DESIGNING A CHOICE EXPERIMENTS SURVEY TO ASSESS THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF ROMANIAN NATURAL AREAS

Diana Elena DUMITRAŞ[1], Ionel Mugurel JITEA[1], Cristian Călin MERCE[1]
Email: ddumitras@usamvcluj.ro

Abstract
This paper explores the use of choice experiments method to design an efficient survey to assess the economic value of Romanian national and natural parks. The choice experiments method is based on the Lancaster theory according to which the consumer's utility is defined as a function of several attributes that characterize the environmental good or service that is analyzed. A set of six attributes was identified to describe hypothetical natural areas that may be visited by tourists: distance from home to the park, observation of nature, type of information needed for the trip, placement of campsite, congestion level at the campsite and price of fuel. The choice sets are obtained by combining every level of each attribute with every level of all other attributes. The fractional factorial design generated 32 choice sets, which were blocked into eight sets, creating eight different versions of questionnaire. It may be concluded that efficient survey design implies a careful follow of the steps recommended in the literature, with a special attention on the design of choice sets.

Key words: choice experiments, survey design, natural areas

[1] USAMV Iaşi