

**An Examination of the Relationships between Motivation, Involvement and  
Intention to continuing Participation among Recreational Skiers**

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**An Examination of the Relationships between Motivation, Involvement and Intention to continuing Participation among Recreational Skiers**

**Abstract**

The present study investigated the degree to which motivation and involvement can predict intention to continuing skiing participation, and additionally tested the degree to which involvement acted as a mediator on the relationship between motivation and intention. Two hundred and twenty four recreational skiers (58.2% males and 41.8% females) from a major skiing resort in South Greece, participated in the study and filled the questionnaires measuring motivation (Manfredo et al., 1997), involvement (Kyle et al., 2004), and intentions to continuing participation (Ajzen, 1987). The results supported initial hypothesis since intention was significant predicted by motivation ( $R^2=.21$ ) and involvement ( $R^2=.46$ ) respectively. Furthermore involvement dimensions, (attraction & centrality) partially (not fully) mediated the relationship between motivation and intention. Marketing implications of these results are discussed.

Keywords: skiing, motivation, involvement, intention to continuing participation

## **An Examination of the Relationships between Motivation, Involvement and Intention to continuing Participation among Recreational Skiers**

### **Introduction**

The intention to continuing participation in sports and recreation behavior is among the challenges facing recreation researchers today (Alexandris, Kouthouris & Girgolas, 2007; Gahwiler & Havitz, 1998; Park, 1996). The positive relationship between intentions to continue active participation has positive effect in public physical, emotional and mental health (Blair, 1993; Helgo & Drake, 2001). Therefore is important for researchers and practitioners to identify the factors that contribute to this prediction.

The relationship between motivation and behaviour is well established (Iso-Ahola, 1999); however recent studies (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Kyle, Absher, Hammitt & Cavin, 2006; Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004) have proposed that this relationship is more complex, since there are attitudinal constructs that interact with motivations and determine behavioural outcomes (e.g., continuing participation). The concept of motivation refers to the forces that initiate, direct and sustain human behaviour (Iso-Ahola, 1999; Weissinger & Bandalos, 1995). Different theoretical approaches have been used and a variety of measurement models have been proposed to measure leisure motivation. Iso-Ahola (1982) proposed approach (seeking) and avoidance (escaping) motivation forces, Crompton and McKay (1997) categorized motivations in pull and push factors, Deci and Ryan (1985) supported intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Recours, Souvill & Griffet, 2004; Treasure, 2001). In the context of active recreation, the Recreation Experience Preference scale (Manfredo, Driver, & Tarant, 1997) has been the most widely applied ones.

Involvement with an activity is one of the constructs that has been proposed as an important factor in understanding recreation behaviour (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999). Studies conducted in recreational settings have showed that individuals who are more involved with an activity are more likely to remain customers in the future (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). A variety of behavioural and attitudinal factors have been proposed as antecedents of leisure involvement by Iwasaki and Havitz (2004), as place attachment (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2003), commitment (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004), attitudinal (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999) and behavioural loyalty (Havitz & Dimanche 1990, Kyle, & all, 2004). Empirical research on

the influence of the above factors on the development of leisure involvement is still limited.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between motivation and involvement, and to investigate the possible mediating role of involvement to motivation toward intention for participation in a very popular outdoor recreation activity in Greece, that of winter skiing.

## **Theoretical Background**

### Recreation and Tourism Motivation

The concept of motivation refers to the forces that initiate, direct and sustain human behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1999). According to Fodness (1994), one of the limitations of the tourism motivation research has been the lack of a universally agreed conceptualisation of motivation. As a result, researchers have measured motivation with a variety of scales that have not been validated across different groups and tourist contexts. In the context of holidaymakers, Fodness (1994) applied the functional approach (Katz, 1960) to develop a scale to measure travellers' motivation. The functional approach proposes that individuals' attitudes are developed in order to satisfy internal / psychological needs. The theory proposes four functions of motivation: the knowledge function, the utilitarian function, the social-adjustive function, and the value-expressive function.

The relationship between leisure and tourism motivation remains a topic of discussion in the literature. Iso-Ahola (1992) criticized previous tourism researchers, who neglected to examine the mechanisms of leisure motivation; he proposed that tourism motivation is part of leisure motivation. Building on this argument Ryan and Glendon (1998) tried to show the applicability of a leisure motivation scale (Beard & Ragheb, 1987) in a tourism context (holidaymakers). These authors applied a gap analysis by measuring the importance of specific motives as driving forces towards visiting specific holiday destinations and measured the degree of satisfaction of these motives. By producing specific clusters of visitors and further testing their differences on destination attributes, they concluded that leisure motivations are applicable in the context of mainstream tourist activities.

In the context of active recreation, the Recreation Experience Preference scale (Manfredo, et al., 1997) has been widely applied. Recreation experience was viewed as

'the package or bundle of psychological outcomes desired from a recreation engagement' (p. 189). This simply means that individuals are engaged in recreation activities (e.g., trekking) in order to achieve certain psychological outcomes (e.g., stress relief). The early scale that was developed by Driver (1983) was a very detailed one, consisting of nineteen domains and 328 items. Manfredi et al., (1997) conducted a meta-analysis of studies using the REP scale 1976-1986 and provided evidence for its validity and reliability. The same authors also suggest that since the psychological outcome dimensions covered by the scale are extensive, researchers can determine which ones are applicable in the context of their studies and use shortened versions of the scale (eighteen domains and 108 items). Shorter versions of this scale have been used (Kyle, Absher, Hammit, & Cavin, 2006).

In conclusion, a review of the published studies on motivation research in the leisure and tourism literature indicates that the conceptualisation and measurement of motivation are not yet clear issues. Different theoretical approaches have been used and as a result a variety of measurement models have been proposed to measure motivation. This might also be related to the heterogeneity of tourists.

#### Leisure Involvement

The construct of involvement is widely studied in leisure, recreation and tourism research. Involvement is defined as an "unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreational activity or associated product" (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997, p.246). This definition addresses mainly the social-psychological aspect of involvement (Kim & Scott, 1997). It is widely accepted today that involvement is a multi-dimensional construct. A series of studies provided support for the construct validity of the tri-dimensional model (Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004). In a more recent study Kyle, Absher, Hammit & Cavi (2006), proposed a five dimensional model –attraction, centrality, social bonding, identity affirmation, identity expression - which could be tested in the context of skiing participation in future studies.

Attraction, centrality and expression were the three dimensions proposed. Attraction refers to the perceived importance that an activity holds for an individual, and the fun, pleasure and enjoyment that derives from participating in a specific activity (McIntyre & Pigram, 1992). Centrality refers to the value that an activity holds in an individual's everyday life. Individuals who score high in the centrality dimension refer to activities that play a central role in their everyday life (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). Finally,

self-expression refers to the “self-representation or the impression of the self that individuals wish to convey to others through their participation in the activity” (Kyle & Chick, 2004, p.245).

It has been proposed that involvement is one of the outcomes of motivation (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). This proposition has been empirically verified by recent studies in the leisure literature (Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2004; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Kyle et al., 2006). Kyle et al.'s (2006) study of camping motivation utilized 15-items from the original Recreation Experience Preference scale (Manfredo et al., 1997). The results of the study provided support for the relationship between motivation and involvement. They further indicated that attraction was positively influenced by escape motives, centrality was positively influenced by learning motives, and expression was influenced by learning motives. Evidence for the relationship between motivation and involvement has also been provided by Funk et al. (2004) and Iwasaki and Havitz (2004). In Funk et al.'s (2004) study a sample of season ticket holders in Women's National Basketball Association was used. The results provided evidence that the attraction dimension was influenced by motives related to the environment of the game, the centrality dimension was influenced by socialization related motives and the expression dimension was influenced by motives related to “team identification” and “role models”. Iwasaki and Havitz (2004) also provided empirical evidence for the relationship between motivation and involvement although this study used a uni-dimensional measure of motivation.

The aim of this study was to test the relationship among motivation, involvement, and intention to continue participation in recreation skiing, and to test the mediating role of involvement in the relationship between motivation and intention to continue participation. We hypothesized that motivation influences involvement, as Iwasaki & Havitz, (2004) reported, which in turn influences intention to continue skiing participation. However, considering previous motivation research regarding motivation's direct relationship with participation (e.g. Alexandris et al., 2002; Vallerand & Losier, 1999), we further aimed to test if motivation (REP scales) has a relationship with intention to continue participation. More specifically, the objectives of the study were as follows: a) to test the influence of involvement on the development of intention to continuing skiing participation; b) to investigate the influence of motivations on the development of leisure involvement; c) to test the degree to which involvement acts as a mediator of the relationship between motivations and intention to continuing skiing participation.

## Methodology

### Sample

Two hundred and twenty four (N=224) adult recreational skiers (41.8% females) participated in this research. Data was collected in Parnassus ski resort located in South Greece. Prior to the data collection permission was granted by the management of the resort. The majority of the samples were single individuals 161 (72.1%). In terms of the age, 30.4% of the respondents were between 18-25 years old, 36% were between 26 and 35 years old, and 33.6% were older than 45 years old. Finally, the majority of the sample was educated at Colleges (31.1%), while 23.6% of them were university graduates. All the demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=224)

Gender Groups	Age Groups	Marital Status
Males: (130) 58.2 %	Group 1:Age 18-25: (68) 30.4 %	Single: (161) 72.1%
Females:(94) 41.8 %	Group 2: Age 26-35: (80) 36 %	Married: (63) 27.9 %
	Group 3: Age 36-65: (76) 33.6 %	
Participants Groups	Occupational Groups	Educational Groups
Infrequent: (67) 30%	Part Time: (50) 22.3%	Secondary: (47) 21.3%
Moderate: (62) 28%	Officer: (98) 43.6%	Colleges: (70) 31.1%
Frequent: (50) 22%	Unemployed: (22) 9.9%	Univ Grad: (53) 23.6%
Systematic: (45) 20%	Entr/urship: (54) 24.2%	Students: (54) 24.4%

### Questionnaires

**Motivation:** Motivation for skiing participation was measured with a modified version of the Recreation Experience Preference scale, which was originally developed by Driver (1983). Manfreda, et al., 1997) provided evidence for the reliability and validity of the scale. For the purpose of the present study 15 dimensions were selected on the basis of being applicable to recreational skiing (Physical Fitness, Enjoy the Nature, Skill Development, Competence Testing, Escape from Pressure, Physical Rest, Excitement, Be with Friends, Be with the Family, Find new People, Risk Taking, Achievement, Telling Others, Equipment, Social Recognition). The selection of particular dimensions was made after a critical analysis of the scale by the authors, and two sport psychologists with experience in downhill skiing. Each dimensions consisted of three items.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of the 45 items as motives for the participation in recreational skiing, on a seven- point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Cronbach’s alpha scores ranged from .86 to .92, showing that the 15 subscales were reliable in terms of their internal consistency

Involvement: Involvement with skiing was measured using Kyle et al.’s (2004) scale. This is a three dimensional scale that includes the following dimensions: a) attraction, measured with four items, b) centrality, measured with three items, and c) self-expression, measured with three items. Seven point Likert type scales were used, ranging from “very much” to “not at all”. Cronbach’s alpha scores ranged from .69 to .86. Intention for continuing participation was measured with three items: “how much determined are you to continue doing ski”, “how much committed are you to continue doing ski”, “how much difficult would be for you to stop doing ski”. Five-point Likert type scales were used, ranging from “very much” to “not at all”. Similar items have been used for measuring loyalty in previous studies (Alexandris & Stodolska, 2004; Armitage & Conner, 1999; Smith & Biddle, 1999). (Cronbach’s  $\alpha=.89$ )

Demographic information: In the last part of the instrument, respondents were asked to provide demographic information regarding their gender, marital status (single, married), age, frequency of skiing participation, occupation, and education level.

### **Process**

The questionnaires were distributed in the cafeteria of the resort to everybody who was more than 18 years old, and had participated in skiing activities during the specific day. An oral question was used to separate skiers from non-skiers, four hundred questionnaires were distributed and two hundred and twenty four (N=224) were collected back, a response rate of 65%. Commenting on the sampling method, it should be noted, that it was not a strict probability method; it was, however, the best choice in order to collect the data required to test the theoretical model.

### **Results**

The battery of fifteen motives (Recreational Experience Preferences) in this study was comprised (break) in three categories/groups. At the first group was contained the most important motives ‘Physical Fitness’ (M=5.7), ‘Enjoy the nature’ (M=5.6), ‘Skill Development’ (M=5.5), ‘Competence Testing’ and ‘Escape from Pressure’ (M=5.3) At the second group was contained “Physical Rest’ (M=4.9), ‘Excitement’ (M=4.6), ‘Be with friends’ and ‘Be with family’ (M=4.4), ‘Find new people’ (M=4.2). At the third group was

contained the less important to skiing participation motives: 'Risk taking' (M=3.9), 'Achievement' (M=3.6), 'Telling Others' (M=2.9), 'Equipment' (M=2.8), and 'Social Recognition' (M=2.8).

In terms of involvement subscales descriptive statistics indicated that "Attraction" had the highest mean score (M=5.1), followed by 'Self-expression' (M=4.1). "Centrality" sub-scale had the lowest mean score (M=3.8). Finally 'intention to continuing' skiing had an average to high mean score (M=3.7). Descriptive statistics for all the variables of the study are provided in Table 2.

In the present study, the role of involvement as a mediator variable between motivation and intention was testified According to Baron's and Kenny's (1986) methodology model, a four-step approach is required in order to test for the mediation effect of a variable, with the use of several regression analyses. Mediation is supported when the following four criteria are satisfied: a) a significant correlation between the independent (Motivation dimensions) and dependent (Intention), b) a significant correlation between the independent (Motivation dimensions) and the mediator involvement subscales (Attraction, Centrality and Expression), c) the mediator involvement subscales (Attraction, Centrality and Expression), should have a significant unique effect on the dependent variable (intention), and d) a regression analysis with both independent variable (motivation dimensions) and mediator (involvement subscales) predicting the dependent (intention). Full mediation is supported when the effect of the independent is non-significantly different from zero. If this effect is reduced but still being significant then it is partially mediated.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics for all the variables of the study.

Variable	Items	M	SD	Min	Max	Cronbach's $\alpha$
1. Physical Fitness	3	5.7	1.7	1	7	.91
2. Enjoy the Nature	3	5.6	1.8	1	7	.90
3. Skill Development	3	5.5	1.6	1	7	.92
4. Competence Testing	3	5.3	1.6	1	7	.89
5. Escape from Pressure	3	5.3	1.7	1	7	.87
6. Physical Rest	3	4.9	1.8	1	7	.90
7. Excitement	3	4.6	1.8	1	7	.93
8. Be with Friends	3	4.4	1.5	1	7	.91

9. Be with the Family	3	4.4	1.6	1	7	.88
10. Find new People	3	4.2	1.7	1	7	.89
11. Risk Taking	3	3.9	1.9	1	7	.90
12. Achievement	3	3.6	1.7	1	7	.91
13. Telling Others	3	2.9	1.7	1	7	.90
14. Equipment	3	2.8	1.6	1	7	.87
15. Social Recognition.	3	2.8	1.6	1	7	.86
Involvement, <i>Attraction</i>	4	5.1	1.3	1	7	.86
Involvement, <i>Centrality</i>	3	3.8	1.4	1	7	.81
Involvement, <i>Expression</i>	3	4.1	1.5	1	7	.69
Intention to participation	3	3.7	1.1	1	5	.76

#### a) First Step: Establishment of the Link between Motivation and Intention

A regression analysis was conducted aiming to establish the link between motivation (dimensions) and behavioural intention. Intention was set as the dependent variable and the fifteen motivation dimensions were set as the independent variables (Table 3). The results indicated that motivation dimensions predicted a significant amount of variance on intention ( $F=4.1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Three of the dimensions (Achievement, Be with Friends, and Enjoy the Nature) contributed significantly to the prediction, with the 'Friends' dimension being the major contributor ( $\beta=.25$ ).

**Table 3.** Prediction of Intention from Motivation.

Motivation Dimensions	<b>B</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Achievement	.12	.24	2.7	.01
Be with Friends	.12	.25	3.0	.01
Enjoy the Nature	.09	.18	1.9	.05

$F=4.1$ ,  $p < .001$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .16$ ,  $R^2 = .21$

#### b) Second Step: Establishment of the Link between Motivation and Involvement

A three set of regression analyses was conducted aiming to establish the link between motivation dimensions and three involvement subscales.

In first regression analysis, attraction was entered as the dependent variable, and the motivation dimensions were entered as the independent variables (Table 4a). The

results indicated that the regression model was significant ( $F=9.2$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The Escape, Achievement and Be with Friends motivation dimensions offered respectively (beta=.32, .25 & .16) significant contributions.

In the second regression analysis, centrality was entered as the dependent variable (Table 4b). Once again the regression was significant ( $F=5.7$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The Achievement, Escape and Equipment motivation dimensions offered respectively (beta=.31, .24 & .24) significant contributions.

In the third regression analysis, expression subscale was entered (Table 4c) that was also significant ( $F=8.2$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The Achievement, Escape and Risk motivation dimensions offered respectively (beta=.19, .16 & .22) significant contributions.

**Table 4a,b,c.** Prediction of Involvement subscales from Motivation dimensions.

	4a. Attraction		4b. Centrality		4c. Expression	
	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
Achievement	.25	3.2**	.31	3.6**	.19	2.3*
Escape	.32	3.8**	.24	2.9**	.16	2.1
Equipment	n.s	n.s	.24	2.9**	n.s	n.s
Friends	.16	2.2*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Risk	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	.22	2.8**
	$F=9.2$ , $p<.001$ Adjusted $R^2=.34$ , $R^2=.38$		$F=5.7$ , $p<.001$ Adjust $R^2=.22$ , $R^2=.27$		$F=8.2$ $p<.001$ , Adjust $R^2=.32$ , $R^2=.36$	

\*\* $p<.001$ , \* $p<.05$

### c) Third Step: Establishing the link between Involvement and Intention

A regression analysis was conducted aiming to test the degree to which involvement subscales could predict behavioural intention. Intention was entered as the dependent variable, while the three involvement subscales were entered as the independent ones (Table 5). The results indicated that the regression model was significant ( $F=67.4$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Only Attraction and Centrality subscales offered respectively (beta=.60 and .15) significant contributions.

**Table 5.** Prediction of Intention from Involvement.

Involvement Subscales	B	β	t	p
Attraction	.40	.60	10.9	.001
Centrality	.09	.15	2.3	.05
Self Expression	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s

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$F=67.4$ ,  $p<.001$ , Adjusted  $R^2=.45$ ,  $R^2=.46$

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#### d) Fourth Step: Examining of the Mediation Role of Involvement

Once again, a regression analysis was performed examining simultaneously the influence of both motivation dimensions and involvement subscales, on behavioural intention (table 6). Overall, the regression model was significant ( $F=12.6$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Beta's of motivation dimension were not significant except  $\beta_e$  with Friends dimension which reduced to .16, though still being significant. Results show that involvement subscales (Attraction and Centrality) partially (not fully) mediated the relationship between motivation and intention.

**Table 6.** Prediction of Intention from Involvement & Motivation.

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b><math>B</math></b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><math>t</math></b>	<b><math>p</math></b>
Attraction	.38	.58	8.1	.001
Centrality	.09	.15	2.4	.05
Friends	.08	.16	2.4	.05

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$F=12.6$ ,  $p<.001$ , Adjusted  $R^2=.45$ ,  $R^2=.49$

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### **Discussion**

The purpose of the study was to explore the nature of the relationship between motivation and involvement among a sample of Greek recreational skiers. The present study, as other studies (Kyle et al., 2006; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004), supported the main hypothesis that motivation is an antecedent of involvement. Kyle's and colleagues' study (2006), despite that it was conducted in a different country (USA) than Greece and at a different sample (campers) than the present study (skiers), presented very similar results. The most important motives for both the studies were: a) 'to enjoy the nature ( $M=5.6$ ), b) to 'escape from every day routine' ( $M=5.3$ ), and c) to "be with friends/family'.

Similarities were also revealed at the involvement subscales. The attraction subscale had the highest scores. The self-expression subscale had the second higher score, both in the skiers sample and the camper sample. At Kyle et al.'s study this subscale was divided in two, a) Identity Affirmation and b) Identity Expression. The least important involvement subscale was 'Centrality'.

Comparing all the scores between the two studies the following conclusions can be drawn. Regardless of the sample differences in culture, nationality, and other demographics the two studies presented nearly the same scores in motivations and involvement subscales levels. In reverse, other studies have shown that both leisure motivation and involvement vary by setting type (Kyle et al, 2003, 2004; McIntyre, 1989; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992; Williams et al., 1990).

The first hypothesis of the present study, was confirmed since 'achievement' 'be with friends' and 'enjoy the nature', motivation dimensions, successfully predicted future intention for skiing participation. Skiing is popular outdoor activity and thus participation in skiing provides a chance for meeting friends or family members in a healthy, fresh and hygiene, environment. Still 'achievement' related motives seemed to be important for participants in order to develop skiing skills and abilities Marketing managers in skiing centers have to create appropriate conditions toward this direction. They must create comfortable resorts, providing quality services, and enhancing communication between clients. They can also act to protect nature environment from overcrowding and human interventions. The results indicated that individuals who are driven by achievement, friends and nature related motives are more likely to continue skiing participants. These results support skiing as a social dynamic outdoor activity.

The second hypothesis was marginally confirmed. Only one of the fifteen selected motivations (from REP battery), the 'achievement' motivation, influenced the three involvement subscales. The second strongest in predictive ability motivation dimension was 'escape', which successfully contributed in the prediction of two involvement subscales 'attraction' and 'centrality'. Three more motives, 'equipment', 'be with friends' and 'risk', optionally, contributed marginally, in the prediction of 'attraction', 'centrality' and 'Self-expression' involvement subscales, respectively. In particular, 'attraction' refers to the perceived importance that an activity holds for an individual. 'Escape in nature' (Kyle's, et al., 2006), 'be with friends', and 'try to achieve a target' are crucial motives that could satisfy the attraction 'perspective' of skiing involvement. Similar, 'centrality', as a value that an activity holds in an individual's everyday life, was influenced by 'achievement' (Kyle's, et al, 2006), 'escape' and the use ness of 'skiing equipment and relevant clothes', motives that indicate every day's pursuits. The 'Self – expression' involvement subscale, refers to the impression of the self that individuals wish to convey to others through skiing. In this case the results supported this direction,

through 'achievement' and 'risk taking'. The combination of these two motivations seems satisfactory.

Confirming previous studies (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004), the results of this study provided evidence that involvement is an important construct that can help towards the prediction of participant intention to continuing participation. It should, however, be pointed out that only the attraction and centrality dimensions and not self expression, were those that contributed to the prediction of intention, 'Self-expression' involvement subscale appeared weak and not dynamic. This is due to the fact that individuals, in their everyday life, participate in a number of different – but similar to skiing - outdoor or indoor activities, from which potentially acquire 'the impression of the self that individuals wish to convey to others through sport participation. The development of attraction and centrality should be targeted by resort managers, if intention is to be increased. As previously discussed, attraction relates to feelings of pleasure, fun, and excitement that an individual experiences from participating in an activity (McIntyre & Pigram, 1992). Resort managers and employees should attempt to increase visitors' experiences regarding different skiing activities, the resort, and its facilities through the delivery of teaching seminars, and the organization of events, celebrations and exhibitions.

On the other hand, centrality refers to the role that an activity holds in an individual's life in relation to the social environment (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). It also relates to significant others' views on an individual's participation in a specific activity (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). Resort managers should communicate information about the resort, its facilities in the forms of leaflets, seminars, or mail outs with weather forecast, road information, ski slopes conditions, and the organisation of cultural and sport events dates. Finally, promoting group participation can also influence the development of skiing participation. Having friends and partners with similar interests can help visitors to develop the centrality dimension.

One of the main objectives of the study was to test if involvement mediates the relationship between motivations and intention. The results indicated that attraction and centrality partly mediated the relationship between motivations and intention. In details, attraction fully mediated the relationship between the "friends' dimension and intention, while centrality partially mediated the relationship between "friends" and intention. Subsequently, "achievement" motives influence intention through their positive effects on the development of attraction, while "friends" motives have both direct and indirect (through attraction) effects on intention.

As previously discussed, attraction is mainly built on the feelings of pleasure and enjoyment that participants develop when participating in a leisure activity (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). Skiing resort managers should, therefore, make any effort to guarantee positive visitors' experiences. This is particularly important for inexperienced skiers and beginners, whose experiences are usually negatively influenced by intrapersonal constraints, such as limited skills, low physical levels and low self-esteem (Alexandris et al., 2007). Targeting the attraction dimensions requires, therefore, a consumer approach on the development and the delivery of the "skiing product". Market segmentation based on psychographic characteristics of the participants (e.g., skill level and personal needs) can help towards this direction. Furthermore, building the core product (skiing) with supporting ones (e.g., events, demonstrations, celebrations etc.) can improve the experience of recreational skiers. Finally, safety issues can also be related to the development of the attraction dimensions, since research has shown that safety concerns are among the main factors that constraint recreational skiers (Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2005).

The centrality was the second dimension that contributed to the prediction of intention to continuing participation. As previously discussed, it refers to the central role that a leisure activity plays in an individual's life. It could be proposed that increasing individuals' knowledge about skiing activities is the main strategy to target centrality. Providing information about the skiing equipment, the resorts, the skiing programs and events can help targeting centrality. These propositions are supported by the results related to the relationship between motivations and centrality. The "equipment" related motives were the main ones that predicted centrality.

Subsequently, individuals who have reached to the point to look for information about skiing equipment and have increased knowledge about skiing are those that have developed the centrality dimension in a greater degree. Resort manager can provide information in the form of leaflets and newsletters. Direct mail can be used to send this information. Interactive web-sites can also help towards this direction. Building communication channels with customers can help resort managers to develop relationship marketing programs with their visitors. This can help towards making visitors more involved with the resort's activities.

### **Conclusion and Future Research**

This study aimed to investigate the interactions among motivations, involvement and intentions in the context of skiing participation. The results provided evidence for the relationships among the above constructs. They indicated that motivation is a useful construct for understanding the development of skiing involvement. Furthermore, they provided evidence that skiing involvement is influenced by certain motivation dimensions (achievement and escape). In the present study we used a three dimensional involvement model as proposed by Kyle et al. (2004) while links among the attraction centrality self expression dimensions and intentions for continuing participation were established. In terms of the mediation effects, the results indicated that the attraction and centrality dimensions were the only ones that partially mediated the relationships among motivations and intention.

These results should be verified by future studies in different recreational activities, programs and settings and different populations. Testing the model in more homogeneous samples could also increase its validity and applicability of results. It could, for example, be suggested that motivations and involvement levels might vary among groups with different skill levels, experience or different demographic characteristics. Future studies should therefore test decision-making models within specific target groups. The inclusion of more constructs that have been shown to interact with involvement and intention, such as place attachment (Kyle et al., 2003), commitment (Kyle et al., 2005), and could also help towards a better understanding of recreational skiers decision making process.

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