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# Active sport tourists: Millennials vs baby boomers

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Active sport tourism is one of the fastest rising leisure segments. Considering the extensive growth of both the millennial and baby boomers generation in this sector, there are large-scale economic potentials for tourism practitioners. The aim of this study is to explore the characteristics of baby boomers and millennial active sport tourists and to differentiate them by relevant factors.

**Methods:** Applying a qualitative research design numerical data is collected by using online surveys about the characteristics, needs and motivations of baby boomer and millennial active sport tourists.

**Results:** Significant differences were found between the groups regarding social-economic characteristics (gender, education level, marital status and income) and motivations. For millennials, 'Escaping from daily routine', 'Thrill & sensation', 'Overcoming challenges' and 'Adrenalin' appeared as relevant motivations. For baby boomers, 'Health' highlights as a principal motivation. Recommendations for professionals in the sector are suggested.

**Implications:** Current study was considered to be important due to an extensive growth seen for both the millennial and baby boomers generation in the active sport tourism market and considering the fact that limited understanding of the characteristics, needs and motives was contradicting this enormous growth in the market. Differences were found between the millennial and the baby boomer active sport tourists.

**Keywords:** sport tourism, millennials, baby boomers, consumer behavior, leisure tourism

**JEL Classification:** L83, L8, Z20

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

With a number of 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals worldwide in 2019, the tourism industry is considered one of the world's biggest market industry nowadays, leading to extensive economic potentials for tourism practitioners (UNWTO, 2019). To be able to play well in the tourism market as a practitioner it is important to decide which specific market segment you want to target, to know the activities most popular within this segment and to know all the characteristics and motives of the travellers of that segment (Mahika, 2011).

Two different age groups that have shown a significant growth in the tourism market in the last few decennia' are the millennial and the baby boomer generation (Patterson 2012, UNWTO Statista, 2016, MDG advertising, 2015). The growth seen for both age groups makes the two groups potential interesting market segments to target for tourism practitioners, considering that growth increases the economic

potential of the market (Mahika, 2011). Knowing that the millennial and the baby boomer travellers are interesting market segments to target (UNWTO Statista, 2016), it is also important to get to know the specific characteristics, motives and the preferred type of holidays of the two groups. This will help practitioner to understand what the two groups value most (Osterwalder & Peigner, 2010).

Looking more specific to the wishes concerning the preferred types of holidays of the baby boomer and the millennial travellers, an interesting change in interests has been mentioned in literature (Mahika, 2011). According to prior studies, both the millennial and the baby boomer travellers are showing a shift in interests, with less interest shown for the traditional sun, sea and sand, sightseeing and shopping holiday trips and more interest shown for beautiful, healthy, intellectual, active and adventurous traveling types (Mahika, 2011; Patterson & Pan, 2007).

It is therefore not surprising that the active and adventure tourism industry (tourists traveling with the specific purpose of participating in a certain sport and adventurous activity out

of their home town) has mentioned to be the one of the fastest growing leisure tourism industry segment nowadays (Hungenberg et al., 2016; Mahika, 2011; Midland & Kington, 2013; Muller & Cleaver, 2000).

Contradicting this clear growth of the millennial and the baby boomer active and adventure sport tourism market is the lacking deeper understanding of the factors representing the active sport travellers stated in literature (Goodnow, 2005; Hungenberg et al., 2016; Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016; Weed, 2014). Further clarification and differentiation of the active sport tourism is thereby said to be needed (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016; Naidoo et al., 2015).

Looking at the motivations of the baby boomer and millennial active sport tourists, on one hand the similar interest of the two groups in the same type of holiday trips may induce similarities in their motivations (Crompton, 1979). The difference in age (and corresponding lifestyle) on the other hand may however also induce some clear differences between the two groups (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005). When differences do exist, age may be used as a differentiation method in the diverse active sport tourism market, making it easier for tourism practitioners to decide on their target strategies for the two groups in future. Purpose of current study is to investigate on those factors differentiating the baby boomer and millennial active sport tourists.

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## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

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Reviewing the literature on the active sport tourism, it became clear that this tourism market is part of the more general overarching sport tourism industry (Gammon & Robison, 1997; Gibson, 1998a). Sport tourism is defined as "Leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities" (Gibson & Fairley, 2011, p.171). The interest and opportunities of this sport tourism market were thereby said to start increasing and diversifying around the mid-1990s (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 1993; Gibson 2004; Weed, 2014). Research on this area is very extensive (Robinson & Gammon, 2004; Hinch & Higham, 2001; Ma et al., 2017).

Several attempts have been made to categorize the broader sport tourism market (Gibson, 1998a; Huggins, 2013; Robison & Gammon, 1997; Ross, 2001; Fotiadis, Vassiliadis, & Soteriades, 2016; Fotiadis & Williams, 2018). One of the most used division of sport tourism hereby is the division of Gibson (1998a). She divided sport tourists into three categories: 1) Sport event tourism, 2) Active sport tourism and 3) Nostalgia sport tourism. The sport event tourism hereby refers to the travellers travelling out of their home communities to watch a certain sport event (Robison, 1998). The active sport tourism group, in contrary, are the tourists that travel to actually participate in sports and the last group. Finally, the nostalgia sport tourists are defined as those people that travel to places with sport related historical importance and cultural values.

Looking deeper into the active sport tourism group some attempts for further subdividing the group has been made.

One subdivision of the active sport tourists thereby is the subdivision into "non-event" or "hobbyists" versus the "event" or "activity" participants (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). On the one hand, the 'activity or event participants' are hereby the amateur participants who travel to take part in tournaments, events or other types of competitions of their chosen sport with examples like soccer, hockey and tennis tournaments, marathons or triathlons. On the other hand, 'the hobbyists or non-event participants' are individuals who have a certain sport as general purpose of their travel without any competition involved in it. For example, travelling for hiking, skiing, snowboarding, scuba diving, rafting, surfing, playing golf and going on survival (mountain climbing, abseiling, canoeing) (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Naidoo et al. 2015; Ross, 2001).

A second way of subdividing the active sport tourism market is a subdivision into "soft" and "hard" active sport tourism. The "soft" and "hard" terms are hereby about the amount of challenge, risk and effort that is being taken. Hiking and golfing are hereby two examples of the "soft" active sport activities and mountain biking or for example kite surfing on the other hand are examples of the "hard" active sport activities (Naidoo, 2015).

Important to consider is the fact that much overlap of the active sport tourism market is seen with a slightly other tourism market, namely the adventure tourism market (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016). Just as the active sport tourism industry, the adventure tourism industry also contains many physical demanding activities. However, it also includes many short-term activities like bungee jumping and skydiving which are not part of the active sport tourism industry (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016). Next to the little differences in certain activities, adventure tourism as a general rule has to involve a certain amount of risk taking and thereby adrenaline increasing, what is not necessary for the active sport tourism market (Giddy & Webb, 2016).

Regarding the characteristics and motives of the active sport travellers, as may be seen from the subdivisions mentioned above, the group of active sport tourism entails a wide range of tourists. For Europeans, for example, most popular physical activities mentioned have always been hiking, bicycling, skiing and golfing (Gibson, 1998b; Weed, 2014). Although this all-time popularity exists, also new sports like kitesurfing and snowboarding have become more popular and have shown a significant growth in latest years (Holt & McCole, 2012).

Describing the characteristics of active sport tourist travellers, Schreiber (1976) was one of the first researcher investigating on golfers, tennis players and skiers. Characteristics mentioned by Schreiber (1976) regarding sport travellers were that most of them were male, affluent, well-educated and more active individuals in general. However, those characteristics have changed in latest years, considering that also other economic classes and different races became interested in active sport tourism trips (Gibson, 2004) and as latest trend also more female have become interested. For gender, an equal split of 57% males vs. 43 % females is seen nowadays (ATTA, 2013). One of the reasons mentioned for the latest trend of female active sport travellers is because of the increasing amount of women-only adventure holidays being offered (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016).

Trying to investigate more in deep on to the decision-making process of the active sport tourist, the relevance of studying needs and motivations has been clearly stated. Knowing the tourist's needs and motivations can help to segment the travel industry and it can help to obtain loyal and satisfied guests (Pizam, & Mansfeld, 1999). Motivations are hereby defined as reasons for people to act in a certain way and to desire certain things. Needs of people are more concerning the necessities of people to live a healthy and happy life (Boon, & Hendrickx, 2015). Thus, characteristics (defined as the traits, qualities and feature that distinguishes or identifies a person (Boon, & Hendrickx, 2015), needs and motivations can very well explain a person's behaviour and thereby explain decision-making (Gibson, 2004).

Investigating the specific motivations of active sport travellers, not a lot of research has been performed so far, however when looking at the overlapping market of adventure tourism much more research is shown. The review of Buckley (2012) suggested 14 motivators, that were mentioned to be significant in earlier studies, going about thrill & sensation, fear, control, skills, achieve, fitness, risk, nature, art, spirit, friends, image, escape and compete.

Pizam et al. (2004) specifically looked at the connection between risk-taking and sensation-seeking scores and adventure tourist activities. They conclude that some people are more risk takers than others in general, enjoying mostly the adrenaline that comes with it. Thus, adventurous sports often contain a certain amount of risk and sensation that increase participant's adrenaline (Giddy & Webb, 2016). The study of Pizam et al. (2004) suggest that risk-taking and sensation-seeking can be important motivator for the young travellers to participate in adventurous sport tourism. Other factors should be included in the study to give a more complete conclusion about the psychological characteristics of active and adventurous sport tourists (Abraham, et al. 2004).

As it seems, the needs and motives (and psychological and behavioural characteristics) are often influenced by a person's age. When looking at the preferences of certain age groups, also the generation people are part of is said to be important (Wong et al. 2008; Mavragani et al., 2017). In the generation theory of Strauss and Howe (1991), they define a generation as a group of people sharing the same birth years with a span of around twenty years (Glass, 2007). In that generation theory most important criteria mentioned for being part of a generation is: to be a member of a generation, you have a so called shared "age location in history". This age location in history means that some shared formative experiences, social trends or historical events, like growing up after the second world war or growing up in a new technical advanced environment, is said to have lasting influence on the habits and preferences of people (Wong et al. 2008).

Due to the shared experiences, the people that are being part of the same generation often also feel like being part of the same group. Getting insight in the needs, motivators and the overall culture of the members of a generation can help managers in any market to target this group of people better (Pendergast, 2010).

Millennials are the people between  $\pm 20$ -35 years old now (college students, young adults and professionals) (Catlett,

2015). They were born between 1980 and 2000. Considering travelling behaviour, the millennials are described as having a huge desire to see the world and thereby being more global-oriented than other generations. This is shown by an 23% higher interest in going abroad than other generations (Barton et al. 2013). Biggest reason mentioned for the annual growth of millennials travelling has been the increased possibilities of low budget travelling and the increase of peer-to-peer businesses tools like Airbnb, Couchsurfing and BlaBlaCar (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). These peer-to-peer businesses not only make it cheaper to travel, but also adds a social value to the travel and can increase the cultural experience with more opportunities for different types of stays for example (Godelnik, 2017).

Next to the higher interest, the millennials are also said to view travelling differently. Where older consumers tend to see travelling more as a luxury, the millennials often see their international trips as an important life experience, fundamental for their personal development (Barton et al. 2013). They use travelling to develop themselves, considering that going abroad often offers new opportunities and experiences like learning about other cultures. Having cultural knowledge and experience has therefore also become an important marker of affluence (Barton et al. 2013; Swartz, 2016).

Another important issue concerning traveller's behaviour is that millennials also see themselves as more adventurous and more receptive to new ideas (Deal et al., 2010; DeBard, 2004). Thus, millennials are changing travels (Machado, 2014). The sports and outdoors adventure tourism industry is therefore mentioned as one of the important new activities of the millennial travellers (Cain, 2016). Looking at specific psychological characteristics of these millennial adventure travellers, a connection between high risk-taking and sensation-seeking scores and adventure tourist activities is found (Pizam et al. 2004).

The baby boomers on the other hand are the generation born between 1946 and 1964, being between 52 and 70 years old now. Considering travelling behaviour, while getting at an age of retirement, they have more free time to spend. In general, they have less social and family obligations than younger people (Patterson, 2012). Next to that, the baby boomers are healthier, wealthier, better educated, more affluent and more independent than older generations were at the age of 52-70 years (Muller & Cleaver, 2000, Naidoo et al. 2015 & Patterson, 2012). Differences with previous generations at the age of 52-70 years are also visible by different attitudes and lifestyles mentioned in literature and by the fact that they also see themselves as younger than they actually are (Patterson, Balderas-Cejudo, & Rivera-Hernaez, 2017). Baby boomers are keen to travel and to do things they have never done before (Muller & Cleaver, 2000, Naidoo et al. 2015 & Patterson, 2012).

Looking at the specific travel preferences, high climate destinations, traditional sightseeing and cultural trips are still popular under the baby boomer travellers. However, experiencing adventure, culture and having authentic learning experiences have become more and more important (World Tourism Organization, 2001). Trips that have become less popular under this new retirement cohort group are the beach holidays which have their main focus on relaxation

(Patterson, Balderas-Cejudo, & Rivera-Hernaez, 2017; World Tourism Organization, 2001). The baby boomers want to have a richer feeling of experiencing by discovering new things, getting new knowledge, learning new skills and being involved in new and adventures activities (Conceição & Skibba, 2008; Harwood, 2007). Some differences between men and women have been mentioned, whereby men are said to be more interested in action and adventure types of holiday and women are more interested in getting new cultural and educational experiences (Chiang & Jogaratham, 2006).

Looking at the active sport tourism market, baby boomers are nowadays starting to get more interested in actively participating in new activities like hiking, diving, surfing, mountain climbing and riding while being on holiday. Their specific motivations mentioned for this type of holidays are because of fun and enjoyment, relieve from stress and tension, escapism, relaxation, change, novelty, the attractiveness of the physical environment and getting a better health (Naidoo et al., 2015). Escaping and relief from stress and tension was mentioned as one of the most important factors for baby boomer to go on an active sport tourism trip. However, researchers also states that more research on the motivations of baby boomer active sport tourists needs to be conducted (Naidoo et al. 2015).

When comparing baby boomer and millennial active sport tourist for example in a kayaking trip, differences between the two groups were found for achievement and stimulation. The younger participants more often went on a kayaking trip to achieve certain goals and to stimulate themselves compared to the older participants (O'Connell's, 2010). Next to achievement and stimulation motivations, O'Connell's (2010) also showed that escaping personal and social pressures and relieving from stress and tension was different between the two groups, with again higher scores for the younger participants.

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### 3 METHODOLOGY

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This research will explore from a quantitative approach the characteristics, needs and motives of millennials and baby boomers to investigate on the differences between the two segments. The hypotheses of the current study are based on prior studies explaining how certain social-economic characteristic and motivations of a person are generally influencing the decision-making process of a person (Berlyne's, 1960; Gibson, 2004; Maslow's, 1943). Differences in age (and corresponding lifestyle) may induce some clear differences in their motivations and behaviours (Goodnow, 2005; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005; Wong et al. 2008).

To be able to explore on those relationships, numerical data is collected by using online surveys about the characteristics, needs and motivations of baby boomer and millennial active sport tourists. The questionnaire consists of active sport tourism related questions, like how often someone goes on an active sport tourism holiday, what type of sport he or she performs on these holidays, if he or she is a hobbyist or event tourist (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010), if the travel holidays are competition related or not and if the trips are self-organised or organised by an organisation (Naidoo et al., 2015). Questions on social economic characteristics were

also included such as age, gender, nationality, education level, income, marital status and health/fitness status (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2016; Jönsson, & Devonish, 2008; Mahika, 2011; Mazilu, & Mitroi, 2010).

At last, questions considering a person's motivations to go on an active sport tourism trip were included. To know which motives should asked for in current study, earlier studies investigating on the motivations of active sport tourist were being overlooked. Considering that not many studies have looked at active sport tourism motivations before, also studies looking at adventure tourism were used, considering the big overlap seen between the two types of tourism (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016). The review of Buckley (2012) was hereby considered as it was the most recent review looking at 50 earlier studies on participant motivations in adventure tourism and recreation. The study indicated 14 motivators which were mentioned to be significant in earlier studies, being: "Thrill & Sensation", "Fear", "Control", "Skills", "Achieve", "Fitness", "Risk", "Adrenalin", "New", "Fun & Enjoyment", "Nature", "Art", "Spirit", "Friends", "Image", "Escape", "Compete", "Relieve/Refresh".

After comparing these 14 motives with other studies, like studies looking at the often-used push and pull factors of Crompton (1979), four more motives were added. One is adrenalin, which was added considering that a connection between high risk-taking and sensation-seeking scores and adventure tourist activities for young travellers. Pizam et al. (2004) concluded that some people are more risk takers than others in general, enjoying mostly the adrenalin that comes with it. The other three motives were: trying new things, fun and enjoyment and relief from stress and tension/to relax and refresh.

These three motives were added after looking at the study of Naidoo et al., (2015) investigating the specific motivations mentioned for the baby boomer adventures sport tourists. Investigating escapism and to relieve from stress and tension was thought to be especially important to ask considering that in the study of O'Connell's (2010), comparing baby boomer and millennial active sport tourist participating in a kayaking trip, a difference between the two groups was found for escaping personal and social pressures (O'Connell's, 2010). See Figure 1 for the complete list of motives involves in this research. The additional four added motivations (coloured blue) derived from Crompton (1979), Naidoo et al., (2015) and Pizam et al. (2004).

The questions considering motives are asked using a 5 item Likert scale. With this scale participants can indicate to what extent they agree or disagree with a certain question asked about a specific motive. The 5 items are ranged as follow: strongly disagree – degree – neutral – agree – strongly agree. For the analysis of all variables, SPSS software was used. Before starting to analyse, a preliminary examination of the data was performed to detect any missing data and outliers. To test whether the questionnaire of the 18 motivational variables were reliable, the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. It had a reliability of  $\alpha = 0.802$ . Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7 is considered as acceptable, between 0.8 and 0.9 it is even seen as good and above 0.9 it is considered as excellent reliable (Field, 2009). Meaning that the questionnaire of current study can be considered as good reliable. At last, to test significant differences between the baby boomer and millennial active sport tourists exist, Pearson's Chi-square tests were used.

Figure 1: Motivators for adventure activity travellers  
(adapted from Buckley, 2012)

| Internal, performance of activity  |                         |  |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Motivation                         | Coding SPSS             | Explanation  |
| Thrill & Sensation                 | [ThrillSensation]       | Adrenalin, excitement                                  |
| Fear                               | [OvercomeFears]         | Overcoming fear  |
| Control                            | [PhysicalMentalControl] | Maintaining physical and mental control of one's body  |
| Skills                             | [EnhanceSkills]         | Using expertise to perform very difficult tasks        |
| Achieve                            | [Challenge]             | Overcoming challenges to reach difficult goals         |
| Fitness                            | [ImproveHealth]         | Activity simply as a way to keep physically fit        |
| Risk                               | [Risk]                  | [Danger as a direct motivation]                        |
| Adrenalin                          | [Adrenalin]             | Enjoying the adrenalin that comes with this activities |
| New                                | [New]                   | Trying new things                                      |
| Fun & Enjoyment                    | [Fun]                   | Enjoying the specific activities                       |
| Internal/external, place in nature |                         |  |
| Nature                             | [BeautyNature]          | Appreciation of beauty                                 |
| Art                                | [Artistic]              | Perception of activity as artistic                     |
| Spirit                             | [Spiritual]             | Activity as spiritual experience                       |
| External, social position          |                         |  |
| Friends                            | [Social]                | Enjoyment in sharing and activity with others          |
| Image                              | [Image]                 | Enhancing how one is perceived by others               |
| Escape                             | [Escape]                | Change from routine of home or work                    |
| Compete                            | [Compete]               | [Competition against others]                           |
| Relieve/Refresh                    | [Relieve]               | Relieve from stress and tension/to relax and refresh.  |

## 4 RESULTS

A total of 262 participants were tested existing out of a total of 138 millennial active sport tourist (with an average age of 27,01 years) and 124 baby boomer active sort tourists (with an average age of 58,76).

A significant difference between the millennial and baby boomer active sport tourists was found for the following variables: for the preference for competition related trips ( $\alpha = 0.018$ ), for being more event or hobbyist active sport tourist ( $\alpha = 0.015$ ), for gender ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), for education level ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), for marital status ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ) and for income ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ). Analysing the crosstabs of these variables the factors representing the two groups can be described as follow: 10,9% of the millennials prefers a competition related trip, whereby only 3,3% of the baby boomers do.

For both groups the highest preference is however for an active sport holiday without any form of competition (89,1%/96,7%). Event or hobbyist for the Millennials: 5,1% event, 73,5% hobbyist, 21,3% both. For the baby boomers: 0,8% events, 86,2% hobbyist, 13% both. Also here it can be seen that the highest preference is hobby related, however a significant different number of millennials go on an event active sport trip (as well). For gender, the group of millennials included 50 males and 88 females, and the group of baby boomers of 80 males and 43 females. In percentage this is: Millennials = 36,2% male / 63,8% female; baby boomers: 65,0% male / 35% female.

Looking at education, the median value for millennials was 7 = University Master's degree, with an interquartile range of 2 and a percentage of 48,2%. For the baby boomer the median value was 5 = Higher vocational education / HBO, with an interquartile range of 2 and a percentage of 40,3%. Considering the marital status, the median value for

millennials was 3 = Partner, not living together and without kids, with an interquartile range of 4 and a percentage of 20,3%. For the baby boomer the median value was 8 = married, with kids (not living at home), with an interquartile range of 3 and a percentage of 49,2%. For income, percentages are more dispersed, whereby the income of the millennials were more on the lower end and for the baby boomers more on the higher end.

No significant difference was found for the times a year millennials and baby boomers go on an active sport related trip, for the preference for self-organised or non-self-organised trips and for the fitness status. With 46,6% of the total amount of participants going ones a year and 49,6% of the participants going two to four times a year on an active sport related trip, almost all having a preference for the self-organised trips (93,5%). Concerning the fitness status, both the millennials and the baby boomers showed their highest percentages for the answer of performing sport 1-2 times a week (40,6% & 54,0%) and 3-4 times a week (47,8% & 39,5%).

Concerning the 18 motivational questions, the questionnaire was considered good reliable, with a Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.802$ . Outcome showed that for the millennials the most important motivations were: fun (4,75), beauty of nature (4,39), social (4,26), relieve (4,04), escape (3,88), thrill & sensation (3,88), challenge (3,87) and adrenalin (3,57) having a mean value above 3,5 whereby the 3 stands for neutral opinion about the motivation and 4 stands for agreeing on the motivation. To a less extend also the motivations new (3,46), enhance skills (3,09), improve health (3,07) and physical and mental control (3,01) show to more than neutral important having a value between 3 and 3,5.

Not important motivators for the millennials were shown to be the motivations of risk (2,58), artistic (2,47), compete (1,89), overcoming fears (1,77), spiritual (1,74) and image (1,64). For the baby boomers only 5 motivations had a value above 3,5, being Fun (4,73), beauty of nature (4,39), social (4,01), improve health (3,84) and relieve (3,81). To a less extend the motivations escape (3,29), physical and mental control (3,06), thrill & sensation (3,06) and challenge (3,06) show to more than neutral important having a value between 3 and 3,5.

Not important motivators for the baby boomers were shown to be the motivations of new (2,77), adrenalin (2,63), artistic (2,26), risk (1,75), enhance skills (2,54), compete (1,52), overcoming fears (1,23), spiritual (1,83) and image (1,44).

In order to compare the two groups, chi square tests were used. See Figure 2. In some cases, the first assumption of chi-square tests of sample size was violated, showing more than 20% of the contingency cells with an expected value of less than 5. In case this assumption was violated, the outcome of the Likelihood Ratio test was used and in case the assumption was met the outcome of the Pearson Chi-Square test was used.

A significant difference between the millennial and baby boomer active sport tourists was found for 11 of the 18 motivations: thrill & sensation ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), adrenalin ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), overcome fears ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), enhance skills ( $\alpha = 0.003$ ), challenge ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), improve health ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), risk ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), image ( $\alpha = 0.044$ ), escape ( $\alpha = 0.002$ ), compete ( $\alpha = 0.013$ ) and new ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ).

Figure 2: Motivators for millennials & baby boomer active sport participants

| Motivational variable | Mean Value Millennials | Mean Value Baby Boomers |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| ThrillSensation*      | 3,88                   | 3,06                    |
| Adrenalin*            | 3,57                   | 2,63                    |
| OvercomeFears*        | 1,77                   | 1,23                    |
| PhysicalMentalControl | 3,01                   | 3,06                    |
| EnhanceSkills*        | 3,09                   | 2,54                    |
| Challenge*            | 3,87                   | 3,06                    |
| ImproveHealth*        | 3,07                   | 3,84                    |
| Risk*                 | 2,58                   | 1,75                    |
| BeautyNature          | 4,39                   | 4,39                    |
| Artistic              | 2,47                   | 2,26                    |
| Spiritual             | 1,74                   | 1,85                    |
| Social                | 4,26                   | 4,01                    |
| Image*                | 1,64                   | 1,44                    |
| Escape*               | 3,88                   | 3,29                    |
| Compete*              | 1,89                   | 1,52                    |
| New*                  | 3,46                   | 2,77                    |
| Fun                   | 4,75                   | 4,73                    |
| Relieve               | 4,04                   | 3,81                    |

\* significant different values, likelihood ratio test and Pearson correlation chi-square test

## 5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of current study are considered to be significant due to an extensive growth seen for both the millennial and baby boomers generation in the active sport tourism market and considering the fact that limited understanding of the characteristics, needs and motives was contradicting this enormous growth in the market. Differences were found between the millennial and the baby boomer active sport tourists. At first, differences are found for several social-economic characteristics. On the one hand, the baby boomer active sport tourists showed to be mostly male, on average having finished a higher vocational education, mostly being married, having kids not living at home and mostly having a high income of >€ 3.500. On the other hand, the millennials showed to be more female, having a high education level of mostly a university master's degree, having different marital statuses (but mostly without kids) and having a lower income, mostly under € 2.500,- a month.

These differences are considered to be important to take in mind for tourism practitioners due the fact that changes happening in the circumstances of a individuals personal life change the value of people given to a certain trip (Goodnow, 2005; Wong et al. 2008). With the statistics performed in current research no conclusions can be made about the link between the specific social-economic characteristics other than age, and the motivations tested to go on an active sport tourism trip. For future studies it may therefore be very interesting to have a better look at which social-economic characteristics contribute to which specific motivations of active sport tourists.

Next to the social-economic characteristics also a big difference was found concerning the motivations tested in current research between millennial and the baby boomer active sport tourists, whereby 11 of the 18 motivations tested showed to be significantly different. Most important significant different motivations were concerning the motivations 'escaping from daily routine of home or work',

'thrill & sensation', 'overcoming certain challenges', 'adrenalin' and 'keeping or improving health', whereby the first four were significantly more important for the millennial than for the baby boomer active sport tourists and the last motivation the other way around, being more important for the baby boomer active sport tourists. Thus, two different groups can be characterized when talking about sport active tourism, with each having their own specific needs and motives concerning active sport related trips.

This conclusion is important considering the recommendations that can be given to the professionals working in the branch of active sport tourism and other researchers investigating the active sport tourists. As mentioned in literature, to be able to make research easier and to go deeper into the consumers profile, segmenting a certain consumer market was considered to be an effective tool (Chen, 2003; Park & Yoon, 2009). To consider two groups as two different segments these two groups each have to have a clear group identity, easily observable and similar within one group, but different from the clear identity of the other group (Wilkie, 1994). Due to the differences found between the millennial and the baby boomer active sport tourists, these two groups may be also be seen as two different market segments in future.

Being considered as two different market segment, distinct marketing strategies by tourism practitioners will be needed. Considering that different customer segments may also be reached differently, they may require different types of customer relationships and they may also be willing to pay differently for the products offered (Goodnow, 2005; Osterwalder A. & Peigner, 2010). Added to this, knowing these differences can help tourist practitioners to satisfy future demand and can also help to better match their products with their specific needs (Hungenberg et al., 2016). Identifying the factors that differentiate them can also help companies to organize their propagation, their design elements, their process and their communication content (Collins, 1999).

Some recommendations can be suggested to tourism practitioners are:

- A good look should be given at the type of active sport tourism activities offered. Professionals that are working with mostly one of the two generations should offer more products that match well with the motivations most mentioned within that group. The active sport tourism activities for millennials for example may be more focused on more risky activities with higher level of thrill & sensation and adrenalin involved and whereby certain challenges exist that a customer can beat. The active sport tourism activities for baby boomers may be more focused on health-related activities, helping the baby boomers to keep or to improve their health.
- Professionals that are targeting both groups can of course offer both types of activities, however it may be useful for them to separate the two types of activities. The clear separation can help professionals to create a good strategy to reach the two groups differently and by creating different types of customer relationships. Making a clear separation may create higher value for the products from the consumer, also making them willing to pay more.

- Last recommendation may not only be about the product, but also about the marketing and promotion of the products. Companies should organize their strategies according to the different content they are offering to the different target markets. The difference between millennials and baby boomers in their motivation for escaping from daily routine of home or work, may hereby also be an important motivation to use for promotion and content marketing.

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## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

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Although the outcome of current study can help professionals working in the branch of active sport tourism, some limitations should also be considered when interpretation the results. The first limitation hereby is concerning the sample taken from the population. Considering that all participants mentioned to have a European nationality and considering the fact that 96% of the participants filled in the Dutch survey instead of the English version, it may be concluded that most participants in current study also had a Dutch nationality. Outcomes of current study may therefore not be generalised to other nationalities considering that cultural and nationality differences do influence the choices tourists make regarding their holiday (Mahika, 2011). Further research including or comparing different nationalities should therefore be performed to make more general conclusions considering the characteristics, needs and motivations of active sport tourist all over the world.

Secondly, considering the sample size, no saturation point has been calculated for current research, thereby making it not sure if the sample is a good representative of the total population (Creswell, 2013; Field, 2009; Walle, 1997).

Thirdly, by performing only quantitative research and using surveys, outcomes may be simplified and less detailed compared to qualitative research. Although this objective way of collecting data is said to always represent the truth, it may not always present the whole truth. Social and historical backgrounds for example, which are also said to influence behaviour and motives, are not measurable using surveys and are thereby left behind in current study (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007; Chatzigeorgiou, 2017). Qualitative research may therefore be performed in further studies to investigate whether certain specific motivations are missing in the current data. Another disadvantages of using surveys, is that the meanings of questions cannot be discussed and questions may have been misinterpreted or misunderstood, this may have let to unintended biases and wrong conclusions made in current study. This may again be solved by performing qualitative research in further.

A fifth limitation is concerning the data collection and the data analysis. Due to the fact that only active sport tourists were interviewed, no comparisons could be made between the travellers that do go on an active sport related trip and the ones that do not. Next to that, due to time limitations, in current research only the differences between the millennial and baby boomer active sport tourists were tested using chi-square tests. With these chi-square tests comparing two age groups, no conclusions can be made concerning the link between other social-economic and health related characteristics and specific motivations of active sport

travellers. Further research should therefore go deeper in the possibilities of also performing two-way ANOVA analyses and logistic regressions to be able to conclude which social-economic variables are most related to the which motivations (Field, 2009).

Last consideration being, although clear differences have been seen between the millennial and baby boomer active sport tourists in current research, not much studies considering this topic have been done before and more research is needed to be able to validate the outcome.

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