivations and constraints

Ricardo Melo^{1*} and Rui Gomes²

Received: 15/06/2015 Accepted: 21/11/2016

¹Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra, Coimbra Education School, ASSERT, IRNIST, Rua Dom João III, Solum, 3030-329 Coimbra, Portugal; Phone: 00351 239 793 120; E-mail: ricardo.es.melo@gmail.com

²Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal; E-mail: ramgomes@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Nature sports is a sports field associated with active sport tourism and is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry. Even though nature sports are economically very significant, little is known about participants and their participatory behaviour. Thus, a study was

conducted using a convenient sample of 1126 nature sports participants to understand their socio-demographic characteristics, demand profile, practice behaviours, motivations and constraints. The results indicate that nature sports participants are mainly young males, with higher education, highly-qualified jobs and high income. The nature sports activity that most of the surveyed individuals already practice is MTB. This is also the activity practiced more frequently by more individuals, and the activity most individuals would like to practice more often. Nature and adventure are indicated as the main reasons for practicing nature sports, while lack of time and lack of money are the main constraints for participation. Statistical tests also revealed significant statistical differences in participation between the different nature sports activities. These data allow augmenting the management and marketing intelligence for owners and managers of nature sports-related businesses as well as agencies and organizations promoting nature sports (tourism). Policy implications for nature sports are also discussed.

© 2017 Varna University of Management. All rights reserved

Keywords: constraints, demand, motivations, nature sports, participation, sport tourism.

Citation: Melo, R., R. Gomes (2017) Nature sports participation: Understanding demand, practice profile, motivations and constraints. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 16, pp. 108-135