

UNIVERSITÄT
BAYREUTH



EUROPEAN
OUTDOOR
GROUP

OUTDOOR SPORTS MOTIVATION STUDY

Why do people take part in outdoor activities?

Research report

Study carried out for OutDoor trade fair

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Background

The outdoor market is booming. More and more Germans are spending increasing amounts of time engaging in open-air leisure activities, whereas the popularity of indoor sports is largely unchanged and in some cases declining.

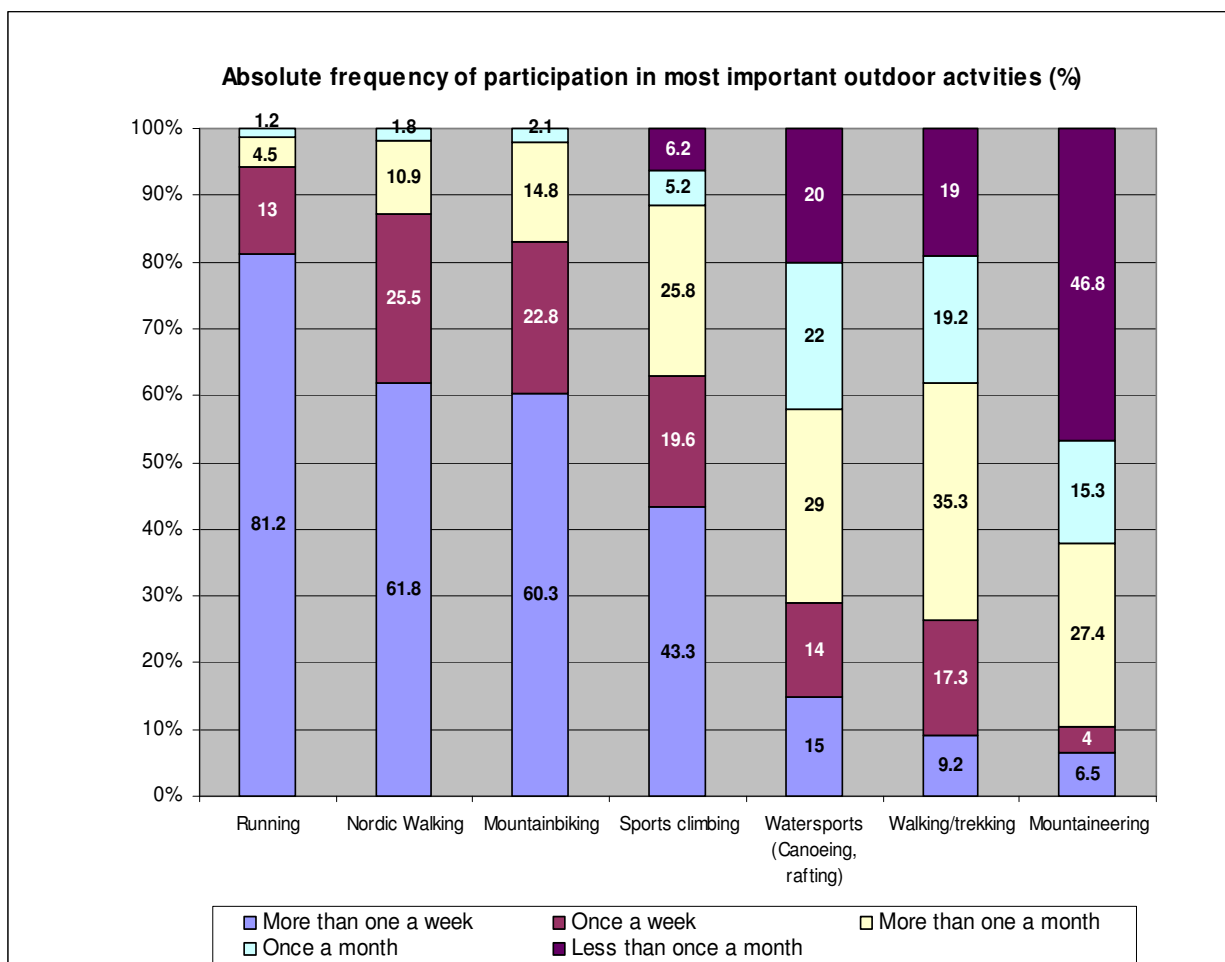
Clearly, these high participation levels reflect a strong degree of motivation, and yet there have been surprisingly few studies of the main reasons why people engage in such pursuits. Obtaining and understanding this information is crucial to businesses operating in the outdoor market.

If equipment manufacturers and retailers can understand why one activity is waxing in popularity as another wanes, they will be better able to predict future trends and focus more effectively on meeting customer demand.

The main purpose of this study is to identify people's motivations for participating in selected outdoor activities. It was carried out using a standardised online questionnaire from 17 May to 7 June 2010. The study population consisted of people involved in these activities who were contacted via the Globetrotter Newsletter, sent to some 420,000 subscribers throughout Germany on 18 and 20 May 2010.

Study overview

Research questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the main reasons for taking part in selected outdoor sports? 2. Are there differences in motivation based on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity itself? • Gender? • Age? 3. Is there a certain kind of person who takes an active part in outdoor sports? 																
Survey population	Germans taking an active part in outdoor sports, whose main sport is walking and trekking, mountaineering, sports climbing, running, trail running, Nordic walking, watersports (canoeing and rafting), or mountain biking.																
Parent population	Approx. 420,000 recipients of the Globetrotter Newsletter																
Sample																	
Method	Ad hoc																
Response	1,720 questionnaires, of which 1,436 usable																
Gender breakdown	782 men, 654 women																
Age range	14-70																
Activity breakdown	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Walking and trekking</td> <td style="text-align: right;">n = 699</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mountain biking</td> <td style="text-align: right;">n = 189</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Running</td> <td style="text-align: right;">n = 154</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mountaineering</td> <td style="text-align: right;">n = 124</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Watersports</td> <td style="text-align: right;">n = 100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sports climbing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">n = 97</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nordic walking</td> <td style="text-align: right;">n = 55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trail running</td> <td style="text-align: right;">n = 18</td> </tr> </table>	Walking and trekking	n = 699	Mountain biking	n = 189	Running	n = 154	Mountaineering	n = 124	Watersports	n = 100	Sports climbing	n = 97	Nordic walking	n = 55	Trail running	n = 18
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Survey method	Standardised online questionnaire																
Survey period	17 May to 7 June 2010																
Client:	Messe OutDoor, Friedrichshafen																



Summary

The survey revealed two key findings:

- Respondents often mentioned other, similar activities which they also practised. Many sports climbers also go mountaineering, runners often do trail running, walkers enjoy Nordic walking, and watersports enthusiasts often list sailing under their other activities. The survey may also help to explain why sports climbers also have a strong affinity for mountain biking.
- Mountaineers and sports climbers take part in the largest number of other activities when the sample size is taken into account. On average, they participate in 2.7 others. Runners and mountain bikers listed an average of around two additional activities, and walkers, Nordic walkers and watersports enthusiasts cited between 1.3 and 1.6.

Top ten motivations for taking part in outdoor sporting activities

Rank	Walking and trekking	Mountaineering	Watersports	Running	Nordic walking	Mountain biking	Sports climbing
1	Switching off	The beauty of nature	Switching off	Getting fitter	Getting healthier	Getting fitter	Endurance and achievement
2	The beauty of nature	Switching off	Mental relaxation	Getting healthier	Getting fitter	Getting healthier	Friendship
3	The sounds of nature	Mental relaxation	The sounds of nature	Switching off	Switching off	Mental relaxation	Meeting people
4	Mental relaxation	The sounds of nature	The beauty of nature	Mental relaxation	Mental relaxation	Switching off	Switching off
5	Visual beauty	New experiences	Visual beauty	Physical experiences	The sounds of nature	The beauty of nature	Improving physical skills
6	Meeting people	Visual beauty	Meeting people	Preventing illness	Losing weight	The sounds of nature	Getting fitter
7	New experiences	Getting fitter	New experiences	Losing weight	Preventing illness	Physical experiences	Company
8	Getting healthier	Meeting people	Improving mood	Endurance and achievement	Experiencing the beauty of nature	Endurance and achievement	Feeling of control
9	Getting fitter	Endurance and achievement	Temperature stimuli	The sounds of nature	Visual beauty	Visual beauty	Mental skills
10	Temperature stimuli	Friendship	Getting fitter	The beauty of nature	Improving mood	Improving mental skills	Concentration

Summary

The great popularity of outdoor sporting activities in Germany is due to a variety of motivating factors. The most important are as follows:

- Physical wellbeing: the fact that these pursuits help you to switch off and recharge your batteries
- Improved health and fitness
- The experience of nature: visual beauty, sounds, temperature stimuli
- Social wellbeing: spending time with friends and feeling good
- The excitement and curiosity provoked by new experiences

However, these key factors are not the same for all outdoor sports, and there are others which apply to different sports. Some groups of activities have very similar motivation profiles; for example running, mountain biking and Nordic walking are fitness-oriented, whereas walking, trekking and watersports are more about relaxation and the enjoyment of nature.

There are also differences in motivation and preferred activity by age and gender. For example young people, who often have a strong need for excitement, represent a large proportion of sports climbers. Mental and social wellbeing and experiencing nature are very important to women, who are more strongly represented in walking and trekking and in Nordic walking.

Cluster analysis also shows that a large proportion of outdoor sports enthusiasts can be allocated to a single motivational type. There are also differing motivational patterns within activities, as some people fit into different clusters.

Some aspects of this analysis are very important to outdoor sports equipment manufacturers and retailers, particularly with respect to advertising policy. For example,

- Different approaches should be used for different activities and motivation profiles. For instance, sports climbers need to be targeted using advertising that emphasises the excitement and social aspects of their chosen pursuit, whereas walkers and watersports enthusiasts tend to be more interested in relaxation and nature. Fitness-centred advertising will appeal most to runners, Nordic walkers and mountain bikers.

- Some activities have similar motivation profiles, so the synergies between them can be exploited. For example, a company operating walking holidays could also offer Nordic walking or canoeing courses, and the positive image of walking can also be transferred to other fields of business, such as Nordic walking and canoeing equipment.
- Depending on the target group, advertising can be targeted by age and gender. Younger participants and men are more likely to be excited by new experiences and challenges that test their boundaries, while health, fitness and nature-related themes will appeal more to middle-aged and older participants.

This study shows that outdoor activities are subject to a number of motivational factors and patterns. This variety applies equally to men and women and to younger and older age groups, and reflects the different nature of the activities concerned. If the boom in the outdoor market is to continue, advertisers must take all of these factors into account.