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**EXPLORING THE NEGOTIATION THESIS APPLICATION AMONG SKI
RESORT TOURISTS: A SEGMENTATION APPROACH**

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Abstract

The negotiation thesis offers a framework for understanding the participation decision making of tourists. Unlike previous studies that investigate the causal relationship between constraints and tourists' revisit intention, this study identified distinct segments of ski tourist based on the relative strength of constraints experienced and then investigated their decision-making process across a sample of 1,348 tourists of ski resorts. Chi-Squared Automated Interaction Detection (CHAID) analysis revealed that the decision making process regarding intention to revisit a ski destination varies between highly versus less constrained ski tourists, indicating different relative strengths of interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural constraints and different interactions among them when predicting revisit intention. On a practical basis, albeit the vast majority of participants were willing to repeat its visit, we offer customized per segment recommendations on increasing frequency of visitation and spending levels.

Keywords: ski tourists; ski resorts; leisure constraints; intention to revisit; CHAID

INTRODUCTION

Sharp globalized competition has forced tourist organizations to focus on understanding the decision-making process of tourists (UNWTO, 2007; 1999). Given that their success depends largely on tourist behavior, several researchers have tried to delineate constructs such as tourist motivation (Godfrey, 1999; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), satisfaction (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), repeat visitation (Alegre & Cladera, 2009), and their related antecedents. To achieve this, interest was initially turned to the identification of the constraint factors that block tourist participation (Stockdale, 1989). This explains to a large extent why the studies aiming at the recognition of differences between participants and non-participants (i.e. Johnson, Bowker, & Cordell, 2001; Nyaupane, Morais, & Graefe, 2004), visitors and non-visitors (i.e. Vassiliadis, Siomkos, & Mylonakis, 2006), and users and non-users (Alexandris & Carroll, 1999; Scott & Munson, 1994) are abundant.

Nevertheless, contrary to what was traditionally believed, constraints do not necessarily prohibit participation. As Kay and Jackson (1991) noted, individuals often do participate “despite constraints”. In this vein, Jackson, Crawford, Godbey (1993) formed the negotiation thesis, suggesting that constraints (interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural) do influence tourist decision to participate in leisure activities, exemplifying yet individual’s ability to negotiate effectively through them. Such ability, based on the relative strength of constraints and interactions between them, along with leisure preferences, motives and degree of interpersonal compatibility and coordination, are likely to modify tourist participation in leisure activities.

Interestingly, although evidence in skiing related literature regarding the antecedents of satisfaction and intention to repeat visitation is extensive (i.e. Matzler, Füller, Renzl, Herting, Späth, 2008; Wang & Qu, 2006) and researchers agree that skiers participate despite constraints (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000), the negotiation process of these constraints remains

rather vague (Hinch et al., 2005). Towards this end, our paper seeks to add to existing knowledge on the role of constraint factors for ski tourists' decision to revisit. In the present study, ski tourist revisit intention is operationalized as a reflection of future participation of active participants.

Specifically, assuming that the level of constraints experienced by individuals can be a differentiating factor of tourist behavior, the present study sets out to examine the role of interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural constraints for predicting intention to revisit, based on their relative strength and possible interactions among them. Put otherwise, we investigate if decision making process varies between those who experience increased level of constraints versus those who perceive their level of constraints relatively limited, with regards to their intention to revisit a ski resort in particular.

On a theoretical basis, this study will examine if the negotiation thesis applies to all tourists, regardless of whether they are highly or less constrained. On a practical basis, shedding light to the decision-making process of ski tourists could allow organizations and destinations to improve tourist profiling and design appropriate positioning strategies for targeted audiences (Priporas, Vassiliadis, Bellou & Andronikidis, 2014).

To meet the objectives of this paper, first we review previous literature on tourist satisfaction, patronage behavior, and constraint factors. Our analysis starts with examining the factorial pattern of constraints. Then we form two segments of ski tourists, based on the perceived level of constraints felt, to examine the uniformity of the "negotiation thesis" among highly and less constrained tourists, through a Chi-Squared Automated Interaction Detection model (CHAID), which has already been adopted in segmentation studies (i.e. Chen, 2003a,b).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist satisfaction and patronage behavior

Ski resorts influence tourists' perceptions, satisfaction and loyalty patterns through their service infrastructure and destination environments (Matzler et al., 2008). Previous research (i.e. Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Danaher & Arweiler, 1996; Huang, Hsu, & Chan, 2010; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Matzler et al., 2008; Maunier & Camelis, 2013; Murphy, Pritchard, Smith, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) showed that different attributes of a destination contribute to the final level of satisfaction, some stressing the need to effectively manage satisfiers and dissatisfiers (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Lu, & Stepchenkova, 2012). Particularly, several studies (i.e. Laws, 1995; Deng, King, & Bauer, 2002; Wang & Qu, 2006) emphasized that satisfaction with several destination factors such as accommodation, tourist facilities, accessibility, and the cost of vacation have the greatest impact on tourists' overall satisfaction. Further, Matzler et al. (2007) found that seven factors namely, parties and fun, information, price-quality ratio, kids' slopes, well-being, slopes, and accessibility influence overall visitor satisfaction, which in turn, is a strong predictor for loyalty. On the other hand, Alegre and Garau (2010) pointed out that the presence of certain factors generates satisfaction, while their absence does not necessarily generate dissatisfaction. The reverse can also occur, where certain factors or situations can only generate dissatisfaction, whereas their absence does not necessarily lead to satisfaction.

Overall, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a tourist destination and/or product/services offered are critical indicators of tourists' overall experience, influencing their decision making for future visits. As several researchers indicate (i.e. Alegre & Cladera, 2006, 2009; Antón, Camarero, & Laguna-García, 2014; Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanz, 2005; Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007; Kozak, 2001; McDowall, 2010; Romão, Neuts, Nijkamp, & Shikida, 2014; Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006; Wan, & Chan, 2013; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), tourists' satisfaction with destinations and

organizations has a significant impact on their intention to revisit or recommend to others. Besides, if tourists are not satisfied with the quality of the services and products provided, it is highly unlikely that they will visit the same destination again.

Constraint factors and the negotiation thesis

The interest for leisure constraints is not new. Ferris (1962) and Mueller, Gurin, and Wood (1962) were probably the first to recognize constraints as factors affecting participation in leisure activities. Yet, evidence was mostly empirical based primarily on the assumptions that constraints obstruct or bound participation per se and that these constraints were actually steady. In these early steps of constraint examination, the orientation was practically quantitative, asking respondents to rate constraints with regards to their impact on participation, with the key aim being the identification of factors that could cease participation (Hinch et al., 2005).

Later on, Robinson and Carron (1982) focused on personal factors that could motivate towards or against participation and environmental factors that could affect the decision to participate. Jackson and Dunn (1988) suggested that ceasing participation is related with aspects of nonparticipation, such as lack of interest. Chick and Roberts (1989) used the term 'antileisure' to explain how social context may diminish perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation, both central to the leisure experience.

In the early 1990s, more explicit and sophisticated theorizing came into place (Gilber & Hudson, 2000). For instance, Crawford and Godbey (1987) classified leisure constraints identified as intrapersonal (individual psychological states and attributes interacting with leisure preferences, such as stress, moral values, shyness, poor health, and lack of skill), interpersonal (derive from interpersonal interaction or the relationship between individuals'

characteristics or else from social interactions among individuals, such as participation in social groups creates friendship bonds, based on the interests of group members as well as family relationships and structures) and structural (intervening factors between leisure preference and participation or constraints from non-interpersonal external environmental factors, such as time constraints, access to destinations, financial limitations, and quality standards for elements concerning perceived facilitation, family life cycle stage, and health condition). Scott (1991), in a qualitative study, revealed that individuals try to find innovative ways to 'negotiate' with constraints. At the same time, Kay and Jackson (1991) showed that individuals may participate in leisure activities regardless of whether they experience constraints or not, while Shaw, Bonen and McCabe (1991) questioned the proposition that constraints reduce leisure. The currently accepted applications of leisure constraints were described by Jackson and Scott (1999), including a) inability to maintain participation at, or increase it to, desired levels; b) ceasing participation in former activities; c) non-use of public leisure services; and d) insufficient enjoyment of current activities.

Going a step further, Crawford et al. (1991) stressed that constraints do not prevent participation per se, as individuals may participate in their chosen activity despite the constraints they may experience, as a result of a negotiation process, explaining why constraints are unrelated or weakly related to participation (Hubbard & Mannel, 2001). In their 'Negotiation of Leisure Constraints' article, Jackson et al. (1993) introduced the negotiation thesis, according to which the three categories of constraints suggested by Crawford and Godbey (1987) are integrated in a single, hierarchical model. This model posits that constraints are not realized in a sequential, distinct manner. Instead, individuals need to negotiate through each type of constraints along with their leisure preferences, their motivations and their interpersonal compatibility and coordination when deciding their level of participation. As such, the 'balance proposition' of the negotiation thesis, indicates that

“both the initiation and outcome of the negotiation process are dependent on the relative strength of, and interactions between, constraints on participating in an activity and motivations for such participation” (Jackson et al., 1993, p. 3).

Ever since, a considerable volume of research has examined constraints in people’s participation in leisure activities (i.e. Cho, Bonn, & Brymer, 2014; Hudson, Hinch, Walker, & Simpson, 2010; Hung, Chen, & Peng, 2013; Zhang et al., 2012; Priporas et al., 2014). Several theories of leisure constraints, theoretical frameworks and empirical studies have been produced in this direction (Godbey et al., 2010). Within the tourism management, the leisure constraint model has received some but rather limited attention. Applications can be found in event tourism (Kim & Chalip, 2004; Funk, Alexandris, Ping, 2009), cruise tourism (Hung & Petrick, 2010), nature-based tourism (i.e. Daniels, Drogin Rodgers, & Wiggins, 2005; Fredman & Heberlein, 2005; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008), and sport tourism (Hinch et al., 2005; Hudson et al., 2010). In the skiing industry in specific, most studies identify participants and non participants in terms of constraint factors that influence their demand for leisure and sports (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000). For example, Williams and Dossa (1995) based on the model proposed by Crawford et al. (1991) investigated constraint factors that influence participants and non participants in ski activities in Canada. Gilbert and Hudson (2000) analyzed factors that influence the decision making process of participants and non participants in skiing activities. Williams and Lattey (1994) analyzed data from selected groups of skiers to identify the fundamental constraint factors that influence participants and non-participants, namely, time, family and financial constraints. In a similar vein, Andronikidis, Vassiliadis, Priporas and Kamenidou (2006), trying to validate Crawford’s et al. (1991) tool in the skiing market, confirmed the existence of two constraint factors (intrapersonal and structural). As apparent, previous research among ski tourists, adopts a causality pattern, examining the impact of constraints upon activity participation.

Nevertheless, this study sheds light to the constraints realized by different groups of ski tourists and their decision-making process with regards to returning to a ski tourism destination.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and procedures

Initially, twenty four students and six junior researchers were trained by the researchers to handle the questionnaire. Students visited the ski resorts in teams of four, accompanied by one leading junior researcher. The former were responsible for the personal administration of the questionnaires while the latter for the support of the former, whenever required. Since the peak season in Greece runs from mid December until late February or early March, data collection took place from mid January until the end of February 2013. As such, research teams visited twelve ski resorts in Greece, namely, Falakro, Lailias, Seli, 3-5 Pigadia, Elatohori, Vorras, Vigla, Vasilitsa, Pilio, Karpenisi, Parnassos, and Kalavrita, during both weekdays and weekends.

In an effort to reduce situational pressure for potential respondents (Paulhus, 1991), the procedure was standardized for all ski resorts including the following: questionnaires were distributed at the cafeterias in ski resorts between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm (this period of time is more relaxing since most of the ski activities are likely to be terminated). Researchers asked every other tourist to participate in the research. For those who agreed to participate, relevant information about the research and the structure of the questionnaire were provided. Respondents were given the option to drop completed questionnaires in a box to ensure anonymity. All questionnaires were originally code numbered to reflect the time and the ski resort of completion. Overall, the students asked every other tourist, 200 per ski resort (a total

of 2400 tourists) to participate in the study. Ultimately, 1348 usable questionnaires were collected, yielding an overall response rate of approximately 58%. No significant variations in the response rate were realized among ski resorts, ranging between 56% and 62%. To examine whether ski tourist responses from different ski resorts could be handled as homogeneous, we performed Kruskal–Wallis one-way analysis of variance (1952). The results revealed no statistical difference among responses coming from different ski resorts, allowing hence their consolidation.

Instruments

The research was conducted with the use of a structured questionnaire consisting of thirty six items, divided in two sections. In an effort to reduce uncertainty and increase respondents' confidence, the funnel approach was used in structuring the questionnaire, beginning with broader questions following with narrower (more specific) questions (Bickart, 1993). The first section of the questionnaire included six items: four demographic questions (gender, age, level of education, and income) and two attitudinal (overall satisfaction and intention for future visit) (Table 1). The second section included the thirty item measurement tool developed by Gilbert and Hudson (2000) to tap Crawford's et al. (1991) constraint model, which is considered as the basis for examining constraints (i.e. Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000).

Items were measured using a five-point Likert scale with scores ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). To reduce response bias, we rephrased the wording in a way that half of the items (15) had reverse meaning and scrambled the order of questions (Ruble & Stout, 1991; Tibbles, Waalen, & Hains, 1998). Given that all respondents were Greek, the constraint items were translated back and forth from the English language

into the Greek, until reaching agreement. To assure content validity, the questionnaire was pre-tested with thirty respondents and the wording was refined in three items.

[Please insert Table 1 about here]

The present study initiated specific procedures aiming at assuring high quality data, which is essential in segmentation research (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009). Since most data quality problems cannot be resolved after data collection (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2006), this study integrated specific pre-data collection techniques. First, segmentation variables included in the questionnaire reflect a valid and widely accepted theoretical model, namely the Leisure Constraint Model developed by Crawford et al. (1991). Second, actions were taken to avoid respondents' fatigue (Johnson, Lehmann & Horne 1990), such as reversed and scrambled questions as well as administration at a relaxing moment. Third, data were collected recently, and thus reflect the current market situation (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009). Fourth, data were collected specifically for the purpose of segmentation (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009).

Statistical analysis

Data analysis consisted of two clearly identifiable procedures in a sequential mode. Initially we performed Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation for the 30 constraints variables. PCA was preferred because it determines linear combinations of observed variables and retains as much information as possible (Fabringer, MacCallum, Wegener, & Strahan, 1999). Due to the fact that initially nine factors emerged, with some not being meaningful, we also adopted Parallel Analysis

(PA) to determine the appropriate number of factors to be extracted from EFA, as suggested by Watkins (2000).

After creating two segments of tourists, namely the highly and the less constrained, we performed CHAID analysis, which is used both for the detection of interaction between variables and as a means for classification, offering detailed information regarding segment membership and depicting the relative importance of predictors (Magidson, 1994). As Hoare (2004: 1) indicates, CHAID analysis is “a great way to sift certain kinds of data to find out where interesting relationships are buried, especially when the relationships are more complex than the linear or at least monotonic ones usually sought”. Hence, CHAID was used to examine the sequential hierarchy of constraints when predicting future participation intention, based on the constraint factors that emerged from EFA.

FINDINGS

Exploratory factor analysis and parallel analysis

As aforementioned, EFA, PCA with varimax rotation, was adopted to identify the underlying dimensions of perceived constraint factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) at 0.894 (Kaiser, 1970; 1974) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity at 2155.802 (df 435; $p < 0.001$) (Bartlett, 1954) confirmed the suitability of data for factor analysis. EFA unveiled nine factors with Eigenvalues greater than one. Given the large number of emerging factors, we decided to proceed with PA, in an attempt to limit the number of factors to those that really make sense (Watkins, 2000). Since Eigenvalues from only four factors were larger than the criterion values from PA (see Table 2), the results tapped the theoretical model suggested by Crawford et al. (1991) only partially. The emerged factors, coming from 21 out of 30 items, were named ‘intrapersonal’, ‘financial cost’, ‘friends and family’ and ‘skiing related’ constraints. Table 3 shows the four factors, their loadings per

items and their reliability score (Cronbach's alpha) as well as the Eigenvalues, percent of variance explained per factor and the overall reliability score for the measure. The total variance explained is approximately 54%, which, albeit low, is quite satisfactory (Streiner, 1994).

[Please insert Table 2 about here]

[Please insert Table 3 about here]

CHAID analysis

Before performing CHAID analysis, we performed pre-selection, as suggested by Escobar (1998). In particular, we used the p-value of the Chi-square independence test (the critical value was set at 5%) and omitted all demographic characteristics, as they were statistically independent of intention to revisit. Next, in order to describe the cases based on the four constraint factors we categorized responses into two groups, the highly constrained (value is greater than the mean factor score) and the less constrained ski resort tourists (value is less than the mean factor score). This practice is in line with previous approaches. For instance, Chiu, Wang, Huang and Chen (2011) classified visitors based on the mean score of constraints. Table 4 shows the classification, according to which the highly constrained ski resort tourist segment includes individuals with greater intrapersonal and family and friends related constraints while the less constrained ski resort tourist segment consists of individuals with greater financial cost and skiing related constraints.

[Please insert Table 4 about here]

The model incorporated in CHAID analysis used intention for future visit as the dependent variable and satisfaction, the constraint factors that emerged from EFA and the

demographic variables as predictors. For the development of the tree, we used a minimum of 100 cases for parent nodes and 50 cases for child nodes (Magidson, 2004). For the analysis, we used the Bonferroni correction formula as the splitting criterion. Figure 1 shows the existence of five segments, corresponding to the terminal nodes 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. As evident, segments are differentiated by tourists' skiing related constraints, level of satisfaction, friends and family constraints and intrapersonal constraints. The model has an excellent predictive power, as it classifies correctly 98.3% of cases, with the risk estimate being only 1.7% ($p=0.004$). To ensure the validity of the emerged solution, we run the 'split-sample validation' method (dividing the sample in two), which produced similar trees for both samples. These were similar to the initial tree (Figure 1).

In Figure 1, the root node shows that the vast majority of ski tourists intend to visit a ski resort in the future (98.3%). The most important predictor variable is skiing-related constraints (Chi-square=7.184, adj. p -value=0.007). Thus, two distinct groups of tourists are recognized: those who are highly constrained by skiing-related issues, with the vast majority being willing to revisit (97.4%) and those who are less constrained by skiing-related issues, with almost everyone declaring willingness to revisit (99.3%). The first group includes 742 individuals whereas the second 606 individuals. The group that is highly constrained by skiing related issues can be further segmented, according to the level of satisfaction (Chi-square=6,061, adj. p -value=0.014). The groups that emerged are those who are either unsatisfied or lower satisfied (Node 4) and those who are satisfied (Node 3), incorporating the above versus below the mean score criterion. Node 4 represents a group that is highly willing to revisit a ski destination (96%) and includes 28.1% of the ski tourists surveyed. Node 3 (Segment 1) included those that are even more willing to revisit a ski destination (98.9%) and represents 26.9% of the ski tourists surveyed.

[Please insert Figure 1 about here]

By the same token, those that are less constrained by skiing related issues can be segmented based on the impact of friends and family constraints (Chi-square=5.468, adj. *p*-value=0.019). The emerging groups that include those who are less constrained (Node 6) and those who are highly constrained by friends and family related issues (Node 5). Node 6 (Segment 2) represents a group of individuals that are all willing to revisit a ski destination (100%) and represents 25.9% of the ski tourists surveyed. Those that are highly constrained by friends and family constraints are further segmented into highly (Node 7) and less constrained (Node 8) by intra-personal issues (Chi-square=3.908, adj. *p*-value=0.048). Again, as with Node 6, Node 8 (Segment 3) includes ski tourists that are all willing to revisit a ski destination (representing 9.3% of the ski tourists surveyed) whereas Node 7 includes a great number of ski tourists (96.9%) that intent to revisit a ski destination. Consequently, three actionable segments (terminal Nodes 3, 6, 8) emerge, based on their relatively better predictive value over intention for future visit. For instance, terminal Nodes 3 and 4 are quite similar in size because of their high percent of people who express the willingness to revisit (98.9% and 96% respectively). Still, as CHAID prescribes, since terminal Nodes express alternative target segments, only one, the one reflecting the greater sub-visitor group, should be chosen to allow a more effective marketing positioning. Hence, Node 3 instead of Node 4 is analyzed. The same applies to the procedure followed for analyzing Nodes 6 and 8. The gain index scores for these nodes are above 100%, indicating that each segment had a higher rate of “intention for future visit” above the overall samples (Chen, 2003a,b). These segments, named after their terminal node, are ‘overall satisfied with ski experience’ (Segment 1: Node 3 – more satisfied with the ski destination), ‘having ski tourist intimates’ (Segment 2: Node 6 – less constrained by friends and family constraints), and ‘enjoying ski resort visiting’

(Segment 3: Node 8 – less constrained by intrapersonal constraints). The results of CHAID analysis are also presented in a simplified format in Figures 2 and 3.

[Please insert Figure 2 about here]

[Please insert Figure 3 about here]

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Theoretical implications

In a highly competitive and globalized era, ski organizations and destinations are faced with multiple challenges, with the most important being ensuring tourist patronage behavior. Within this context, the present research examined leisure constraints experienced by ski resort tourists through a segmentation approach to investigate the participation decision-making process. As such, we investigated if decision making process varies between those tourists who experience increased level of constraints versus those who perceive a relatively limited level of constraints, with regards to tourists' intention to revisit a ski resort. Hence, on a theoretical basis, this study examined if the negotiation thesis (Crawford et al., 1991) applies to all ski tourists, taking into consideration the relative strength of constraints they experience.

From a constraint perspective, our findings provide partial support to the negotiation thesis for ski tourists, as four distinct factors emerged namely intrapersonal, financial cost, skiing related and friends and family related constraints (mostly tapping the proposed interpersonal constraints). Basically, financial cost related and skiing related constraints form structural constraints. Failure to combine structural items into a single factor is not new, as these have already been considered problematic due to their complexity (i.e. Nyaupane et al., 2004).

Examining the predictive power of these constraints along with ski tourist satisfaction over intention for future visit yielded interesting findings. In the case of less constrained ski tourists, two segments were identified. For ski tourists ‘enjoying ski resort visiting’, who are less constrained by intrapersonal constraints, the first type of constraints influencing their decision to revisit is the intrapersonal, followed by (relatively high) friends and family related constraints and finally by (relatively low) skiing related constraints. Such finding is roughly in line with those of previous researchers recognizing intrapersonal constraints as the most influential ones (i.e. Alexandris, Kouthouris, Funk, & Giovani, 2009; Crawford et al., 1991; Hinch et al., 2005; Hudson & Gilbert, 1999) and structural as the least influential (Godbey, Crawford & Shen, 2010; Hawkins, Peng, Hsieh, & Eklund, 1999; Samdal, & Jekubovich, 1997).

Generally, in line with Crawford et al (1991) and following researchers (i.e. Pennington-Gray & Kerstetter, 2002; Raymore, Godbey, Crawford and von Eye, 1993; Walker, Jackson, & Deng, 2007), our findings offer support to the hierarchy proposed by the negotiation thesis. The second segment identified includes those that are ‘having ski tourists intimates’, who are less constrained by interpersonal constraints, and the negotiation thesis seems to apply only partially. These ski tourists seem to be the less constrained by all, as they have totally overcome intrapersonal constraints, and are relatively low constrained by friends and family and skiing related constraints. The case with the highly constrained ski tourists, however, is significantly different. Particularly, our findings revealed only skiing related and overall satisfaction as predictors of ski tourist intention to revisit. The role of satisfaction for intention to revisit has also been discussed by Faullant et al (2008). In our study, overall satisfaction seems to precede skiing related constraints.

Overall, our findings are in line with the ‘balance proposition’ introduced by (Jackson et al., 1993). As Jackson et al. (1993) and Hubbard and Mannell (2001) argued, constraints

are unrelated or weakly related to participation, thus not necessarily prohibiting participation. Consequently, the fact that both less and highly constrained ski tourists in our study report their— almost catholic - willingness to revisit is not a paradox. Obviously, ski tourists seem to negotiate or even overcome their constraints, through their leisure preferences, their motivations for participation, and/or interpersonal compatibility and coordination. From a segmentation perspective, interesting findings came up as well. In line with our expectations, the constraints proposed by the negotiation thesis do not apply similarly to different groups of ski tourists, providing hence a segmentation basis indeed. Besides, as Hung and Petrick (2010) and Godbey et al. (2010) postulated, constraints are not homogeneous across different groups and activities.

Practical Implications

The present study aimed at unravelling distinct segments of ski tourists and their decision-making process for revisiting a ski tourism destination. Although our results indicate that the vast majority of respondents are likely to revisit, they are still of great practical value. Thus, on a practical basis, managers are urged to find ways to maintain this willingness, reported from different groups of tourists with different perceived level of constraints, and turn it into actual visit. Put differently, delineating the decision process of distinct tourist groups that intend to revisit (based on their diverse constraint patterns) allows managers to gain deeper insights and design appropriate marketing mixes for increasing (a) their frequency of visitation and (b) spending levels. This way, given that both (a) and (b) are central to the administration of ski resorts, we offer managers practical advice on helping tourists overcome or negotiate more effectively with perceived constraints, thus turning intention to revisit into actual visit. For example, Customer Relationship Management can assist towards this direction. In particular, policies and practices that could build profitable lifetime durations

with ski tourists, include developing loyalty programs, designing suitable products and services, and employing helpful and well trained staff to ensure prompt and efficient services (Bolton & Kannan, 2000; Murdy & Pike, 2012; Reinartz and Kumar, 2003). At the same time, helping ski tourists overcome or negotiate more effectively with perceived constraints could increase the tourists' spending level, the degree of cross-buying behavior exhibited, and the length of visit, which at least in the case of Greek ski tourists falls mostly within 1 and 3 days (Vassiliadis, Priporas, & Andronikidis, 2013). Given the distinct segments identified through the CHAID analysis, customized approaches need to be designed for each segment. In the case of 'overall satisfied with the ski experience' tourists, emphasis should be given on facilitating the negotiation process with the skiing related constraints while in the case of tourists 'enjoying ski resort visiting' the focal constraints to be managed is the family and friends related. Finally, in the case of 'having ski tourist intimates' tourists, constraints appear to be of relatively limited importance. Our specific recommendations for the positioning of ski resort services per segment appear in Table 5, including 7Ps and negotiation strategies (as suggested by Jackson & Scott, 1999), for each segment.

[Please insert Table 5 about here]

Overall, all afore mentioned constraint based policies are expected to enable ski tourists to negotiate with identified constraints effectively.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Although the current study adds to current theoretical and empirical knowledge, it is not free of limitations. Given that the study took place in one country, our results need further investigation before they can be safely generalized in Europe and US. Furthermore, since ski tourists that participated in the study have successfully negotiated their constraints, future

researchers might replicate it among individuals in a different moment and setting. In addition, this study did not take into consideration potential motivations for participation, which could offer further insight into why constraints do not impede participation. Future researchers could also examine the applicability of the overall negotiation thesis among distinct tourist segments. Finally, researchers could also examine whether the negotiation thesis is verified when alternative typologies of constraints are in place.

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Table 1. Measurement scale format of the questionnaire

Variables of the study	Values
<i>a. Demographic variables</i>	
1. Personal monthly income	Under 351 Euro= 1; 351-650,99 Euro= 2; 651-1000,99 Euro= 3; 1001-1300,99 Euro= 4; 1301 Euro and over= 5
2. Age	0 until 18=1, 18-25=2, 26-35=3, 36-45=4, 46-55=5, 56-65=6, Over 65=7
3. Gender	Man= 1; Woman= 0
4. Level of education	Primary= 1; Secondary= 2; University= 3; postgraduate (Master, PhD)= 4
<i>b. Attitudes</i>	
5. Degree of tourist satisfaction	From “Absolutely unsatisfied”= 1 to “Absolutely satisfied”= 5
6. Intention for future visit	Most likely I will not come back in the future= 0; Most likely I will come back in the future = 1; I will surely come back in the future= 2
<i>c. Constraints variables (*)</i>	
7 - 36. Thirty constraints items of the three theoretical constraint categories	From “Completely disagree”=1 to “Completely agree”=5

Note: () the thirty constraint variables are named in a Table 3.*

Table 2. PA versus EFA (Principal Component Analysis) results

Factor number	PCA Eigenvalue	PA Criterion Value	Decision
1	7.427	1.281	<i>accept</i>
2	2.550	1.244	<i>accept</i>
3	1.775	1.215	<i>accept</i>
4	1.411	1.192	<i>accept</i>
5	1.164	1.169	reject
6	1.091	1.150	reject
7	1.063	1.130	reject
8	0.988	1.112	reject
9	0.901	1.095	reject

Table 3. EFA four factor solution

Factors and Constraints Variables	Factor loadings (*)	Eigenvalues	Percent of variance explained	Reliability explained
“Intra personal constraints”				
Afraid of injury	0.62	7.627	27.756	0.86 (9 items)
Will get cold and wet	0.61			
Harder to learn than other sports	0.64			
It is too dangerous	0.69			
Scared of lifts	0.67			
Afraid of heights	0.70			
Don’t fancy the physical challenge	0.66			
Self-conscious or embarrassed learning	0.65			
It would be too stressful	0.59			
“Financial cost constraints”				
Clothing and equipment too expensive	0.69	2.750	11.499	0.78 (5 items)
Others don’t have the money	0.67			
Anticipation of expense	0.66			
Lack of low-cost, all-inclusive holidays	0.55			
Don’t have enough money	0.63			
“Friends and family constraints”				
Too many family commitments	0.67	1.975	7.918	0.69 (3 items)
Family are too young	0.62			
Can’t find others to go with	0.50			
“Skiing related constraints”				
Concerned about the lack of snow	0.68	1.511	6.703	0.73 (4 items)
Too much hassle buying or renting	0.65			
Too much planning involved	0.61			
Slopes are overcrowded	0.54			
Total variance explained			53.876~54%	0.77 (21 items)

Notes: () Only factor loadings with scores over 0.50 are presented*

Table 4. Descriptive statistic for the four constraint factor solution

Constraint Factors	Mean scores(*)	St. Dev.	Mean		St.	
			High	Low	Dev	Dev
Intrapersonal constraints <i>(# of ski tourists)</i>	2.02 <i>(1391)</i>	0.66	2.61 <i>(706)</i>	1.44 <i>(685)</i>	0.33	0.21
Financial cost related constraints <i>(# of ski tourists)</i>	3.02 <i>(1391)</i>	0.68	3.57 <i>(593)</i>	2.46 <i>(798)</i>	0.43	0.29
Skiing related constraints <i>(# of ski tourists)</i>	2.41 <i>(1391)</i>	0.78	3.07 <i>(633)</i>	1.74 <i>(758)</i>	0.24	0.35
Family and friends related constraints <i>(# of ski tourists)</i>	2.59 <i>(1391)</i>	0.68	3.21 <i>(773)</i>	1.98 <i>(618)</i>	0.11	0.25

(*) **Note:** Mean scores of respondents are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1= «I disagree absolutely» and 5= «I agree absolutely».

Table 5. Customized Policies per segment

Target Markets of Ski tourists			
Marketing Actions	Overall satisfied with ski experience (node 3)	Having ski tourist intimates (node 6)	Enjoying ski resort visiting (node 8)
<i>Actions that affect ski tourists' negotiation process</i>			
Product/Service	Create skiing and leisure opportunities with secure infrastructure like ski mobiles, ski slopes and lifts. Adopt a total satisfaction guarantee policy.	Create family facilities for babies, children, young boys and girls and animation, ski activities and leisure experience for young and older people. Adjust facilities to accommodate disabled individuals. Lodgings, food and beverages need to be adjusted to the special requirements of all family members.	The ski destination is already attractive to them. Offer them the opportunity to purchase a variety of products and supportive services. Ensure variability of skiing and leisure opportunities.
Place	Secure the ski area e.g. with signing the safe ski slopes. Provide easy access to the ski resort e.g. free shuttle bus	Provide sufficient parking facilities and transport connections for families. Easy access and free time and leisure activities (Wi-Fi, internet, books, movies etc.) will also help.	Grant easy access and facilities to visit the place.
Price	Adopt differential prices, to reflect ski tourists' usage patterns as well as the purchasing means (etc. through internet, mobile technology, phone). Offer discounts and gifts for early ticketing.	Introduce family cards and offer free ski activities for ski club members. Emphasize in all cases the related social benefits.	Introduce multiple packages, in different pricing categories.
Promotion	Point out the different levels of skiing opportunities. Promote	Promote the opportunities that arise from visiting a	Past-experience can be very important for them. E-social

	the user friendly and safe atmosphere. Reinforcement of satisfaction mode.	ski resort with family and friends versus staying to home. Emphasize the social experience other than skiing itself. Introducing social media tools to allow and encourage seeking new friends to participate in the activity. While in the ski resort, encourage friend participation through joint activities.	groups, opinion leading, positive word of mouth, and reference groups are factors to enhance their visitation pattern.
People	Ensure safety through medical staff, and ski experts. Train your staff and infuse customer and market orientation.	Engagement of animators, ski-teachers, baby sitters, and medical staff for children and older people. Flexible and understanding front line employees.	Skilful and educated staff that will emphasize long term relationships e.g. through Customer Relationship Management.
Physical evidence	Create a warm atmosphere and user friendly design of the facilities, to help ski tourists feel involved and secure.	Create a warm and family friendly atmosphere, with special facilities too, to have the social group feel comfortable.	Emphasis needs to be given on infrastructure and activities offered, through multiple options.
Processes	Enforce quality improvement practices in your processes (ISO, Official signs etc.) and monitoring customer satisfaction.	Provide access to skiing and related activities through the internet or mobile applications, to reduce time and hassle for check in and check out. Information on reaching the ski destination can also be helpful. Easy check in and out facilities.	Initiate Membership Awards programs that ensures privileges based on frequency and intensity of usage, along with contests among members.
Negotiation strategies	Emphasize cognitive negotiation strategies; 1. Encourage immediate preparation for necessary equipment or clothes 2. Suggest shortening the time	Stress behavioral negotiation strategies; 1. Encourage seeking new friends to participate in the activity 2. Encourage seeking	Highlight behavioral negotiation strategies; 1. Encourage alternative ski activities 2. Promote the activity or offer gifts

allocated for other appointments	friends with interest in similar fields
3. Encourage participation if all conditions permit	3. Encourage inviting friends to participate in the activity
4. Suggest making a list of personal tasks	

Figure 1. CHAID analysis for intention for future visit

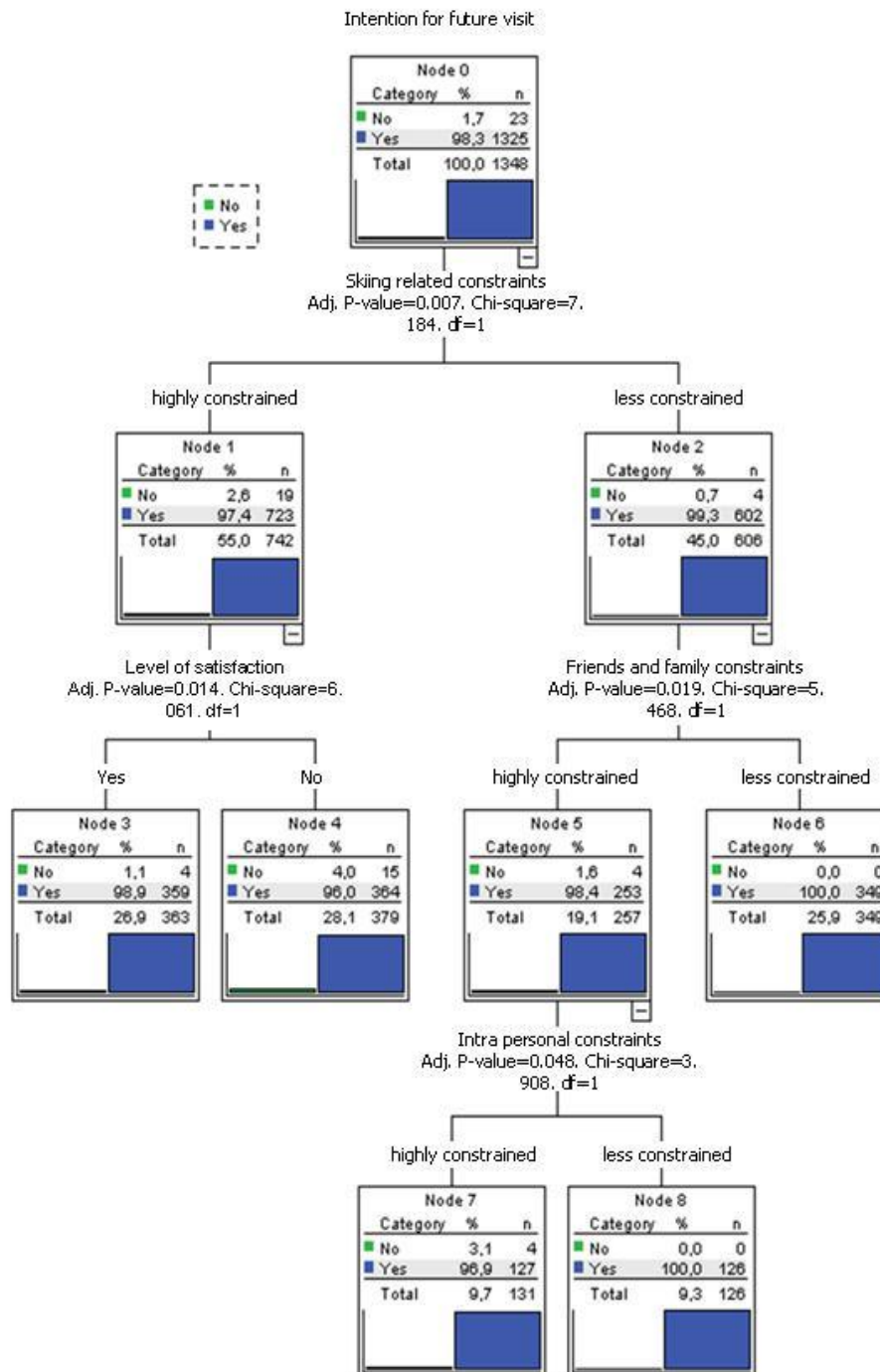


Figure 2

Highly constrained



Figure 3

Less constrained

