

Cycling in Mid and Later Life: Involvement and Benefits Sought from a Bicycle Tour

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Abstract

Countering the trend that sport participation decreases with age, there are a number of physically active mid and later life adults who take part in sports events. This study investigated involvement in cycling and benefits sought by participants of an organized bicycle tour. Life cycle and gender analyses were used to frame the study of 417 participants who were surveyed online and by mail after the tour. Both men and women were equally involved in cycling, with mid life participants showing the highest levels. Mid-lifers sought relaxation and later-lifers sought new experiences. There were no significant multivariate effects, but life stage shaped benefits sought among the more highly involved cyclists. Event planners are advised to leverage participant benefits by age.

KEYWORDS: Cycling, involvement, benefits-sought, life-stage, gender, active sport tourism

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Introduction

Active participation in sport tends to decrease sharply after age 40 (McPherson, 1984), and at all stages of life, more men than women are active participants in sport (Hargreaves, 1994). Likewise, in terms of travel to take part in sport (active sport tourism), a distinct decline in participation is evident with age, and at all life stages more men than women tend to choose sport related vacations (Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002). The participant profile for Bike Florida, a week-long bicycle and camping tour, seems to run counter to these findings and supports the more recent work of researchers who have found that there is an active subset of mid and later life individuals who are regularly involved in organized sport such as master's swimming (Stevenson, 2002), the Master's Games (e.g., Dionigi, 2002; Ryan & Lockyer, 2002), and the Senior Games (Cardenas, Henderson, & Wilson, 2009). Each spring, Bike Florida, a nonprofit bicycle safety organization, sponsors a bicycle tour through the back roads and cycle trails of Florida. Participants cycle an average of 50 miles a day and camp as a group at night. Many participants take part annually and since its inception in 1994 about 1,000 cyclists participate each year. As yet, there are a few studies on bicycle tourism. Ritchie (1998) examined the potential for tourism development in New Zealand from bicycle touring; Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) examined the likelihood that participants in a bicycle tour similar to Bike Florida would return again to the event location as tourists; and Bull (2006) examined cycle racer's patterns of travel associated with taking part in weekend competitions. This study adopts the participants' view and focuses on their experiences of taking part in a bicycle tour.

While in much of the western world there is a growing concern about the lack of physical activity at all stages of the life course (Henderson & Bialeskchi, 2005), there does appear to be a group of mid and later life adults who are physically fit and have a high level of commitment to their sport. However, as yet little is known about them, beyond the growing body of work on Master's and Senior Games participation. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the benefits sought from taking part in an organized cycling event and the level of involvement in bicycling of these mid and later life participants, with a view to finding out about why they took part in this sort of event and their overall interest and participation in cycling. The study was framed within a life span perspective notably Levinson's (Levinson, 1996; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978) model of the adult life cycle and a gender analysis, with a particular focus on sport.

Review of Literature

Life Cycle and Gender

Using a biographical approach to initially study men (Levinson et al., 1978), and later women (Levinson, 1996), Levinson identified four overlapping eras or seasons in the life cycle: Childhood and Adolescence (zero-22 years); Early Adulthood (17-45 years); Middle Adulthood (40-65 years); and Late Adulthood (over 60 years). These eras make up the macrostructure of the life cycle within which a series of developmental tasks occur. Levinson suggested that these tasks are shaped

by the self, psychological and biological processes, as well as by the wider sociocultural context. The current study focused on two eras, Middle Adulthood and Late Adulthood, each of which is characterized by different tasks. Middle adulthood is characterized initially by coming to terms with the polarities between young and old, masculine and feminine, destruction and creation, and attachment and separateness. These polarities are manifested in the mid-life transition starting around age 40 for some, and may signal a period of questioning about life and the impending movement from the younger to the middle-aged generations. While starting out with what may be a turbulent transition into middle adulthood, the 50s may be a period characterized by satisfaction as many individuals may feel able to enjoy the benefits of their earlier efforts related to career and family. In turn, they may perceive they have more access to leisure (Kelly, Steinkamp, & Kelly, 1987).

Levinson suggested that age 60 or thereabouts heralds the transition into the early stages of late adulthood. For some, this may start with decisions about retirement, which may be dreaded or anticipated eagerly. Levinson suggested that one of the major tasks early in this era is to establish a new level of engagement with society and the self. It may also be a time to start new activities and endeavors. Although much of this may be tempered in the mid to later stages of this era by diminishing health and the loss of contemporaries, many continue to engage in their favorite activities, possibly in a reduced capacity if need be. While there are many critiques of stage theories, particularly from those who suggest that each generation is so different (e.g., Dychtwald & Flower, 1990), there are also consistencies in the psycho-social tasks such as generativity (Erikson, 1963), and the continued process of biological aging that go across the generations. As such, Levinson's framework provides us with a model to help explain differences or similarities among participants from the two eras, mid and later life. In a study of the leisure experiences of 30- to 60-year-olds, Carpenter (1992) used Levinson's idea of life structure and found that individuals busy with structure building phases of the life cycle felt they had higher levels of perceived freedom than those engaged in structure changing, which seems to take up more time and energy. She suggested, therefore, that life stage differences may influence people's leisure behaviors, choices, and attitudes. Likewise, Iso-Ahola, Jackson, and Dunn (1994) used a Levinsonian framework to examine patterns of continuity and change over the life span. They found in general that individuals tended to take part in fewer new activities with age, and they were less likely to participate in team sports and other physical activities, preferring home-based hobbies instead, a trend confirmed in a more recent study (Janke, Davey, & Kleiber, 2006).

A gender perspective recognizing that men and women experience the world differently (e.g., Henderson, 1990) is also imperative. In regard to sport and physical activity, there is a wealth of research demonstrating that girls and women differ in terms of their access to (Hargreaves, 1994) and their experiences in sport (Theberge, 1995). Some of the younger participants in this study would have grown up in the U.S. benefiting from Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments Act which entitled girls and women more equal access to sport and physical activity, whereas some of the older participants may have grown up during times when

the social acceptance of girls and women in sport was not as pervasive as it is today (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). Although, even today, Janke et al. (2006) found that there is a tendency for older women to be less involved in physical leisure and more involved in community and social activities. Perhaps this might be explained somewhat by Vertinsky's (1995) findings from a historical review of the stereotypes associated with physical activity and older women. She found beliefs such as physical activity is unsafe for women and other negative stereotypes are still pervasive, and may partially explain why fewer older women than men take part in physical activity. Although as Stanley and Freysinger (1995) found, older women are more likely to try new activities than their male counterparts, and so given the encouragement and opportunity older women may take part in sport. Thus, conceivably, gender may provide a valuable perspective from which to better explain any differences evident among male and female participants in this study.

Involvement

In the leisure studies literature, there is a long history of examining participation patterns in a range of different activities. One of the concepts used to explore people's commitment or attachment to their leisure is involvement. Kyle and Chick (2002) suggest that in leisure studies most conceptualizations of psychological involvement tend to denote "personal relevance" of the activity or "the degree to which a person devotes him or herself to an activity" and the "strength of the cognitive linkage between self and the activity" (p. 427). With roots in social judgment theory, working in the realm of political persuasion Sherif and Cantril (1947) proposed that involvement is a belief system related to an individual's self-concept. When people hold strong attitudes about a subject or issue, this belief system influences all other decisions regarding that subject or issue, with the more involved likely holding a narrower range of acceptable attitudes and a wider range of rejection (Sherif, Sherif, & Nebergall, 1965). In turn, high involvement in an issue is likely to influence future behaviors (Sherif, Kelly, Rodgers, Sarup, & Tittler, 1973).

In the late 1980s, psychological involvement as a concept was applied to leisure behavior (e.g., Havitz, & Dimanche, 1990; McIntyre, 1989). In an adaptation of Laurant and Kapferer's (1985) multidimensional approach to psychological involvement, McIntyre noted the meaning and central life role of leisure activities for some individuals and introduced the concept *enduring involvement* (EI). He suggested that EI should be conceptualized as three dimensions: Attraction, Self-expression, and Centrality. Attraction refers to an individual's attachment and interest in an activity and the satisfaction they receive from it. Self-expression encompasses both personal and social identity tied to the activity; and Centrality refers to the extent to which individuals' lives are organized around the activity and if their friends are mainly associated with the activity. Thus, the concept of EI appears to provide a good way of evaluating continued interest and emotional attachment, or what Kyle and Chick (2002) refer to as personal relevance of an activity.

Over the last 20 years, various scales have been used to measure different aspects of involvement in leisure behavior (e.g., Havitz & Dimanche, 1990; Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammitt, & Jodice, 2007; McIntyre, 1989). Across all of the studies, the guiding premise is that individuals are more or less involved in their leisure activities and this involvement yields insights on various aspects of their behavior. Few studies have examined differences among individuals as the focus has tended to be within the activity group. However, Wiley, Shaw, and Havitz (2000) examined gender in relation to involvement in hockey and figure skating. They found that there were no gender differences in overall involvement in the sports. However, both male and female hockey players revealed higher levels of Centrality and female hockey players had higher Attraction scores than female figure skaters, whereas, female figure skaters revealed the highest levels of Self-expression. Thus, while there may be some gender differences in involvement, it seems that the nature of the sport is more influential. Kyle and Chick (2004) noted little attention has been devoted to examining involvement in an activity over the life course. Although in terms of gender and previous experience in the sport Siegenthaler and Lam (1992) found no significant differences in ego involvement in tennis; however, involvement did vary by age. They found that younger tennis players (18-27 years) had the highest levels of ego involvement in tennis when compared to tennis players in midlife (38-57 years), who in turn showed more ego involvement in the sport than older players (58-67 years). However, as Havitz and Dimanche (1999) pointed out, the use of cross sectional data has largely hindered an understanding of involvement over individuals' lives. Nonetheless, while still not longitudinal per se, Kyle and Chick (2004) found through their use of ethnographic methods that social ties with friends and family were the main focus of their involvement among a group of long time rural fair participants, and social ties also encouraged their involvement in the fair over a number of years. This also reinforces McIntyre's (1989) earlier finding that centrality to lifestyle and the social bonds inherent in the activity, as well as enjoyment, were the most important aspects of involvement in an activity.

In the sport tourism literature, McGehee, Yoon, and Cardenas (2003) in a study of recreational road runners found that those with higher levels of involvement were more likely to travel to take part in races. Similarly, Ritchie (1998) distinguished between inexperienced and experienced cycle tourists and found that they were motivated differently. Inexperienced tourists sought competency and mastery, while experienced tourists were motivated by solitude and exploration. McIntyre, Coleman, Boag, and Cuskelly (1992) were the first to use involvement in relation to master's sports participation, although their participants were mainly local and not sport tourists. In terms of behavioral involvement, they found that the participants averaged 17 years of master's participation in their chosen sport and that they had high levels of EI in master's sport. Ryan and Lockyer (2002) also examined involvement among master's athletes in New Zealand. They found that among the highly involved there were two types of participant; the Sport Purists for whom challenge was an important component and the Games Enthusiast who sought a mixture of challenge, fun, and socializing in the event, and they generally exhibited a high level of commitment to the Master's Games movement.

More recently, Brey and Lehto (2007) used behavioral frequency to examine the relationship between involvement in home-based activities and participation in tourist activities. They found that people who had participated more frequently, that is, had a higher level of behavioral involvement in jogging, golf, or cycling at home, were more likely to take part in these activities while they were on vacation. Indeed, Wiley et al. (2000) suggested that perhaps a major reason why people maintain their involvement in their chosen activity over time is that they derive valuable benefits from being involved such as stress relief and overall health and well-being. One approach to investigating the benefits participants may seek from their involvement in an activity is to use the benefits approach used extensively in the tourism literature (Hayley, 1968).

Benefits

There are two schools of thought in the benefits literature, one largely used in recreation is derived from Driver's conceptualization of a benefit as "improved or desired conditions of individuals' (Driver, Brown, & Peterson, 1991, p. ix) and is operationalized in the Recreation Experience Preference Scale (see Driver, Tinsley, & Manfredi, 1991). While the recreational approach is becoming more pervasive in tourism (e.g., Tomas, Scott, & Crompton, 2002), the tourism literature has largely adopted the second approach to benefits derived from Hayley's (1968) classic paper on market segmentation. Hayley advocated segmenting consumers based on benefits, which he suggested could be regarded as causal rather than descriptive factors. He explained that the benefits individuals seek from a product provide insights into the reasons why they might ultimately purchase it. Following this line of thought, in the 1970s and 1980s researchers began to apply the idea of benefits sought to understand tourist behavior and choices. This is the approach to benefits sought taken in this paper.

The idea of investigating benefits sought in relation to motivations for travel may explain why Hayley (1968) believed that benefits sought provided such powerful insights into consumer behavior. Working from the classic needs based theories of Murray (1938) and Maslow (1948) where unsatisfied needs drive behavior, such an understanding might explain the claimed causal power of benefits sought. Nonetheless, there has been some debate about the ability of researchers to measure tourist needs (e.g., Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983). For a while, this led to some work conceptualizing benefits as realized rather than sought (Shoemaker, 1994). However, through the 1990s and beyond the benefits sought tradition continued in tourism studies. Although as Sarigöllü and Huang (2005) noted, not all benefits sought are conceptualized as motives, much existing work is either solely about, or includes destination attributes, amenities, and activities in their measures. The consensus appears, however, that when benefits are measured as motives they provide valuable insights into behavioral choices (Frochot, 2004).

Working from a motivational perspective, a review of the relevant literature, and in-depth interviews, Gitelson and Kerstetter (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Kerstetter & Gitelson, 1988/89) identified 28 benefits sought individuals may have for travel, in this case a visit to North Carolina. Through their studies they identified four benefits factors: relaxation, exploration, social, and excitement. They found

that women rated each of the benefits higher than men, older visitors tended to rate the explorer benefits as the most important, and when travel group composition was examined couples rated excitement and social benefits higher. Whereas, using a family life cycle analysis, Kerstetter and Gitelson (1988/89) found that families traveling with children sought a variety of activities and social benefits. They also found that benefits sought varied by season, by activity, and by geographical location within North Carolina with mountain visits rated more highly in terms of relaxation and social benefits and coastal visits as higher in excitement benefits. Loker and Perdue (1992) in a similar study of visitors to North Carolina also found four benefits factors: escape/relaxation, natural surroundings, excitement/variety, and spend time with family and friends. Thus, the two studies show there are common themes in benefits sought, certainly in relation to trips to one U.S. state, as well as potential differences by gender, life stage, and geographical location.

In more recent work, Lehto, O'Leary, and Lee (2001) found that older international travelers rated the benefits outstanding scenery, experiencing different cultures, relaxing, and opportunities to learn about something most highly. They also uncovered some gender differences in that women placed more importance on social benefits, opportunities to learn, and safety, whereas, men rated functional/instrumental benefits more highly and showed a higher preference for physical activities. Among their participants, benefits sought by age and retirement status did not differ significantly. In contrast, Boksberger and Laesser (2009) in a study of Swiss mid and later life tourists found that rest and relaxation, experiencing landscapes and nature were the major benefits distinguishing three different types of tourists: time-honored bon vivants, grizzled explorers, and retro travellers. While they did not find any gender differences in their clusters, they found that the different types of tourist varied by age with older tourists preferring international group related travel (grizzled explorers) and middle-aged tourists preferring familiar destinations and a more independent travel style (time-honored bon vivants). Boksberger and Laesser also mentioned that employment status differed between these different types of tourists with the older travelers tending to be retired and the middle-aged tourists more likely to be employed full-time.

Similarly, Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2001) found that employment status was an important distinction among the college educated women they studied, with employed women tending to prefer the family and social benefits travel cluster. They found that these women sought opportunities to experience natural surroundings, educational experiences, and shopping. Among their nine benefit factors, there were also some women who sought physical experiences in their travels, which encompassed taking part in sports and physical activities with a focus on activities that required skill. Few of the benefits-based studies have identified sport as a benefit of travel. This is most likely due to the absence of sport and physical activity being listed as a potential benefit sought. Nonetheless, Cha, McCleary, and Uysal (1995) identified sports seekers in their analysis of Japanese overseas tourists. In their study the benefit factor sports seekers included both taking part in sport and physical activity as well as watching sport. The sport seekers tended to be in their twenties, college educated, and more likely to be male.

In a few studies, researchers have directly used a benefits approach to investigate different forms of sport participation and active sport tourism. McIntyre et al. (1992) found that for Australian master's sport participants their most important motives were physical fitness and social motives followed by knowledge and skills, relaxation, and personal development. The authors suggested that as people age that the social motivations for taking part in sports increase. Indeed, using Wankel and Berger's (1991) individual benefits of sport, the master's participants identified personal enjoyment, physical well-being, and psychological well-being as the most important. The social nature of sport was noted by a group of Greek active sport tourists in a mountain context. Papadimitriou and Gibson (2008) using a benefits approach to study these Greek active sport tourists found that sports experiences, which included refining and learning new skills related to their favorite outdoor physical activities, were as important as socializing, excitement, enrichment, and relaxation related benefits. Thus, while benefits sought seems to have been conceptualized and operationalized in different ways, the consistent finding suggests that tourists seek a range of different needs and amenities in a destination, and as such this concept may provide some insights on mid and later life bicycle tourists.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between involvement in cycling and the benefits participants sought from taking part in the 2005 Bike Florida tour. Gender and life stage were also examined to provide further insights on involvement in cycling and participation in Bike Florida. Specifically, this study asked the following questions: 1) Are there significant differences in Enduring Involvement in cycling (Attraction, Self-expression, and Centrality) between mid and later life participants? 2) Do male and female participants differ in their levels of Enduring Involvement in cycling (Attraction, Self-expression, and Centrality)? 3) Do mid and later life participants differ in benefits sought from the cycle tour? 4) Do male and female participants differ in benefits sought from the cycle tour? 5) Do benefits sought differ among participants by Enduring Involvement level in cycling? 6) Are there differences in involvement levels, life stage, and gender on benefits sought from the cycle tour?

Method

Data Collection

The respondents in this study were participants of Bike Florida 2005. Data collection began one week after the tour ended. The data were collected using a voluntary online survey and a mail survey. For the online survey, an e-mail message was sent by a staff member of Bike Florida Inc. to all 950 participants who indicated they had an e-mail account. The e-mail message informed the participants about the goals of the survey and listed a URL which linked them to an informed consent statement and the survey instrument. Both of these were housed on a secure server at the university. Two follow-up messages were sent and data collection continued for one month after the initial e-mail contact. Four hundred sixty online surveys were submitted; however, after deleting the questionnaires that

were submitted twice (participants clicked on the submit button multiple times), 451 surveys were available for analysis, constituting a 47.5% response rate.

For those 102 participants who did not have access to e-mail, a cover letter, return envelope, and copy of the questionnaire were mailed to their home addresses. A follow-up postcard thanking those who had responded and reminding those who had not yet sent their questionnaires back was mailed 10 days after the initial mailing. Forty-seven completed questionnaires were received through the mail for a response rate of 46.0%. Combining both sub-samples, the final sample comprised 498 Bike Florida participants for an overall response rate of 46.8%.

Sample

The sample was comprised of 498 participants ranging in age from 18 to 88 years with a mean age of 57.87 years ($SD = 9.87$). The majority of respondents (83.7%, $n = 417$) were over 40 years of age. Seventeen respondents were aged between 18 and 39 years, and 65 respondents did not provide their age. Thus, with the majority of the sample comprising individuals who could be classified as belonging to middle (40-59 years) or late adulthood (60 years and over) according to Levinson et al.'s (1978) model of the adult life cycle, we decided to focus our analysis on these two macro seasons of the life cycle. Consequently, the analysis for this study focused on the 417 participants aged 40 and above. Of these 417 participants, 53.0% ($n = 221$) were aged between 40 and 59 years old (middle adulthood) and 47.0% ($n = 196$) were between 60 and 88 years old (late adulthood). Only 1.3% ($n = 7$) of the participants were aged 80 and over. Of the 417 participants, 59.0% ($n = 245$) were males and 41.0% ($n = 170$) were females.

Respondents were predominantly white (96.0%, $n = 385$). In terms of educational level, 49.0% ($n = 200$) indicated having a bachelor's degree, 37.3% ($n = 152$) had earned a doctorate or other terminal degree, and 13.7% ($n = 56$) indicated their highest level of education was high school. More than half of the respondents (56.8%, $n = 213$) reported their total 2004 annual household income to be between \$50,001 and \$75,000, 22.1% ($n = 83$).

When participants were asked about their past participation in Bike Florida (i.e., prior to 2005), over 50% reported that they had taken part in the tour previously with answers ranging from 1 to 12 times. When asked if they take part in any other physical activities on a regular basis, 86.1% ($n = 353$) said yes citing such activities as walking, running, kayaking, swimming and backpacking. In terms of participation in other organized bike tours similar to Bike Florida, 82.3% ($n = 335$) reported they participate or have participated in other similar bike tours and 60.9% ($n = 240$) reported they take part in other organized sports/physical activity events such as triathlons, softball teams, Senior Games, and marathons.

Instrument

The survey instrument was a self-administered questionnaire consisting of fixed choice and partially open-ended questions and took about 12-15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire consisted of seven sections four of which were used in this study: Enduring Involvement, benefits sought, participation patterns in sport and physical activities, and demographics. McIntyre's (McIntyre, 1989; Mc-

Intyre & Pigram, 1992) Enduring Involvement scale was employed. The involvement items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). This Enduring Involvement scale consists of 13 items measuring three dimensions: *Attraction* (4 items), *Self-expression* (4 items), and *Centrality* (3 items). Kyle et al. (2007) have argued that one of the weaknesses in involvement related research is the continued use of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) when there are enough studies that have used McIntyre's (McIntyre, 1989; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992) EI scale to justify using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Three factors were identified by CFA (Table 1). The three-factor CFA model was based on 11 items and demonstrated good fit (Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square $\chi^2/df = 157.10/41 = .000$, RMSEA = 0.083, SRMR = 0.061, NNFI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99). Two reverse coded items with negative factor loadings from the *Attraction* dimension, "I can't say that I particularly like cycling" ($\lambda = -0.31$, $z = -2.61$) and "I have little or no interest in cycling" ($\lambda = -0.17$, $z = -1.27$), were deleted from the original 13 item scale.

The three involvement factors had good reliability and validity: *Attraction* ($M = 4.49$, $SD = .55$, $CR = .90$, $AVE = .83$), *Self-expression* ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .71$, $CR = .86$, $AVE = .60$), and *Centrality* ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .75$, $CR = .75$, $AVE = .51$). Factor loadings ranged from 0.52 to 0.94 with significant z-scores ($p < .05$). Correlations ranged from 0.17 to 0.76 (Table 2).

The 26 benefits sought items used in Williams and Gibson's (2004) study of active sport tourists and adapted from Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter's (2001) work were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 = *not at all important* through 5 = *extremely important*. Six benefits sought factors were identified using EFA: *Socializing* ($M = 3.28$), *New Experience/Knowledge* ($M = 3.00$), *Physical Activity* ($M = 4.11$), *Relaxation* ($M = 3.23$), *Skill Development* ($M = 2.24$), and *Excitement* ($M = 2.86$). The variance explained by the six factors was 66.27% (Table 3).

A series of partially open-ended questions asked participants about taking part in other sports and organized sports events. In terms of demographics, age and gender were used as independent variables for the study. Age was measured by year of birth and was subsequently recategorized into two groups, 1 = middle adulthood (40-59 years) and 2 = later adulthood (60 years or more) (Levinson et al., 1978; Levinson, 1996).

Data Analysis

Frequencies, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used to analyze the data. Frequencies were used to generate the descriptive statistics on the participants. A CFA was used to test the model fit of McIntyre's (McIntyre, 1989; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992) EI scale by using the diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) estimation based on the asymptotic covariance matrix of ordinal variables (Joreskog, 1993). The root-mean square-error of approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger & Lind, 1980, June) with a 90% confidence interval and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) (Hu & Bentler, 1995) should be below 0.10 for acceptable model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992), whereas, the comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990) and the non-normed fit index (NNFI) (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) should be at least 0.95 or above for acceptable model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1995). A composite

Table 1*Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Mean Scores for Enduring Involvement in Cycling*

	λ	Z	SE	M	SD
Enduring Involvement ^{ab}				3.91	0.55
I. Attraction (CR=0.90, AVE=0.83)				4.49	0.55
Cycling is very important to me	0.90	-	-	4.49	0.68
Cycling is one of the most satisfying things I do	0.87	18.85	0.05	4.56	0.61
Cycling is one of the most enjoyable things I do	0.85	13.91	0.07	4.58	0.65
Cycling offers me relaxation when life's pressures build up	0.72	12.62	0.06	4.32	0.77
II. Self-expression (CR=0.86, AVE=0.60)				3.63	0.71
Cycling says a lot about who I am	0.94			3.92	0.87
When I am cycling others see me the way I want them to see me	0.79	20.30	0.04	3.52	0.94
When I am cycling I can really be myself	0.77	17.72	0.05	3.81	0.83
You can tell a lot about a person when you see them cycling	0.52	11.07	0.05	3.27	0.92
III. Centrality (CR=0.75, AVE=0.51)				3.51	0.75
I find that a lot of my life is organized around cycling	0.86	-	-	3.64	1.01
Most of my friends are in some way connected with cycling	0.62	16.41	0.04	2.96	1.06
I enjoy discussing cycling with friends	0.62	12.32	0.06	3.94	0.80

^a 5 point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree).

^bCFA model was based on 11 items and demonstrated good fit (Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square $\chi^2/df=157.10/41 = .000$, RMSEA =0.083, SRMR=0.061, NNFI=0.99, CFI=0.99).

reliability (CR) greater than 0.6 is considered adequate and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for construct validity should be above 0.5 (Bagozzi, 1994). For discriminant validity, it is recommended that the correlations among the variables are less than 0.85 (Kline, 2005). An EFA with principal components extraction and varimax rotation was used to examine the construct validity of the benefits scale. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to assess differences by life stage and gender. The multivariate effect size (Partial η^2) associated with Wilk's Λ was reported with F and p . No relationship between the factor and dependent variables is indicated if the partial η^2 is 0.

Results

Life Stage, Gender, and Enduring Involvement

MANOVA results indicated that there was a significant difference between middle and later life participants on the three dimensions of involvement (Wilk's $\Lambda = .97$, $F(3, 413) = 4.28$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .030$) (Table 4). Univariate analysis revealed that Attraction was significantly higher among middle adulthood (MA) participants than participants in later adulthood (LA) ($F(1, 415) = 12.86$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .030$). However, in terms of gender and involvement, MANOVA revealed no

Table 2*Correlation Matrix for Enduring Involvement Items*

Cycling is very important to me																			
Cycling is one of the most satisfying things I do	.624**																		
Cycling is one of the most enjoyable things I do	.566**	.764**																	
Cycling offers me relaxation when life's pressures build up	.383**	.495**	.484**																
Cycling says a lot about who I am	.567**	.470**	.423**	.424**															
When I am cycling others see me the way I want them to see me	.307**	.302**	.270**	.379**	.619**														
When I am cycling I can really be myself	.373**	.378**	.330**	.402**	.543**	.576**													
You can tell a lot about a person when you see them cycling	.182**	.212**	.166**	.174**	.400**	.548**	.434**												
I find that a lot of my life is organized around cycling	.510**	.469**	.454**	.298**	.566**	.398**	.428**	.246**											
Most of my friends are in some way connected with cycling	.329**	.258**	.244**	.228**	.391**	.356**	.270**	.239**	.564**										
I enjoy discussing cycling with friends	.334**	.304**	.252**	.333**	.389**	.383**	.333**	.282**	.380**	.292**									

** $p < .01$.

significant differences between male and female participants on any of the three dimensions of involvement (Wilk's $\Lambda = .99$, $F(3, 411) = .093$, $p = .964$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$).

Life Stage, Gender, and Benefits Sought

MANOVA revealed that there were significant differences in benefits sought by life stage (Wilk's $\Lambda = .91$, $F(6, 270) = 4.522$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .091$) (Table 5). Specifically, univariate analyses of the six benefits sought factors revealed that participants in later life were significantly higher on seeking *New Experiences/Knowledge* benefits ($F(1, 275) = 7.459$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .026$) than mid-life participants; whereas, mid-life participants rated *Relaxation* benefits higher than those in later life ($F(1, 275) = 7.715$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .027$). In terms of gender, there were no significant differences between male and female participants on benefits sought (Wilk's $\Lambda = .97$, $F(6, 270) = 1.256$, $p = .278$, $\eta_p^2 = .027$).

Enduring Involvement and Benefits Sought

MANOVA was used to examine the effect of involvement levels (i.e., using a categorical independent variable with low, medium, and high levels) on the six benefits sought factors (Table 6). The total involvement scores for each of the three EI dimensions (*Attraction*, *Self-Expression*, and *Centrality*) were divided in turn into three levels: High (HI), Medium (MI), and Low (LI). As suggested by Zaichkowsky (1985), the bottom 25% and the top 25% were designated as cutoff percentiles. The 25th percentile was designated as lower involvement (LI); those between the 26th percentile and 74th percentile were designated medium involvement (MI);

Table 3*Principal Components Factor Analysis and Means for Benefits Sought*

Benefits Sought Factors ^a	Factor loadings						M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Factor 1: Socializing							3.28	.94
To be with friends	.91						3.26	1.30
To spend more time with friends	.87						3.10	1.23
To vacation with my friends	.86						3.08	1.38
To socialize with others	.77						3.43	1.00
To meet new people and socialize	.60						3.13	1.07
To meet interesting people	.56						3.25	1.02
Factor 2: New Experience/Knowledge							3.00	.77
To increase my knowledge of different places		.80					3.44	1.04
To see something new		.68					3.83	.95
To travel in Florida		.67					3.37	1.18
To seek an educational experience		.66					2.28	1.04
To seek intellectual enrichment		.48					2.32	1.04
Factor 3: Physical Activity							4.11	.65
To participate in physical activities			.85				4.31	.85
To cycle			.75				4.65	.64
To feel good after being physically active			.73				4.29	.81
To engage in sports activities			.71				3.81	1.11
To feel exhilaration			.56				3.52	1.05
Factor 4: Relaxation							3.23	.86
To rest and relax				.83			2.95	1.17
To take it easy				.78			2.54	1.24
To get away from it all				.66			3.74	1.15
To travel where I feel safe				.49			3.62	1.19
Factor 5: Skill Development							2.24	1.00
To learn a new skill					.82		1.99	1.04
To refine a skill					.82		2.54	1.20
Factor 6: Excitement							2.86	.91
To have thrills						.75	2.47	1.18
To do exciting things						.73	3.29	.95
Eigenvalue	6.78	2.80	2.05	1.96	1.21	1.11		
Variance Explained (%)	28.23	11.68	8.54	8.15	5.05	4.62	66.27	
Cronbach's Alpha (α)	.89	.78	.78	.69	.79	.66		
Correlation ^b					.66**	.51**		

^a 5 point Likert scale (1=not at all important, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important).

^bCorrelation significant at the 0.01 level for a factor having two items.

and those with scores in the 75th percentile were designated highly involved (HI). For each of the involvement dimensions the breakdown was: *Attraction*, LI ($n = 57$) range: 2.55 to 3.88, MI ($n = 153$), range: 3.89 to 4.88, and HI ($n = 153$) range: 4.89 to 5.00; *Self-expression*, LI ($n = 95$) range: 1.50 to 3.24, MI ($n = 180$), range: 3.25 to 3.99, and HI ($n = 142$) range: 4.00 to 5.00; *Centrality*, LI ($n = 79$) range: 1.33 to 2.99, MI ($n = 195$) range: 3.00 and 3.99, and HI ($n = 143$) range: 4.00 to 5.00.

Table 4*Means and Standard Deviations for Enduring Involvement by Gender and Life Stage*

Involvement	<i>M</i> ^a (<i>SD</i>)		Total	<i>M</i> ^a (<i>SD</i>)		Total
	Life Stage		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Gender		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
	Middle	Later		Male	Female	
Attraction	4.58 (.53)	4.39 (.56)	4.49 (.55)	4.48 (.54)	4.50 (.56)	4.49 (.55)
Self-expression	3.69 (.74)	3.57 (.67)	3.63 (.71)	3.63 (.71)	3.63 (.72)	3.63 (.71)
Centrality	3.57 (.79)	3.45 (.71)	3.51 (.75)	3.51 (.74)	3.51 (.76)	3.51 (.75)

^a Means are based on 5 point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree).

Table 5*Means and Standard Deviations for Benefits Sought by Gender and Life Stage*

Benefits Sought	<i>M</i> ^a (<i>SD</i>)		Total	<i>M</i> ^a (<i>SD</i>)		Total
	Life Stage		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Gender		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
	Middle	Later		Male	Female	
Socializing	3.13 (.97)	3.30 (.92)	3.21 (.95)	3.27 (.95)	3.13 (.94)	3.21 (.95)
New Experiences/ Knowledge	2.94 (.75)	3.19 (.76)	3.05 (.76)	3.03 (.77)	3.08 (.76)	3.05 (.76)
Physical Activity	4.11 (.69)	4.12 (.67)	4.12 (.68)	4.03 (.62)	4.18 (.75)	4.12 (.68)
Relaxation	3.34 (.86)	3.05 (.86)	3.21 (.87)	3.19 (.87)	3.25 (.87)	3.21 (.87)
Skill	2.25 (1.05)	2.29 (.98)	2.27 (1.02)	2.29 (1.02)	2.23 (1.02)	2.27 (1.02)
Excitement	2.87 (.95)	2.89 (.91)	2.88 (.93)	2.92 (.95)	2.83 (.90)	2.88 (.93)

^a Means are based on 5 point Likert scale (1=not at all important, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important).

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Benefits Sought across Enduring Involvement Dimensions by Three Levels of Involvement

Benefits Sought	<i>M</i> ^a (<i>SD</i>)			Total
	Low	Medium	High	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Attraction				
Socializing	2.98 (.93)	3.16 (.96)	3.37 (.93)	3.27 (.95)
New Experience /Knowledge	2.97 (.71)	3.05 (.81)	3.08 (.73)	3.07 (.77)
Physical Activity	3.71 (.79)	4.09 (.69)	4.31 (.52)	4.20 (.61)
Relaxation	3.14 (.80)	3.10 (.88)	3.39 (.86)	3.25 (.87)
Skill	2.08 (.99)	2.31 (.97)	2.29 (1.09)	2.30 (1.03)
Excitement	2.53 (.88)	2.93 (.93)	2.97 (.92)	2.95 (.93)
Self-expression				
Socializing	3.08 (.99)	3.16 (.90)	3.35 (.98)	3.20 (.96)
New Experience /Knowledge	3.00 (.79)	3.04 (.76)	3.08 (.76)	3.04 (.77)
Physical Activity	3.89 (.76)	4.11 (.63)	4.27 (.64)	4.09 (.68)
Relaxation	3.13 (.95)	3.15 (.83)	3.35 (.85)	3.21 (.88)
Skill	2.35 (1.12)	2.24 (.93)	2.24 (1.07)	2.28 (1.04)
Excitement	2.75 (.96)	2.83 (.89)	3.04 (.95)	2.87 (.93)
Centrality				
Socializing	2.99 (1.00)	3.20 (.91)	3.34 (.97)	3.18 (.96)
New Experience /Knowledge	3.10 (.73)	3.04 (.76)	3.04 (.80)	3.06 (.76)
Physical Activity	3.89 (.85)	4.16 (.62)	4.19 (.63)	4.08 (.70)
Relaxation	3.31 (.91)	3.12 (.87)	3.29 (.84)	3.24 (.87)
Skill	2.21 (.96)	2.32 (1.02)	2.22 (1.06)	2.25 (1.01)
Excitement	2.84 (.98)	2.88 (.97)	2.92 (.86)	2.88 (.94)

^aMeans are based on 5 point Likert scale (1=not at all important, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important).

In examining the differences in benefits sought by each involvement dimension (i.e., *Attraction*, *Self-expression*, *Centrality*), only *Attraction* had a significant effect on benefits sought (Wilk's $\Lambda = .87$, $F(12, 538) = 3.12$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .065$). Univariate analysis showed that the benefits sought factors, *Physical Activity* ($F(2, 277) = 12.53$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .084$), *Relaxation* ($F(2, 277) = 3.43$, $p = .034$, $\eta_p^2 = .024$), and *Excitement* ($F(2, 277) = 3.56$, $p = .030$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$) differed significantly by *Attraction* level. A Tukey HSD post hoc analysis revealed that participants higher (HI) on *Attraction* rated these benefits significantly higher than MI participants, and in turn, MI participants rated these benefits significantly higher than those lower involved (LI) in the *Attraction* dimension of cycling involvement.

While the effects of the involvement dimensions *Self-expression* (Wilk's $\Lambda = .93$, $F(12, 538) = 1.75$, $p = .054$, $\eta_p^2 = .038$), and *Centrality* (Wilk's $\Lambda = .93$, $F(12, 538) = 1.66$, $p = .072$, $\eta_p^2 = .036$) were not significant on benefits sought, a Tukey HSD post hoc analysis revealed some significant differences. Participants high (HI) on *Self-expression* and *Centrality* sought more *Physical Activity*-related benefits than LI participants (*Self-expression*, $F(2, 277) = 6.17$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .043$; and *Centrality*, $F(2, 277) = 3.71$, $p = .026$, $\eta_p^2 = .026$).

Enduring Involvement, Life Stage, Gender, and Benefits Sought

In examining the multivariate effect of gender, life stage, and *Attraction* involvement on benefits sought, no significant interaction effect was found (Table 7). Univariate analysis revealed that participants with LI, MI, and HI levels of *Attraction* involvement reported significantly higher levels of interest in the benefits *Socializing*, *Physical Activity*, and *Excitement*. Tukey HSD post hoc analysis revealed that participants with higher levels (HI) of *Attraction* reported more interest in *Socializing* and *Physical Activity* benefits than the MI participants. In turn, the MI participants reported more desire for *Socializing* and *Physical Activity* benefits than the LI participants; whereas there were no significant differences between the HI and MI participants in seeking *Excitement* benefits. Those HI or MI on *Attraction* were significantly more likely to seek *Excitement* benefits from the tour than those LI on *Attraction*. As for the univariate effect of life stage on benefits sought, participants in middle and late adulthood differed significantly on two benefits: *Socializing* and *New Experience/Knowledge*. The LA respondents tended to seek more *Socializing* and *New Experience/Knowledge* than MA. There were no significant differences by gender.

The multivariate effect of *Self-expression*, life stage, and gender on benefits sought revealed no overall significant interaction effect, although there was a significant interaction effect on *Excitement* benefits. The univariate analysis showed that participants high (HI) on *Self-expression* were significantly more interested in seeking *Physical Activity* benefits than those low (LI) on *Self-expression*. Univariate analysis also revealed that the LA participants were significantly higher in seeking *New Experience/Knowledge* benefits and the MA participants were significantly higher in seeking *Relaxation* benefits. There were no significant differences by gender in benefits sought.

The multivariate effect of *Centrality*, life stage, gender on benefits sought revealed no significant overall interaction effect although there was a significant

Table 7*MANOVA for Enduring Involvement, Life Stage, and Gender on Benefits Sought*

Fixed Variable	Dependent Variable (Benefits Sought ^a)	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Attraction	New Experience/Knowledge	2/265	1.444	.238	.011
	Socializing	2/265	4.070	.018*	.030
	Physical Activity	2/265	12.755	.000***	.088
	Relaxation	2/265	1.268	.283	.009
	Skill	2/265	2.479	.086	.018
	Excitement	2/265	4.201	.016*	.031
Wilk's Lamda = .88, $F(12,520) = 2.81$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .061$					
Life Stage	New Experience/Knowledge	1/265	7.326	.007**	.027
	Socializing	1/265	4.941	.027*	.018
	Physical Activity	1/265	1.029	.311	.004
	Relaxation	1/265	3.182	.076	.012
	Skill	1/265	.142	.706	.001
	Excitement	1/265	.098	.754	.000
Wilk's Lamda = .92, $F(6,260) = 3.85$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .082$					
Gender	New Experience/Knowledge	1/265	.695	.405	.003
	Socializing	1/265	.147	.702	.001
	Physical Activity	1/265	.282	.596	.001
	Relaxation	1/265	.825	.365	.003
	Skill	1/265	.709	.400	.003
	Excitement	1/265	2.344	.127	.009
Wilk's Lamda = .97, $F(6,260) = 1.36$, $p = .230$, $\eta_p^2 = .030$					
Attraction ×	New Experience/Knowledge	7/265	.377	.915	.010
Life Stage ×	Socializing	7/265	.562	.787	.015
Gender	Physical Activity	7/265	1.004	.428	.026
	Relaxation	7/265	.992	.437	.026
	Skill	7/265	1.092	.368	.028
	Excitement	7/265	1.641	.124	.042
Wilk's Lamda = .86, $F(42,1223) = .93$, $p = .608$, $\eta_p^2 = .024$					

Table 7 (cont.)

Fixed Variable	Dependent Variable (Benefits Sought ^a)	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Self-expression	New Experience/Knowledge	2/265	.074	.928	.001
	Socializing	2/265	1.898	.152	.014
	Physical Activity	2/265	5.087	.007**	.037
	Relaxation	2/265	.626	.535	.005
	Skill	2/265	.273	.761	.002
	Excitement	2/265	2.429	.090	.018
	Wilk's Lamda = .93, $F(12,520) = 1.51$, $p = .117$, $\eta_p^2 = .034$				
Life Stage	New Experience/Knowledge	1/265	6.295	.013*	.023
	Socializing	1/265	1.508	.221	.006
	Physical Activity	1/265	.009	.923	.000
	Relaxation	1/265	6.604	.011*	.024
	Skill	1/265	.033	.856	.000
	Excitement	1/265	.977	.324	.004
	Wilk's Lamda = .91, $F(6,260) = 4.30$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .090$				
Gender	New Experience/Knowledge	1/265	.967	.326	.004
	Socializing	1/265	.431	.512	.002
	Physical Activity	1/265	2.235	.136	.008
	Relaxation	1/265	.186	.667	.001
	Skill	1/265	.502	.479	.002
	Excitement	1/265	1.650	.200	.006
	Wilk's Lamda = .96, $F(6,260) = 1.72$, $p = .117$, $\eta_p^2 = .038$				
Self-expression ×	New Experience/Knowledge	7/265	.344	.933	.009
Life Stage ×	Socializing	7/265	.743	.635	.019
Gender	Physical Activity	7/265	.924	.488	.024
	Relaxation	7/265	.720	.655	.019
	Skill	7/265	.214	.982	.006
	Excitement	7/265	2.281	.029*	.057
	Wilk's Lamda = .85, $F(42,1223) = 1.01$, $p = .449$, $\eta_p^2 = .026$				

Table 7 (cont.)

Fixed Variable	Dependent Variable (Benefits Sought ^a)	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Centrality	New Experience/Knowledge	2/265	.418	.659	.003
	Socializing	2/265	1.579	.208	.012
	Physical Activity	2/265	5.579	.004**	.040
	Relaxation	2/265	1.320	.269	.010
	Skill	2/265	.341	.712	.003
	Excitement	2/265	.679	.508	.005
Wilk's Lamda = .92, $F(12,520) = 1.91$, $p = .031$, $\eta_p^2 = .042$					
Life Stage	New Experience/Knowledge	1/265	7.603	.006**	.028
	Socializing	1/265	1.916	.167	.007
	Physical Activity	1/265	.332	.565	.001
	Relaxation	1/265	4.020	.046*	.015
	Skill	1/265	.001	.972	.000
	Excitement	1/265	1.222	.270	.005
Wilk's Lamda = .91, $F(6,260) = 4.48$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .094$					
Gender	New Experience/Knowledge	1/265	1.627	.203	.006
	Socializing	1/265	.112	.738	.000
	Physical Activity	1/265	.000	.996	.000
	Relaxation	1/265	.041	.840	.000
	Skill	1/265	.769	.381	.003
	Excitement	1/265	1.418	.235	.005
Wilk's Lamda = .97, $F(6,260) = 1.31$, $p = .252$, $\eta_p^2 = .029$					
Centrality ×	New Experience/Knowledge	7/265	.337	.936	.009
Life Stage ×	Socializing	7/265	.447	.872	.012
Gender	Physical Activity	7/265	1.778	.092	.045
	Relaxation	7/265	.561	.787	.015
	Skill	7/265	.234	.977	.006
	Excitement	7/265	2.099	.044*	.053
Wilk's Lamda = .84, $F(42,1223) = 1.11$, $p = .292$, $\eta_p^2 = .029$					

^a 5 point Likert scale (1=not at all important, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

interaction for *Excitement* benefits. Univariate analysis showed that those HI and MI on *Centrality* were more likely to seek *Physical Activity* benefits than those LI on *Centrality*. There were also significant differences by life stage, but not by gender. Participants in LA rated *New Experiences/Knowledge* benefits significantly higher and MA participants rated *Relaxation* benefits significantly higher.

Discussion

The study provides insights on a group of middle and later life bicycle tour participants both in terms of their general involvement in cycling and the benefits they sought from a bicycle tour. Not surprisingly, given the nature of the sample, the participants reported relatively high levels of enduring involvement in cycling. However, when asked about taking part in other sports and events, many of them reported they also participated in a range of physical activities, which may indicate they lead generally active lifestyles. In terms of the three dimensions of involvement, the participants rated *Attraction* the highest, followed by *Self-expression*, and *Centrality*. From this we may concur that the participants regarded cycling as an important activity, which provided them with a moderately high level of identity, and around which they organized part of their life (McIntyre, 1989). This pattern across the involvement dimensions seems to be consistent among a variety of recreational activities. Havitz and Dimanche (1997) in a review of existing studies at that time found that the *Attraction* dimension tended to be rated the highest. They also noted that there was a tendency across the studies they reviewed for recreational participants to be high on some dimensions and low on others for the same activity (p. 268). The patterns of EI in cycling in this study are also very similar to those reported by McIntyre et al. (1992) in a study of Australian Master's Games participants who were comparable in life stage and sociodemographic background (over 40, white, and middle class) as the Bike Florida participants. Perhaps involvement in sporting activities during middle and later life is largely characterized by enjoyment, intrinsic satisfaction, relaxation, and meaning. Interestingly, all of these attributes are core concepts associated with contemporary definitions of leisure as experience (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000) and may suggest why EI has been identified as a valuable concept for understanding attachment to leisure activities over the years (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997).

The identity and centrality dimensions of EI are both moderately high among these participants and mirror other similar studies (e.g., McIntyre et al., 1992) and again may be explained by the idea that for most people a leisure role (i.e., cyclist) is just one of many roles they fill in their lives. Leisure scholars understand leisure choices in the wider context of people's lives which typically include work and family (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1975), and as such these participants may enjoy being identified as cyclists and they may see themselves as cyclists, but the self-expression results suggest that they also construct their identities around other segments of their lives. Indeed, as Stevenson (2002) found among a group of masters' swimmers, they enjoyed being identified as physically fit and active rather than just a swimmer. The Bike Florida participants are likely to fit this description. They seem to identify with and are identified as cyclists, and many of them organize their lives around cycling to different degrees. However, they also appear to balance their cycling with other life roles and interests such as other sports, work as indicated by their income levels and their life stage (i.e. mid-life for some), and the family roles associated with both life stages (Levinson et al., 1978; Levinson, 1996). Although, when examined by life stage, those in mid-life reported significantly higher *Attraction* involvement in cycling compared to those in later life.

This finding mirrors that of Siegenthaler and Lam (1992) where ego involvement was slightly higher among mid-life tennis players than those in later life. In a sport tourism context, perhaps this finding is indicative of the highly involved mid-life cyclist who probably has to take a week of vacation time to take part in Bike Florida, whereas, many of the later life adults may be retired or working part time (Boksberger & Laesser, 2009). In the U.S., where vacation time entitlement is very low, only those with very high involvement and attachment to the activity are likely to use their precious time to take part in the tour (Right2vacation, n.d.).

In terms of gender, very few researchers have examined gender differences in EI. For sport and physical activity, this is curious given the historically different patterns of participation in the U.S. and many other countries in sport. Nonetheless, perhaps as Wiley et al. (2000) found, that once women have negotiated any constraints they may experience regarding participation in sport, they are no less involved in their chosen activity than their male counterparts. Likewise, Siegenthaler and Lam (1992) found no gender differences in ego involvement in their study of tennis players. For the male and female Bike Florida participants, statistically there were no differences across the EI dimensions. The fact that there are a group of avid female cyclists in middle and later life suggests that attitudes may have changed somewhat toward physically active women in general, but particularly among older women. Indeed, Hargreaves (1994) pointed out that seeing older women compete in Masters' Games puts forth "an image of positive health and autonomy" (p. 268), and counters Vertinsky's (1995) finding that the pervasive sentiment is that strenuous physical activity is dangerous for older women. Perhaps, the next stage in this work is to find out how these women became involved in cycling. Many of these women due to their age would not have benefited from the increased access to sport provided by Title IX and the more open attitudes toward female participation in sport (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). Thus, it is likely, that many of these women, particularly those in later life, were introduced to cycling in their post-adolescent years as they would have grown up in a time period where sport participation would have been discouraged (Hargreaves, 1994). Certainly, Stanley and Freysinger (1995) suggested that older women are more likely to try new things than their male counterparts. Finding out more about these physically active women would be an interesting direction for future research given that Janke et al. (2006) found that the trend for women to be physically less active in later life still exists.

The importance of physical activity for both the male and female participants is evident when the benefits sought for taking part in Bike Florida were examined. The chance to cycle and to be physically active was rated very highly by the participants, followed by the chance to socialize, relax, experience new things, and excitement. These benefits seem to be common among other sports and physical activity experiences for middle and later life participants. McIntyre et al. (1992) found that physical fitness was the most important reason for taking part in the Master's Games; likewise, Ryan and Lockyer (2002) found that master's athletes identified the challenges, fun, and social opportunities associated with taking part. The social benefits associated with leisure experiences are commonly identified by participants in a range of activities and may be one of the reasons why they con-

tinue to participate (e.g., Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Lehto et al., 2001). Indeed, McIntyre et al. (1992) found that social benefits were rated as more important than improving or testing skills, and they suggested that social motives increase in importance with age. Among the Bike Florida participants, certainly skill development was rated as the lowest set of benefits sought, likely because they were already skilled cyclists as indicated by their high involvement levels in the sport and their past history taking part in previous Bike Florida events. Ritchie's (1998) study of bicycle tourists in New Zealand appears to support this contention as he found that less experienced cyclists were more likely to be motivated by competence and mastery, whereas more experienced cyclists sought solitude and contact with nature.

When benefits sought were examined by life stage, interestingly among mid-life participants relaxation from taking part in the tour was sought at a significantly higher rate than among those in later life who rated the benefit new experiences and knowledge higher. This seems to reinforce our earlier contentions that mid-life participants are likely to be balancing work and possibly family responsibilities and they may see the tour as a chance to escape and relax in a physically active environment. Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990) also found that older tourists were less likely to seek relaxation in their trips to North Carolina and as such seem to suggest that the life structures of those in mid and later life may be qualitatively different (Carpenter, 1992; Levinson et al., 1978; Levinson, 1996). Certainly, the domestic bicycle tourists surveyed by Ritchie (1998) viewed their cycle trip as a chance to be physically challenged and avoid the pressures of daily life. In contrast, the later life Bike Florida participants rated the opportunity for novelty and to gain new knowledge higher. Similarly, Gitelson and Kerstetter found that older tourists sought what they called explorer benefits which included novelty and learning about new things in their trips more so than younger tourists. Likewise, Lehto et al. (2001) found that experiencing different cultures and opportunities to learn about something were rated as highly desirable benefits among their sample of older international tourists. If we look at this in the context of life stage, Levinson et al. (1978) suggested that a major task of late adulthood is to relinquish leadership roles to the younger members of society and to focus on the self. This may provide individuals at this stage of life with more freedom and time (Kelly et al., 1987), and for older women in particular a sense of entitlement (Gibson, Ashton-Shaeffer, Green, & Autry, 2003/2004) to seek the intrinsic satisfaction associated with various endeavors which may include a desire to learn more about the destination they are visiting or to experience something new and different.

Indeed, when researchers have examined benefits sought, female tourists consistently report they seek a change of routine, social activities, and exploration more so than their male counterparts (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Pennington-Gray & Kerstetter, 2001; Lehto et al., 2001). However, among the Bike Florida participants there were no significant differences in benefits sought by gender, which may suggest the active sport tourism context may differ in some way from other forms of tourism. Or it may be that as these participants showed similarly high levels of involvement in cycling that the influence of involvement is more influential than gender. Support for this contention can be found in the two stud-

ies that have examined gender in relation to involvement in a sport context and found no differences among male and female participants (Siegenthaler & Lam, 1992; Wiley et al., 2000). However, the lack of gender differences in the current study may also be an anomaly of this sample as Ritchie (1998) found that female cycle tourists were more motivated by the chance to explore as well as to escape the everyday, but he did not control for life stage. Thus, the relationship between gender and involvement warrants further attention.

When the dimensions of involvement in cycling were examined in relation to benefits sought, the more highly involved in the *Attraction* dimension reported significantly higher needs for physical activity, relaxation, and excitement from taking part in the tour. Indeed, those with the highest levels of *Attraction* involvement demonstrated the most desire for these benefits. The physical activity benefit was also higher among those participants with high levels of *Self-expression* and *Centrality* involvement. The quest for physical activity related benefits seems to be a consistent finding across other studies. As discussed earlier, McIntyre et al. (1992) found physical fitness was a primary motive for Master's Games participants and Papadimitriou and Gibson's (2008) participants also rated physical activity along with excitement and relaxation as important benefits sought from their ski trips. Perhaps in an active sport tourist context it is not surprising that participants desire to be physically active as an opportunity to take part in their favorite sport is often a primary motivation behind their trips (Robinson & Gammon, 2004). The one major difference between this study and the findings from similar studies is the absence of social benefits when examined in the context of involvement level. The chance to socialize is usually a primary benefit of sport (McIntyre et al., 1992) and is often paired with physical activity (Papadimitriou & Gibson, 2008). As social benefits just failed to reach statistical significance, this again may be an artifact of these participants, or as the main effects analysis reveals may be related to the influence of life stage.

When the multivariate effects of involvement, life stage, and gender on benefits sought were examined, those highly involved in cycling across all three involvement dimensions rated physical activity as an important benefit sought from the tour. However, those high on *Attraction* involvement also revealed a desire for socializing and excitement benefits. Kyle and Chick (2002; 2004) suggested that the social context might both reinforce individuals' level of involvement in the activity as well as to provide a reason for continued participation (i.e., they get to be part of a community and socialize with the group). In later work, Kyle et al. (2007) postulated that social relationships may underpin individuals' EI in a recreation activity. This seems very likely. Throughout the leisure studies literature from the early days the nature and importance of the social group to continued recreation participation has been noted (e.g., Field & O'Leary, 1973).

When examined by life stage, participants in later life with high levels of *Attraction* involvement were also significantly higher on socializing and new experiences and knowledge benefits. The addition of socializing benefits in this multivariate analysis in relation to involvement and life stage seems to confirm McIntyre et al.'s (1992) thesis that the importance of social benefits increase with age. Certainly from a life span perspective, one of the tasks of later life is form-

ing a new connection with the world which becomes particularly important as individuals may have lost some of their previous roles such as worker or parent of young children. Previous studies on leisure in later life suggest that the social nature of leisure (Kelly et al., 1987) becomes extremely important and that often leisure provides the context for socializing (Gibson, et al., 2003/2004). Interestingly, participants high on *Self-expression* and *Centrality* in later life are more likely to seek new experiences and knowledge from their participation in the tour, whereas, participants in mid-life sought relaxation. These patterns are consistent with the findings discussed earlier about the influence of life stage among these highly involved cyclists. Another interesting finding is that while there are no significant multivariate main effects among involvement, life stage, and gender on benefits sought, for *Self-expression* and *Centrality* the excitement benefit shows a significant interaction effect. Previous studies on benefits have identified excitement as a benefit sought by tourists from their travels (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Loker & Perdue, 1992) and is consistent with the idea that tourism is primarily motivated by novelty and change (Crompton, 1979). However, previous researchers have not examined benefits sought in relation to involvement, life stage, and gender in a sport or tourism context. Thus, a direction for future research may be to delve more deeply into this relationship.

While for this sample there are no gender differences on any of the EI dimensions or benefits sought or any interactive effects of gender, life stage appears to be an influential variable and might hold the key to understanding the consistencies evident across studies that have examined EI and benefits sought among similar age groups across Australia and New Zealand (McIntyre et al., 1992; Ryan & Lockyer, 2002). The current study makes a unique contribution to this literature by introducing a new sport and a noncompetitive sport context, that of a cycle tour, rather than the competitive arena of Master's Games. This study also focuses on the tourism nature of the experience. Perhaps the fact that Bike Florida is a vacation experience enhances many of these benefits, particularly the desire for new experiences and relaxation inherent in tourism (Lehto et al., 2001) and the social bonding likely to occur in short lived tourist communities (Lett, 1983).

The focus on involvement in cycling generally as an indicator of leisure involvement and the investigation of participants on a cycle tour (i.e., tourism context) in the same activity is also a unique contribution to the literature as it suggests a link between leisure and tourism preferences (Carr, 2002). Brey and Lehto (2007) found that people who are involved in physical activities in their leisure are likely to take part in the same or different physical activities while on vacation. However, at present very few scholars contextualize tourism choices within existing leisure preferences or choose to ground their studies in concepts with demonstrated value in leisure studies (such as involvement). Thus, we would recommend future research especially in active sport tourism focus on the likely relationship between leisure activities and tourism choices.

This study also has implications for the measurement of EI. In response to Havitz and Dimanche's (1997, p. 271) comment about the elusive quest for construct validity of the EI scale and Kyle et al.'s (2007) call for using Confirmatory Factor Analysis, we confirm the three dimensions of EI proposed by McIntyre (Mc-

Intyre, 1989; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992) with an 11-item scale. However, when using EI in relation to benefits sought, caution needs to be exercised with the possible overlap between the item "Cycling offers me relaxation when life's pressures build up" which is part of the *Attraction* dimension and the benefits sought factor relaxation which includes such items as "to rest and relax," "to take it easy" and "to get away from it all." The wording of the item in the *Attraction* dimension is more likely to relate to an internal drive associated with a favorite leisure activity, in this case cycling and stress relief, whereas, for benefits sought relaxation seems to refer to a generic tourism motive such as escape (Crompton, 1979). Thus, rather than regarding the finding that those high on *Attraction* involvement in mid-life seeking relaxation from the cycle tour as a limitation, it may support our contention that tourism choices such as sport based vacations should be viewed within the context of preferred leisure activities.

We also need to recognize the delimitations of the present study. While the results of this study provide us with insights into one bicycle tour, the Florida effect first noted by Gibson et al. (2003/2004) may have influenced these data. Florida is a state where the climate and the pervasive recreational opportunities for mid and later life adults might encourage more physical activity among groups that may not be as active in other geographical locations. However, the consistencies in the results of this study when compared to other studies from around the world suggest that the findings could be generalized to other groups with similar socio-demographic characteristics. Although, this similar demographic profile across these studies may also suggest that sport participation in middle and later life may be a middle class, white phenomenon and that issues of access to active sport tourism contexts should be addressed in future work (Gibson, 1998). Moreover, while gender and life stage differences were examined, the next step would be to move past the differences approach and move into a more in-depth analysis of gender and age (Henderson, 1990). The nature of survey-based research and the types of research questions posed tends to result in a gender differences approach. We tried to work within this inherent limitation by recognizing the historical inequalities associated with sport participation in the U.S. for women. Likewise, Havitz and Dimanche (1997) suggested the continued use of cross-sectional data prevents us from examining change in involvement over time. By framing our interpretations within life span theory, while we cannot suggest change we can attempt to explain differences between the two life stages.

In conclusion, this study provides insights on the benefits individuals seek from taking part in organized active sport tourism events and their overall involvement in physical activity. The influence of life stage in relation to benefits sought suggests that event organizers should pay attention to the age of their participants. While the attraction of the physical activity seems to be a primary reason for participating across all age groups, for some facilitating social opportunities and new experiences may enhance participant satisfaction, while for others running an event that is well organized and provides a site for relaxation may be more important.

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