

A Study of the Participation and Consumption of Sport Tourism among Groups of Different Socio-economic Status in Taiwan

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Abstract

Sport Tourism is one of the fastest growing parts of the tourism industry in the world. Sport sociologists from developing countries have shown that sports participation is still stratified based on social status. The **purpose** of this study was to reveal the current situation of sport tourism participation, and compare it with the participation and consumption of sport tourism among groups of different socio-economic status in Taiwan. The **method** of this study utilized a self-devised "Sport Tourism Participation Questionnaire", which was distributed to 3840 residents of Taiwan aged 12 or above in each county between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006. The **result** of the data analysis concluded the following: 1) The annual frequency of residents of Taiwan participating in domestic tours averaged 3.8 times per person and 85.45% of them took at least one domestic trip. Furthermore, the annual sport tourism participation averaged 1.64 times per person with 59.55% of residents taking part in a minimum of one sport tourism activity. 2) The annual frequency of residents of Taiwan participating in overseas tours averaged 0.39 times per person and 24.04% of participants took at least one overseas trip. Furthermore, the annual sport tourism participation averaged 0.90 times per person with 61.54% of residents taking part in a minimum of one sport tourism activity. 3) There were differences between participants of different socio-economic status in general tourism and sports tourism participation frequency. 4) There was also a significant difference in the participation of groups of different socio-economic status in general in overseas tourist activities and overseas sports tourism related activities. In **conclusion**, the participation in travel and sport tourism by Taiwanese nationals compared with that of nationals of developed countries is still on the low side. This means that there is still potential for growth in sport tourism participation. There are still obvious differences in the general and sport tourism participation among members of the different socio-economic strata. These differences are most evident in the frequency of participation and the amounts of money spent.

Keywords: sport tourism, socio-economic status, social stratification

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1. Introduction

According to the 2000 report of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism has become the chief source of income of foreign-exchange (FX) for many countries, 8 percent of the FX was due to international tourism profit. Moreover tourism accounted for a major portion of international trade (approximately 53,300 hundred million US dollars). By 2020, the total number of participants in international tourism is estimated to reach 1.6 billion, and the global tourism revenue could reach two trillion US dollars (Tourism Bureau, 2004). Even in 2004, with the Indian Ocean tsunami at the end of that year, and with international terrorism threats, the global tourist industry still grew by 5.5 percent and a record eight hundred million people participated in foreign tourism (WTO, 2006 see figure1 and figure 2). Moreover, according the World Travel & Tourism Council, (WTTC) 2000 tourism report, the scale of the global tourism industry accounted for 10.8 percent global GDP, reaching more 3,5 trillion US dollars. In the same report, WTTC estimated that the scale of the global tourism industry will be responsible for 11.6 percent of global GDP, reaching 6.6 trillion US dollars by 2010. Meanwhile, the number of global tourism industry employees will rise to approximately 192 million (a share of 8.33% of total global employment), and this number was estimated to grow to 251 million by 2010 (Tourism Bureau, 2004). The above shows the importance of the tourist industry to the global economy and the economies of individual countries.

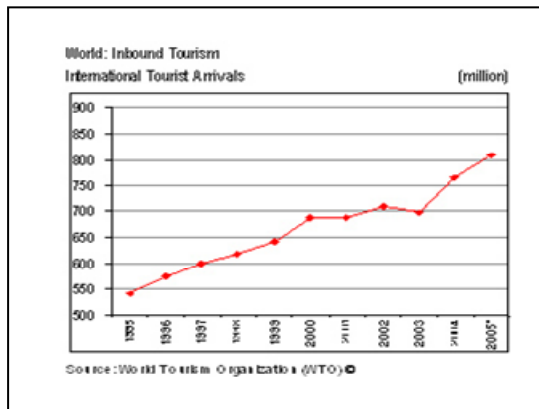


Figure 1 All previous years international tourist's growth tendency chart.

Resource : WTO (2006)

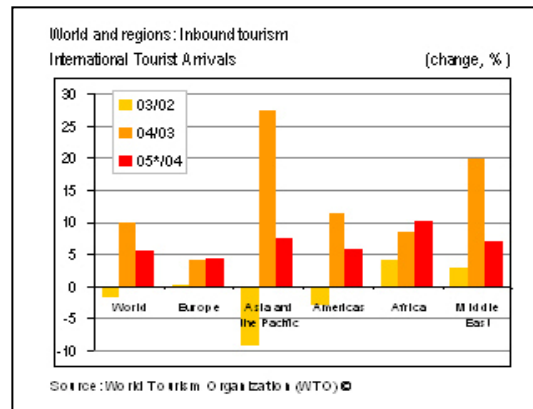


Figure 2 2002-05 international tourist area growth tendency chart.

Resource : WTO (2006)

In 2006 the percentage of Taiwanese residents, aged 12 or above, who took at least one domestic tour was 87.6, the average of tourism participation frequency in one year was 5.49, an average personal expenditure of individuals participating in domestic tourism was 2086 New Taiwan Dollars (US\$64.03), and the total tourist

expenditures were 224.3 billion Taiwan dollars (6.885 billion US dollars), or 2.2% of the total GDP of Taiwan for 2006 (Tourism Bureau, 2007). As popular demand for domestic tourism grows, there is also an increased demand for better value. Sports tourism has also become an important part of this increased demand on the part of participants in domestic tourism. Recently, it has accounted for the biggest proportional growth within the Taiwanese domestic tourist industry (WTO, 1985; Terry, 1996). In recent years, sports tourism has flourished in Taiwan. Participation in events such as the ING Taipei International Marathon, Taroko International Marathon, the I-Lan International Collegiate Invitational Regatta, the Sun Moon Lake International Swimming Competition, the Kenting National Triathlon, white water rafting in Siouguluan and Laonong Rivers, Green Island Snorkeling, stream tracing, rock climbing, the Pro Stroke Golf Tour and numerous others has become a major new trend of growth in the tourism industry (Jiang, 2003).

North American and European sport sociologists' research has shown stratification based on sex, socio-economic status and race in sports tourism participation (Nixon & Frey, 1996). Consequently, it has become necessary for sport tourism promoters to know what the participation and consumption levels are among groups of different socio-economic status in Taiwan. This study tries to focus on this new trend of sport tourism in Taiwan, considering it from a sociological point of view. We explored the differences in sport tourism participation of members of different socio-economic groups in Taiwan. The results of our study could provide our government and tourism industry with information necessary to improve the quality of sport tourism facilities and services, and facilitate future tourism policy making.

1-1 Purpose

Based on the above mentioned background and motives, the purpose of this study is to compare the levels of sport tourism participation among different socio-economic groups in Taiwan. The specific purposes of the study are as follows:

- 1-1-1 To investigate the current state of domestic sport tourism participation in Taiwan;
- 1-1-2 To explore current tendencies of international sport tourism participation by Taiwanese nationals;
- 1-1-3 To compare the levels of participation and consumption of sport tourism of individuals of different socio-economic status in domestic tourism in Taiwan;
- 1-1-4 To compare the participation in and the consumption of sport tourism services of Taiwanese nationals of different socio-economic status in overseas tourism;

1-2 Definition

1-2-1 Sport tourism

Standeven and De Knop(1999) defined it as “all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for noncommercial or business/commercial reasons, that necessitate travel away from home and work locality. In this study, we define sport tourism as “travel for non-commercial reasons, to participate or observe sporting activities away from the home range” (Hall, 1992: 147).

1-2-2 Socio-economic status

Socio-economic status (SES) is the combination of the economic standing and the social position of an individual or a family relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analyzing a family’s SES, the household income earners' education and occupation are examined, as well as combined income, versus individual income (Kraus & Keltner, 2008; NCES, 2009). This study adopts Hollingshead (1957) “Two-Factor Index of Social Position” model which categorizes the subjects’ according to education and occupation, dividing them into five groups. It multiplies the indexes of education by 4 and those of occupation by 7. The sum of the two indexes determines the subjects’ socio-economic status. The socio-economic index is divided into five grades, 11-18, 19-29, 30-40, 41-51 and 52-55.

1-2-3 Social Stratification

In sociology and anthropology, social stratification is the hierarchical arrangement of social classes, castes, and divisions within a society. These hierarchies are not present in all societies, but are quite common in state-level societies (as distinguished from hunter-gatherer or other social arrangements) (Gowdy, 2006). According to Saunders (1990), in modern Western societies, stratification depends on social and economic classes comprising three main layers: upper class, middle class, and lower class. Each class is further subdivided into smaller classes related to occupation. The term *stratification* derives from the geological concept of *strata*, or rock layers created by natural processes.

2. Method

2-1 Subjects

Residents of Taiwan ages 12 or over were the target of research for this study. In order to reflect the population proportionally and according to regional distribution in, stratified convenience sampling was utilized in this study. Trained students working part-time were assigned to conduct face-to-face interviews based on our questionnaire in cities and rural areas in Taiwan in the period between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006. A total of 4,800 questionnaires were sent out, and 3,840

responded (available retrieved rate was 80%). Participants in this study consisted of 1,601 males (41.7%) and 2,239 females (58.3%).

2-2 Instrumentation

The instrument of this study utilized a self-devised “Sport Tourism Participation Questionnaire”, which contained items to ascertain the participants’: (1) demographic characteristics of residence, age, gender, education, occupation, family income, and connubiality; (2) tourism participation frequency, sport tourism participation frequency, number of locations visited, participation type, and consumption.

2-3 Data processing

2-3-1 Socioeconomic status evaluation

The Socioeconomic status (SES) evaluation in this study adopts Hollingshead’s (1957) “Two-Factor Index of Social Position” modifying his method taking into account current socio-economic trends in Taiwan. We have divided the participants into five categories according to level of education and current occupation and then combined their scores in order to determine their socio-economic status. The computing method is as shown in Table 1:

Table 1 multiply indexes of Socioeconomic status counting

occupation level	occupation multiply indexes	education degree	education multiply indexes	Socioeconomic status indexes	SES limits	SES level
I	5×7	I	5×4	55	52-55	I
II	4×7	II	4×4	44	41-51	II
III	3×7	III	3×4	33	30-40	III
IV	2×7	IV	2×4	22	19-29	IV
V	1×7	V	1×4	11	11-18	V

2-3-2 Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics analysis was utilized to deal with qualitative data, showing the frequency, percentage, and average of participants’ characteristics in this study. T-test and One-Way ANOVA were applied to the differences of age, gender, education, occupation, and family income for participants’ characteristics in this study. The significance level in this study was .05 ($p < .05$).

3. Result and Discussion

3-1 Frequency of sport tourism participation in domestic tours

3-1-1 Frequency of domestic tourism

In table 2, we found that the average of domestic tourism frequency for Taiwan residents in 2006 was 3.80 (SD=5.21). 2253 (58.98%) respondents of this study rated participating in domestic tourism 1-4 times per year; another 621(18.67%) respondents stated that they participated in domestic tourism 5-9 times per year. The afore stated shows that 85.45% of respondents to this inquiry participated in domestic tourism. This constitutes a number lower than that reported by the Taiwan Tourism Bureau in 2005 (5.7 times per resident per year, 90% of all respondents). The Difference between these two studies may be due to the different definition of “tourism” and a different sampling strategy. In our study, we have defined “tourism” as “individuals engaging in leisure, commercial, or other types of travel and activities, while residing in a location other than their home (WTO, 1997)”. The definition of “tourism” in the Taiwan Tourism Bureau’s study was broader than that of our study and included activities and travel engaged in while the participants were at their primary place of residence.

Table 2 Summary of frequency of people domestic traveling frequency

(N=3820)

Times/year	n	Percentage	Average	SD	Participation ratio
0	556	14.55	3.80 times/year	5.21	85.45%
1~4	2253	58.98			
5~9	621	16.27			
Over 10	390	10.21			
Total	3820	100.00			

3-1-2 Frequency of Sport tourism participation for domestic tourism

The average of sport tourism participation frequency for respondents was 1.64 times (SD=2.99) in 2006. According to the participants’ responses, 40.45% (1,525) never participated in sport tourism. Of all respondents 39.97% (1,507) stated that they engaged in sport tourism 1-2times per year, while 14.51% (547) reported participating in sports tourism 3-4 times per year. 59.55% of respondents reported participating in sport tourism within the last year (see Table 3). The sport tourism participation rate according to the Taiwan Tourism Bureau’ report (2004) was 12.1%, and that of England was 10-20 % (British Tourist Authority/ English Tourist Board [BTA/ETB], 1992; Withyman, 1994). However, if we consider sport activities as “accessary activities”, then the percentage of sport tourism participation would increase to 25-80 % (Standeven & De Knop, 1999). German Studienkreis fur Tourismus(1990) indicated that 80% tourists had engaged in some kind of sport

activity while engaging in “non-sport” tourism . Smith and Jenner (1990) estimated that 10% of all European tourism can fall under the category of sport tourism, or tourism where the main goal is engaging a sport (it was estimated that the number would grow to 13% by 1995). Data showed that 8.4% of Swedish tourists engaged in sport centered tourism, and 7% of them engaged in sport activities during tourism not specifically oriented toward sports activities. German tourists engaging in sport activities during tourism accounted for 8% of all tourists, but only 7% were categorized “as true sport tourists” (Studienkreis fur Tourismus, 1990). The above data reveals that, be it internationally or domestically, different studies yielded radically different results. The chief reason for this was the respondents’ or researchers’ different definition of “sport tourism”. It is not surprising then that England Leisure Consultants (1992) pointed out that we must be careful to define the noun “sport tourism”, and must interpret sport tourism participation data carefully, lest we come up with highly inaccurate results. Regardless of inaccuracies, the above data reveals rapid, massive increases in sport tourism participation. This indicates that sport activity participation has become a major motivation for tourism.

Table 3 Summary of domestic sport tourism participation frequency

(N=3770)

Times/year	n	Percentage	Average	SD	Participation ratio
0	1525	40.45			
1~2	1507	39.97			
3~5	547	14.51	1.64		
6-10	134	3.54	times/year	2.99	59.55 %
Over 11	57	1.51			
Total	3770	100.00			

3-2 Frequency of sport tourism participation in overseas tourism

3-2-1 Frequency of overseas tourism

Table 4 shows that 728 of the subjects had participated in tourism in 2006. The rate of overseas travel was 24.04. The average number of overseas travel participation is 0.39 (SD =1.02). The number of participants who reported not participating in overseas travel was 2445 (76.10%). 478 (16.08%) people reported traveling abroad once per year. 163 (5.38%) reported traveling abroad two times per year. 38 (1.25%) of participants reported traveling overseas three times per year, and 40 (1.32%) reported traveling abroad 4 of more times per year. The results of this

study contradict those of the 2004 national survey of the frequency of international travel (Tourism Bureau, 2007). The results of the 2004 survey state that the rate of international travel is 21%. Taiwanese nationals engaged in international travel an average of 0.34 times per year. The estimated rate of overseas travel was 21%-24% annually. The number of times of each person engaged in overseas travel was found to have been about 0.34-0.39 times per year on average.

Table 4 Summary of frequency of overseas tourism participation

(N=3820)

Times/year	n	Percentage	Average	SD	Participation ratio
0	2300	75.96			
1	487	16.08			
2	163	5.38	0.39		
3	38	1.25	times/year	1.02	24.04%
Over 4	40	1.32			
Total	3820	100.00			

3-2-2 Frequency of sport tourism participation in overseas tourism

As shown in table 5, in 2006 the average rate of foreign tourism participation was 0.90 (SD =1.02). The participation rate in overseas sports activities is 61.54%. Among participants 43.68% engaged in overseas tourism at least once, while 38.46% did not participate in overseas tourism at all, 13.60% participated two times per year, 3.71% participated three to five times and 0.55% participated six times or more.

The results of studies had done abroad reveal that, not only has sports tourism seen significant growth domestically, but that international sports tourism has grown at a similar rate as well. For example 27.1% of Belgians participate in sports activities while vacationing in Belgium. In contrast, 30.4% of Belgians vacationing abroad engage in sports activities (Westvlaams Economisch Studiebureau, 1991). English tourism administration (the Tourist Board) reports point out internal travel sport tourism can reach 2/3. Overseas travel also accounts for 1/3 (English Tourist Board, 1987). Sport Tourism International Council (STIC, 1997) reports reveal that international sports tourism exceeds 1/3 (34%), but the level of participation in tourism sport activities is up to 42% (average percentage). This percentage can even reach 56% and 54% in the Caribbean area and Europe. The participation level in Asia and South America is 30%. The fact that the overall rate of sport tourism participation has reached 61.54% shows the increasing importance of sport tourism. (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, 1995; Churchill, 1995; Ogilvie & Dickinson, 1992; Smith

& Jenner, 1990; Mudge, 1991; Weiler & Hall, 1992).

Table 5 Summary of frequency of sport tourism participation in overseas tours
(N=728)

Times/year	n	Percentage	Average	SD	Participation ratio
0	280	38.46			
1	318	43.68			
2	99	13.60	0.90	1.02	
3-5	27	3.71			61.54%
Over 6	4	0.55			
Total	728	100.00			

3-3 A Comparison of the participation and consumption of sport tourism levels among groups of different socio-economic status in domestic tours

It tables 6, the differences in sport tourism participation, sport tourism consumption, general tourism participation and general tourism consumption between groups of different socio-economic status become apparent. The Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons result, reveal significant differences between the sport tourism participation and consumption, and the general tourism participation and consumption between individuals of the highest and lowest socio-economic strata.

The above described results reveal that the social stratification when it comes to sport tourism participation is very similar to that of the results reached in similar studies done in Britain (Intel International Group, 1995; Leisure Consultants, 1992). Both studies show that the majority of sport tourism participants belong to the highly educated, professional classes. Researchers in France have reached similar conclusions. In France the highest sport tourism participation levels were among men or women with high level business management positions (Pigeasseau, 1997). All such studies reveal that sport tourism participation occurs mostly in the upper levels of society, among groups of professionals with higher education degrees who have more time and money at their disposal. After all, two prerequisites for consumption of tourism are time and money, and these are not universally available, nor evenly spread where they are available (Standeven & Knop, 1999: 73).

Table 6 Summary of the comparison of the participation and consumption of sport tourism among different socio-economic groups in domestic tours (N=3840)

Variable	SES Level	n	M	SD	F	Post-Hoc Comparisons
frequency of tourism	1	255	2.02	.78	22.00*	3, 4, 5 > 1 3, 4 > 2
	2	2051	2.14	.81		
	3	888	2.33	.79		
	4	561	2.42	.84		
	5	65	2.42	.77		
frequency of sport tourism	1	259	1.57	.80	24.37*	2, 3, 4, 5 > 1 3, 4, 5 > 2
	2	2062	1.76	.86		
	3	891	1.96	.90		
	4	563	2.01	.99		
	5	65	2.11	.92		
consumption of tourism	1	194	4688.99	8323.67	20.87*	3, 4, 5 > 1, 2 5 > 3
	2	1613	5246.75	8342.37		
	3	793	7000.98	8786.13		
	4	514	8475.00	9157.05		
	5	64	10684.38	13438.66		
consumption of sport tourism	1	131	1032.29	1387.95	12.37*	3, 4, 5 > 1, 2
	2	1290	1289.97	1990.47		
	3	623	1810.11	2700.24		
	4	383	1970.51	2432.94		
	5	46	2396.43	4807.46		

* < .05

3-4 A comparison of the participation and consumption of sport tourism among different socio-economic groups in overseas tours

Table 7 reveals significant differences in the frequency of participation in and consumption of general tourism and sport tourism of Taiwanese nationals of different socio-economic groups. The Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons results reveal significant differences in the frequency of participation in and consumption of sport tourism between persons in higher and lower socio-economic positions, when it comes to domestic sport tourism, but the differences were not quite as obvious in the overseas sport tourism participation frequency levels.

The above described results of domestic studies of the frequency of participation in sport tourism were very similar to those of the study of Yiannakis (1992) and Mintel International Group (1995). Generally speaking, sport tourism participation frequency is closely linked to socio-economic status. The results of this study has also found that the seeming lack of stratification when it comes to overseas sport tourism participation comes from the fact that individuals able to engage in overseas sports tourism already belong to a group with a higher socio-economic position Standeven & Knop (1999:73)

Table 7 Summary of the comparison of the participation and consumption of sport tourism among different socio-economic groups in overseas tours (N=728)

Variable	SES Level	n	M	SD	F	Post-Hoc Comparisons
frequency of tourism	1	202	.21	.59	51.08*	3, 4, 5 > 1, 2
	2	1651	.21	.55		
	3	652	.58	.94		
	4	459	.62	.94		
	5	64	.61	1.00		
frequency of sport tourism	1	21	.86	.91	3.31*	The difference among the groups is not significant
	2	186	1.08	.71		
	3	169	1.29	.77		
	4	126	1.24	.76		
	5	15	1.40	.63		
consumption of tourism	1	37	22945.95	19519.44	7.03*	5 > 1, 2, 3 4 > 2
	2	263	32095.06	33977.72		
	3	245	36684.62	41877.49		
	4	187	43711.26	38148.69		
	5	24	66083.33	71472.66		
consumption of sport tourism	1	17	4410.00	9907.59	3.69*	4 > 2
	2	161	6005.40	12178.98		
	3	128	6189.84	8543.92		
	4	115	10963.04	14940.10		
	5	13	9615.38	16587.09		

* < .05

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

4-1 Conclusion

The result of this study is that the average domestic tourism frequency for Taiwan residents was 3.8 times per year, and the domestic tourism participation ratio was 85.45%, the sport tourism participation ratio for Taiwan residents was 59.55%. The annual frequency of residents of Taiwan participating in overseas tours averaged 0.39 times per person and 24.04% of participants took at least one overseas trip. Furthermore, the annual sport tourism participation averaged 0.90 times per person with 61.54% of residents taking part in a minimum of one sport tourism activity. There were differences between participants of different socio-economic groups in general tourism and sports tourism participation frequency. There was also a significant difference in the participation of groups of different socio-economic status in overseas tourist activities and overseas sports tourism related activities in general. In conclusion, the participation in travel and sport tourism by Taiwanese nationals compared with that of nationals of developed countries is still on the low side. This means that there is still potential for growth in sport tourism participation. There are still obvious differences in the general and sport tourism participation among members of the different socio-economic strata. These differences are most evident in the frequency of participation and the amounts of money spent. Finally, we found there was a stratification phenomenon on sport tourism participants' socio-economic status

4-2 Suggestion

According to the findings of this study, the sport tourism participation ratio for Taiwan residents was lower than that of residents of other countries. In the future we must develop more attractive and safer sport tourism destinations, with more experienced and service oriented staff. These, combined with the advantages of good climate, rich cultural traditions and unique geographical features, should contribute to the growing popularity of Taiwan as a sport tourism destination. It is important for our government to contribute in the planning and construction of more convenient and ecologically conscious sport tourism facilities. Social stratification should be avoided and democratization of sport tourism sights and facilities should be encouraged in order to facilitate the future growth of the industry.

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台灣不同社經地位民眾參與運動觀光行爲之比較

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摘要

運動觀光是觀光產業中成長最快速部門之一，從開發國家之運動社會學者之研究結果顯示運動參與者在社經地位上有階層化的現象，居於推廣運動觀光需要，有必要瞭解不同社經地位民眾參與運動觀光差異情形。本研究主要目的在探討台灣民眾參與國內外旅遊與運動觀光之狀況，以及比較不同社經地位民眾參與國內外旅遊與運動觀光消費行爲之差異情形。本研究**方法**採用問卷調查法，以研究者自行發展之「運動觀光之參與狀況調查問卷」為工具，以地區分層方便取樣方法，調查台灣民眾2006年1月1日至2006年12月31日參與運動觀光之狀況，共獲得台灣地區年滿12歲以上國民有效樣本3840人。所得資料經分析**結果**如下：(1)台灣民眾每年參與國內旅遊頻率平均為3.80次(SD=5.21)，國內旅遊率(一年至少曾從事1次國內旅遊的比例)為85.45%，國內旅遊參與運動觀光次數平均為1.64次(SD=2.99)，國內運動觀光參與率(一年當至少曾從事1次國內運動觀光參與的比例)為59.55%；(2)台灣民眾每年參與國外旅遊頻率平均為0.39次(SD=1.02)，國外旅遊率(一年至少曾從事1次國外旅遊的比例)為24.04%，國外旅遊參與運動觀光次數平均為0.90次(SD=1.02)，國內運動觀光參與率(一年當至少曾從事1次國內運動觀光參與的比例)為61.54%；(3)不同社經地位民眾在國內旅遊次數、運動觀光次數、旅遊消費及運動觀光消費之差異均達顯著水準；(4)不同社經地位民眾在國外旅遊次數、運動觀光次數、旅遊消費及運動觀光消費之差異亦達顯著水準。本研究**結論**為台灣民眾參與運動觀光次數比起已開發國家仍偏低，顯示運動觀光推展仍有成長空間，而民眾社經地位對其旅遊與運動觀光頻率及消費金額均有顯著影響，顯示民眾參與運動觀光活動的社經地位層級呈現明顯階層化現象。

關鍵字：運動觀光、社經地位、階層化

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