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This study explores the potential of expanding experience use history (EUH) by differentiating paddlers who are apt to travel away from their home to paddle. Using the Recreational and Travel Use History (RTUH) framework, five market segments were developed using data from the 2008 North Carolina Paddle Tourism Study: Enthusiast Travelers, Recreational Travelers, Recreational Hobbyist, Occasionals, and Novices. A new scale was tested to identify what non-paddling experiences paddlers seek on a paddling trip and what issues most concern them on their trip. Four experience factors were identified: Nature, Local Culture, Local Food, and Corporate Chains. Three issue factors were identified: General Safety, Trail Attributes, and Guide/Outfitter concerns. This study expands on the destination management literature by refining the EUH construct and introducing a new scale to measure paddlers’ trip concerns and desired experiences.

1. Introduction

Recreation trails are powerful promoters of physical activity in communities and are increasingly being heralded for an array of benefits, ranging from stress reduction and lessened risk of chronic diseases to increased quality-of-life and lower obesity (Active Living Research, 2011). Paddle trails, specifically, not only provide health and recreation benefits to the users (Stein, Denny, &Pennisi, 2003), but also economic and social benefits for communities (Siderelis & Moore, 2006). Understanding the characteristics of individual users by employing market segmentation techniques helps managers optimize benefits for users and can also add value to destinations (Anderbeck & Caldwell, 1994). Visitor management practices heavily rely on understanding tourist/consumer preferences and experiences in making a destination both more competitive and sustainable. It is for this reason that the current study explores the potential of expanding experience use history (EUH) through investigating paddlers who travel away from their home to paddle.

Paddling sports, which include canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and rafting, are an increasingly popular form of recreation for many Americans. Between 2005 and 2009, approximately 20 percent of Americans participated in some form of non-motorized boating’ (Cordell, 2012, p. 65). According to Cordell (2012), 22.8 million people canoed in the United States between 2005 and 2008, an increase of 18.2% over the 1999–2001 time period. Projections based on the NSRE suggest the number of adults participating in paddling sports will increase to more than 60 million by 2060 (Bowler & Askew, 2012). According to the NC Outdoor Recreation Plan (2008), 8% of the NC population use personal watercraft as a form of outdoor recreation. Kayaking has growing rapidly (260%) in the last 10 years. However, there is little information that differentiates paddlers by psychographics, skill level, trip characteristics, party composition, information sources, trip attributes, concerns, or spending on trips.

Experience use history (EUH) has been used to segment users of a specific recreation activity into distinct categories and has been extensively tested (Draper, Woosnam, &Norman, 2011; Hammitt, Backlund, &Bixler, 2004; Petrick, Backman, Bixler, &Norman, 2001; Schreyer, Lima, &Williams, 1984). The data in this study could be analyzed using any of several other techniques. For example, cluster analysis as employed by McIntyre and Pigram (1992, p. 14) was used to differentiate subgroups of campers based on their recreation involvement and could be a useful analytical tool if it was employed to better account for the ‘multidimensionality of the concept’ of recreation specialization. Kyle, Graefe, Manning, and Bacon (2004) used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in a similar study examining the experience of hikers. Upon finding limited support for their...
hypotheses using SEM, the authors encouraged further explorations into recreation involvement that would lead to a better understanding of leisure behavior related to involvement (Kyle et al., 2004). While other techniques—such as cluster analysis or SEM—are useful for performing similar analyses, we believe that the approach taken in this paper is appropriate for two reasons.

First, the paper expands on the EUH by demonstrating how paddlers can be segmented not only across experience variables, but also across travel-related variables to better understand the multidimensionality of recreation behavior. Second, expansion of EUH opens the door for further testing of a valuable market segmentation model. Finally, the purpose of this research is not to explore factors related to EUH through the lens of recreation specialization (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Hammitt, Knauf, & Noe, 1989) or recreational involvement (Kyle, Kerstetter, & Guadagnolo, 2002), but rather to use EUH to understand behaviors related to travel patterns. While it is useful to know the relationship of recreation specialization and recreation involvement with EUH, there are many subtleties and nuances that exist in people's travel preferences which specialization and involvement may not address. This study explores a new modification of EUH that may prove useful in understanding the underlying dynamics influencing travel choices and behaviors. Additionally, this study examines the differences between five paddler segments within a new construct of recreational and travel use history (RTUH). Natural resource managers, tourism planners and destination marketers, as well as any manager tasked with marketing resources for water based-recreation will find this approach beneficial. Specifically, the research questions examined in this study are the following:

1. Do paddlers with varying Recreation and Tourism Use History (RTUH) differ in socio-demographic characteristics?
2. Do paddlers with varying RTUH differ in their trip characteristics (boat ownership, travel party composition, region of North Carolina, typical distance, lodging preferences, sources, spending)?
3. Do paddlers with varying RTUH differ in their trip experience preferences?
4. Do paddlers with varying RTUH differ in their trip concerns?
5. Do paddlers with varying RTUH differ in their general recreational activity preferences?

2. Literature review

Since its introduction by Schreyer et al. (1984), EUH has been developed into a useful tool to categorize recreational users in consideration of differences in their previous experience. However, EUH is not without limitations when applied to recreational tourism as the framework does not include variables related to travel. Expanding on experience use history requires understanding not only recreation segmentation and EUH, but also the concepts incorporated into the new model. To expand on EUH, thus creating a visitor management tool for destination managers, this research incorporates paddler and paddling trip characteristics, trip experience preferences, and trip concerns. Relevant literature covering recreation segmentation, EUH, and the newly incorporated concepts are reviewed here.

2.1. Recreation segmentation

Segmenting a market, or identifying different wants, needs, and characteristics of consumers, is important because it can result in competitive advantages for a business, organization and/or destination (Sausen, Tomczak, & Herrmann, 2005; Smith, 1956).
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