National park visitors’ interest to use tourism services in rural communities

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Background

- Declining economy and community life in rural villages
- Contribution of protected areas to rural development
- National parks are an attraction for countryside tourism
Tourism services in the countryside
Tourism services
Aim of the study

The aim is to better understand national park visitors as potential tourists in the countryside

- Are national park visitors interested to use tourism services?
- What kind of services they are interested in?
- Do park visitors differ in their interests; visitor groups?
- How the visitor groups differ from each other?
  - socioeconomic background
  - attitudes towards countryside in general
- Which visitor groups have an intention to visit again the park and the region
Framework


- Factors related to the interest and the intention to use tourism services in the vicinity of a national park:
  - satisfaction to previous experience
  - attitude towards countryside
  - sense of place, place identity

Holistic tourism experience
Data and methods

- Two study areas:
  - Seitseminen National Park
  - Linnansaari National Park
- In co-ordination with Metsähallitus
- 544 respondents
- response rates 63 % and 72 %

- 40 different items of tourism services: guided excursions, equipment rentals, rentals for sauna, room for festivities, catering services, visit a farm, accommodation, restaurants, shops
- Statistical methods: factor analysis, clustering analysis, analysis of variance
Results

- nearly all NP visitors came to the region because of the NP
- one half of visitors informed that their only contact to local community is when using services
- the other half has friends or relatives living in the region, or they have an access to a recreational home, or they have some other interest to visit the region
National park visitor groups based on their interest to use services in the park vicinity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>% of visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor recreation oriented</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided excursions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent recreation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safaris</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism oriented</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country-side</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fest services</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room &amp; rentals</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attitude towards countryside and socioeconomic background variables in different visitor groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Outdoor recreation oriented groups</th>
<th>Tourism oriented groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guided</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE towards countryside, sum index</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE, years</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSEHOLD INCOME group</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEX, female</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to RECREATION HOME in region</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visitor group differences

- Outdoor oriented visitors (guided and independent) had the most positive attitudes towards the country side
- Tourism oriented ‘country-side group’ members have most often the regular access to the recreation home in the region
- Guided excursions were the most interested by older people
- Motorized safaris were interested by respondents with high household income
General satisfaction and intention of visitor groups to visit the park and region again

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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<th>Tourism oriented groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guide d</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction to the quality of park services, sum index</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction to the quantity of park services, sum index</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTENTION to visit the PARK again</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTENTION to visit the REGION again</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intention to visit the park and the region

- Interest to visit the park and the region again
  - outdoor oriented groups ‘guided’ and ‘independent’
  - fest service group of the ‘tourism oriented’ section

- No interest to visit the park and region again
  - room & rental group

- Interest to visit the region again
  - countryside group
Summary

- Park visitors are heterogeneous in their interest in
  - to use different tourism services
  - to visit the park and the region again

- Outdoor oriented visitors, 56 % of all, are the most interested in renting equipments or buying guided excursions, and also to visit the park again
Conclusions and Discussion

- Tourism service providers should be aware of the different interests of park visitor groups
  - to develop rental services to physically active
  - to provide guided excursions to older people

- More research is needed to identify the multilevel interactions between the visit motivation to the national park and park communities, tourism service use and the intention to revisit the region
Thank You