

# An examination of motives for engagement in active sports tourism

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**Abstract**—Organizing and hosting sports events and activities has become one of the priorities of many communities since it can create social cohesion and a healthier population. The aim of this research was to detect potential active sports tourists’ clusters based on their social-psychological motives. These motives could be important when attracting sports tourists to actively participate in sports activities on a destination. A qualitative approach covered statistical analysis of the data set from the European Social Survey (rounds from 2012 and 2016). This research has given insights into potential active sports tourists, insights which can help in further research on active sports tourism and the motivation of tourists. The results showed that there are three clusters of potential active sports tourists and that those clusters can be used as a framework in showing social-psychological motivation factors for active sports tourists and how they can be applied.

**Keywords**—active sports tourists, motivation, clusters, marketing strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sport provides broad opportunities for raising environmental awareness and encouraging social and economic development of a society. Sport has a positive impact on human mental and physical health, but it can have impact on a natural world since it is using its resources. Organizing and hosting sports events has become one of the priorities of many communities since it can create social cohesion and healthier population. Increased awareness of public health, occurrence of new sports and popularity of sports events have enhanced interest in sports activities [1], especially during holidays since travellers tend to be more active during vacation and participating or attending sports event or activity can be the main reason for travelling [2].

Reference [3, p. 229] defined sports tourism as “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities (active sports tourism), to watch physical activities (event sports tourism), or to venerate attractions associated with

physical activities (nostalgia sports tourism)”. For the active sports tourists being physically active and participate in some sports is one of the main reasons for traveling [4]. Reference [5] divided active sports tourists into two categories: non-event- and event- related tourists. The first category of active sports tourists tends to be involved in leisure-based activities during holiday (e.g. hiking, climbing, skiing, sailing, diving), while the other group tends to participate in sports events during their vacations. Choice of a destination for active sports tourists is under influence of geographical settings like space, place and environment [6].

When analyzing tourists' behaviour, tourism marketers were focused on how tourists obtain and consume tourism products and services, and especially how the decision-making process develops and what influences it [7]. Reference [8] highlighted that tourists' inner motives like desire can be used in predicting their behaviour before, during and after vacation, since those motives push people to reach goals. Understanding tourists' inner motives can be difficult since they are constant through time, they are constantly changing. Given the importance that sports tourism, i.e. active sports tourists, has in the total tourism market, understanding motives that underly active sports tourist behavior is crucial for successful marketing of sports tourism products and services. The aim of this research was to detect potential active sports tourists’ clusters based on their social psychological motives. These motives could be important when attracting sports tourists to actively participate in sports activities on a destination.

## II. MOTIVATION FOR ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVE SPORTS TOURISM – LITERATURE REVIEW

Participating in sports or tourism activities allows people to satisfy their individual needs, such as the need for social interaction, to discover new things, to explore and challenge, or to escape from everyday life. Reference [9, p. 53] noted that the motives of the sport participants and the tourist can be remarkably similar, and it is logical that

people participate in the same sports activities at home as they do on holidays as “arousal levels can be enhanced by the addition of the place experience to the activity”. Thus, while some tourists may be motivated by the novelty and change associated with learning new skills [10], others may emphasize competence- mastery or self-development as the prime push factors in selecting a particular vacation style [11]. Reference [12] found out that participation in sports activities during holiday is related to intrinsic motives (e.g. challenge, enjoyment), exercising like a motive is linked to extrinsic reasons (e.g. health concerns, social recognition). Sports tourists are usually motivated by a sense of accomplishment and they want opportunities to improve existing skills by demonstrating prowess in their choice of sport.

Reference [13] determined 32 theories of motivation that can be used to explain the motivations of sports tourists and that hedonic motives best describe sport spectators and participants of sports events. Beside theories, scholars developed different scales that have been used to measure motivation in sports tourism. Reference [14] developed the Sport Interest Inventory scale for measuring motivations of sports tourists which take part in sports events. The scale has ten factors (sport interest, vicarious achievement, excitement, team interest, supporting women’s opportunity in sport, aesthetics, socialization, national pride, drama, and player interest) and results gained from research carried out during 1999 FIFA Women’s World Cup revealed that excitement, interest in soccer, aesthetics and supporting women’s opportunities were the important motives for sports tourists. Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption was developed by reference [15] and has nine factors that are relevant for measuring motivation of sports tourists: achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, drama/eustress, escape, family, physical attractiveness of participants, quality of the physical skills of participants and social interaction.

Existing literature in sports tourism motivation showed that there are many factors that can affect tourists’ behavior and decision making [15] or their satisfaction level [16]. According to reference [17], hedonic motives can better explain sports tourists’ behavior, showing “why” characteristics of these tourists. Research of reference [18] that adrenaline and thrill were the primary motives of tourists when choosing to participate in adventure sports like rock climbing or river surfing. Motivational decisions can be affected by tourists’ skill and abilities levels to participate in some sports activities, especially if those activities are outdoor adventure activities, but on the other side, it is found out that risk has limited motivational importance, but it can have significant role in tourists’ experience [19]. Reference [20] classified motivation into three groups, namely: internally-generated motives (e.g. fear, control, skills, thrill), internal and external motives (e.g. nature, art and spirit), and the last group is named externally-produced (e.g. escape, competition, escape).

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Study Methods

A qualitative approach covered statistical analysis of the data set on the rotating module “Welfare attitudes” (Round 8, year 2016) and the data on “Personal and Social well-being” (Round 6, year 2012) from the European Social

Survey. The model consisted of 16 indicators that can fit in the Sports Tourism Motivation Scale [20]. The data were evaluated in SPSS 24.0 by performing principal component factor analysis and cluster analysis.

#### B. Sample

Out of 68,653 respondents from 21 European countries that participated in the EES Round 8 and 6 in 2016 and 2012, the focus was on 23,015 respondents who answered on questions related to social psychological motives connected with sport participation. The demographic characteristic of the sample is presented in Table 1. Male respondents were slightly more represented (59.8%) compared to female respondents (40.2%). Almost equal distribution was present between two age groups: 24.3% between 31 and 40 years and 23.1% between 41 and 50 years. Most of the respondents were employed (55.8%), married (47.3%) with the monthly income between 1,001 and 3,000 euros (43.5%). Regarding the athletic status, most of the respondents were amateur (69.9%).

Table 1. Demographics for potential active sports tourist participants

Demographic Variable	%	Demographic Variable	%
Sex		Legal marital status	
Male	59.2	Married	47.3
Female	40.2	Separated	18.8
		Divorced	24.9
		Widowed	9.0
Age		Monthly income	
18-25	10.4	≤ 1,000€	29.7
26-30	15.6	1,001 – 3,000€	43.5
31-40	24.3	3,001 – 5,000€	15.4
41-50	23.1	≥ 5,000€	11.4
51-60	17.8		
61-70	7.6		
71+	1.2		
Athletic status		Employment status	
Amateur	69.9	Employed	55.8
Professional	30.1	Self-employed	27.5
		Not in a paid work	16.7

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Exploratory Factor Analysis

A principal component factor analysis was applied to delineate the social psychological motives of participants as potential active sports tourists. Hence, 16 social psychological variables were analyzed by testing inter-correlations. The Bartlett’s test of sphericity was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) and the Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) was 0.870, indicating that all variables were acceptable for conducting factor analysis, while Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.816. Table 2 presents the results of Varimax rotation with four factors identified with a total of 56.2% variance explained.

Table 2 shows that four factors were extracted based on the psychological motives in the context of potential active sport participants:

- Factor 1 was labeled “Self-Enrichment” gathering six variables with reliability alpha calculated to 0.722;
- Factor 2 was labeled “Social Needs” with reliability alpha calculated to 0.704 and incorporating four variables;

- Factor 3 was labeled “Stress Relief” with reliability alpha calculated to 0.731, incorporating three variables; and
- Factor 4 was labeled “Physical Fitness” with reliability alpha calculated to 0.719, including three variables.

#### *B. Cluster analysis – potential active sports tourists’ segments*

Based on previously identified four groups of psychological motives, cluster analysis was conducted. The main aim was to indicate potential active sports tourist segments based on their social psychological motives. Respondents were clustered by a K-means nonhierarchical cluster analysis and the centroids of the three clusters were used as the starting values to obtain the final cluster solution. The results in Table 3 show that respondents were classified into three clusters: Cluster 1 was composed of 33.16% of the respondents, Cluster 2 of 35.86% and Cluster 3 of 33.06% of respondents.

In order to better describe clusters, the mean values of the four factors (measured on a Likert-type scale) for each cluster were calculated. Cluster 1 was labeled “Friendly sportsmen” since this group of respondents had relatively higher mean scores on Factor 2 (“Social Needs”), but the lower mean score for all other factors. Cluster 2 was labeled “Sport enthusiasts” since this cluster had higher mean scores for factor – F2 (“Social Needs”) and factor F3 (“Stress Relief”) than mean scores of the other groups and the total. Finally, Cluster 3 was labeled “Sport oriented” since respondents in this group had higher mean scores on factor F1 (“Self-Enrichment”) and F4 (“Physical Fitness”), than mean scores of the other groups and the total.

#### V. CONCLUSION

This research has given insights into potential active sports tourists, insights which can help in further research on active sports tourism and motivation of active sports tourists. Since the active sports tourism market records growth, results of this research can be used in better responding to active sports tourists' needs and expectations and in better marketing of destinations for sports tourists.

The results from the research can use as a framework in showing social psychological motivation factors for active sports tourists and how they can be applied. In marketing perspective, Cluster 1 “Friendly sportsmen” explained that active sports tourists travel and participate in sports activities because they enjoy company of other sports tourists. Potential active sports tourists from Cluster 2 “Sport enthusiasts” like to participate in sports activities during holiday since it will give them a chance to meet new people or create stronger bond with friends, but also these activities can release them from daily pressure and stress. The results of Cluster 3 „sport oriented“ clearly pointed that tourists participate in sports activities, because these activities best describe who they are and that such a lifestyle is healthy for them.

This study highlighted that motives which show why active sportsmen practice some activities should be taken into consideration in tourism research. The scale may be further improved by adding some other motives (e.g. tourism motives) and some other analysis should be applied, like t-

test or ANOVA. All of this can provide more detailed information for further segmentation of active sports tourism market and better adaptation of marketing strategies and advertising campaigns.

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**Appendix**

Table 2. Results of factor analysis

VALUES WITH VARIABLES	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained	Reliability Alpha
<b>F1: Self-Enrichment</b>		<b>3.673</b>	<b>15.48</b>	<b>0.722</b>
Competing makes me the kind of person I am.	0.811			
Participating in sports activities helps me to reach my potential.	0.782			
Participating in this event helps me accomplish things.	0.794			
Participating gives me a feeling of self-assurance	0.772			
Competing in this event will help me understand the value of hard work and dedication.	0.725			
Participating makes me feel confident about my abilities.	0.756			
<b>F2: Social Needs</b>		<b>4.572</b>	<b>14.12</b>	<b>0.704</b>
I enjoy participating because it gives me a chance to spend time with friends.	0.788			
I feel a bond with people who compete beside me.	0.793			
Participating with a group leads to improved social relationships.	0.710			
I enjoy participating because it gives me a chance to meet new people.	0.685			
<b>F3: Stress Relief</b>		<b>3.162</b>	<b>14.08</b>	<b>0.731</b>
By participating in this event, I am able to get away from daily pressures.	0.813			
Competing is an excellent remedy for me if I am tense, irritable, and anxious.	0.742			
Participating makes me feel less stressed than I did before I started.	0.711			
<b>F4: Physical Fitness</b>		<b>3.006</b>	<b>12.52</b>	<b>0.719</b>
I compete in order to stay physically fit.	0.723			
I compete because I feel it keeps me healthy.	0.757			
I compete in sport because it develops physical fitness.	0.746			

Table 3. Final clusters from the nonhierarchical analysis

Factors	Potential Active sport clusters				
	Cluster 1 "Friendly sportsmen"	Cluster 2 "Sport enthusiasts"	Cluster 3 "Sport oriented"	F Value	Sig.
F1: Self-Enrichment	2.56 <sup>(2)(3)</sup>	3.03 <sup>(1)</sup>	3.26 <sup>(1)</sup>	573.564	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
F2: Social Needs	2.90 <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	2.81 <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	1.80 <sup>(2)</sup>	2756.537	0.000
F3: Stress Relief	2.42 <sup>(2)(3)</sup>	3.90 <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	2.72 <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	1662.358	0.000
F4 Physical Fitness	2.16 <sup>(2)(3)</sup>	3.01 <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	3.36 <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	236.780	0.000

Notes: (1) (2) (3) The mean of the cluster is significantly different from the mean of other clusters on each factor based on post hoc Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) test.

a) Highlighted mean values indicate higher values than means values of the other groups and the total.

b) The mean difference is significant (p<.05).