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SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND MOTIVATIONS ON HIKING: A RESEARCH ON BEYŞEHİR HIKERS

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EXTENSIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Beginning from 19th century, as a result of industrialization, while leisure times of humans were gradually increasing, urban life becoming widespread in the same period slowly detracted people from the nature. As a result of this, people are more interested in nature-based activities to evaluate leisure times. The studies carried out show that nature-based recreation is a rising tendency and that especially nature sports is a general phenomenon in the developing world. Nature-based tourism market, including compelling (rafting, expedition) and easy nature sports (trekking, hiking), are expressed as the fast growing sorts of tourism in the rates of 10 - 20 %, and it is estimated that about 10-20% of tourists in global meaning are interested in nature as directly or indirectly.

Nature sports incorporate many different sport products, also including nature walking. Nature walking has begun as individual and group activities nature lower people make to discover natural beauties and be in nature and was defined as a sports branch including trekking made in natural environment and camps. Just as nature walking can be only walking-purposes realized as a day-long (hiking) or realized for a few day (trekking), it is a nature sport that can also be a tool (reaching a rock climbing field) to make another nature sport

Determining socioeconomic status, practical behaviors, and motivations of individuals is important in terms of both forming marketing activities that are appropriate for the participants of nature sports by combining this information and making satisfied participants by meeting their expectations. In this study, it was aimed to derive profiles by determining sociodemographic characteristics of the individuals participating in nature walking realized around Beyşehir and identify participation motivations in nature walking. In the direction of this aim, in nature walking realized in the duration of 4 months, administering a survey to the participants, the results obtained were analyzed by means of package programs. In addition, motivations of participants were compared according to their remarkable socio-demographic characteristics.

Conclusion

It can be said that the individuals participating in nature walking consist of generally male-dominated, middle – age group, well-educated, and moderate income people. These people predominantly grow in the village and town and again live there and do not use cigarette and alcohol. They participate in nature walking with their friends, have experience of 1-3 years, make nature walking for one-two time a month, reserve monthly budget between TL 100-400 for this activity, are not generally member of any association, have information about activities through their friends and social media, do not take any education about nature walking, and do not

have sufficient equipment but pay attention about the subjects such as health and safety. Except this, the fact that some part of participants are participating in nature walking in only Beyşehir and are not following the publications about nature walking are the signs showing that they are amateurs in terms of participant level. As a result of these findings, it can be considered that nature walking in Beyşehirare relatively realized in more amateur style and that easy tracks, on which the people can walk without any equipment, are preferred

When participation reasons of the individuals in nature walking, “Integration into nature”, “That it is my interest area and addresses to me”, “desire to get rid of monotony” took the top 3. It was identified that the first two reasons, namely, “integration into nature” and “that it is my interest area and addresses to me” more came to the forefront among the participation reasons of the individuals, who are member of nature walking association. Participation reason taking place in the third order (desire to get rid of monotony) was identified to take place more importantly among the participation reasons of the individuals participating in the activities of nature walking in the vicinity of Konya-Beyşehir. Hence, when the subjects such as “desire to integrate into nature” and “interest area” are at high level, while they transform into the state of being member of an association, participation reason depending on desire to get rid of monotony leads individuals to participate in nature walking and not to travel for this sport except their immediate vicinity

“Desire to set a good example to my family” among the participation reasons are higher among male participants. Among the participations reasons of single people in nature walking, “desire to a new circle” occupies a more important place. In the various studies it is identified that males prefer more and long tracks in nature walking, while females want to make nature walking in the short and easy tracks.

Another important result revealed among the participation reasons of individuals having the sufficient equipment for nature walking. The individuals having the sufficient equipment, whose “effect of social circle” and “integration into nature” among their participation reasonstake place, have higher average compared to the participants not having sufficient equipment. This result can be interpreted in the form of that participants having sufficient equipment are affected by social circle.

In the study, the participation reasons of the individuals in nature walking are important determinatives in the stages of organizing activities and managing activities. Organizing the activities that are appropriate for participation reasons of the individuals and will meet their expectations is an important issue. Being able to meet these expectations will only be possible with knowing the participation reasons of individuals. In this context, the study has a quality of guidance for the associations organizing nature walking and decision makers, who are responsible for forming the necessary infrastructure.