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INTENTION OF MOUNTAIN BIKERS TO RETURN

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ABSTRACT

Mountain biking forms part of cycle tourism and is a growing segment in sport tourism. Yet, information about the underlying motives of those who participate in mountain bike events, while a tourist at the same time, appears to be scant. The purpose of this research was to determine the motives of mountain bikers and what drives their intentions based on samples from German (n=205) and South African (n=205) cycling events. Five motives were identified using exploratory factor analysis. These were enjoyment, health and fitness, event status and team, social interaction, relaxation, and dedication. Participants in the two events significantly differed based on the importance of the motives. The motives dedication, enjoyment, and health and fitness were identified as drivers of intention for return participation. While the motive dedication and the variable, country, significantly influenced intention to return visits. Marketers should target their promotional activities based on the different motives in relation to behavioural outcomes.

Key words: Return intentions; Motivation; Mass participation events; Mountain biking.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenal growth in sport tourism is not surprising considering the broad range of benefits that accrue to both the host country and the host city from staging sports events (Gratton *et al*., 2005). Potential benefits of sport tourism include, amongst others, attracting high-yield visitors, especially repeaters; generating a favourable image of the destination; improving the organisation of sports events; and increasing community support for sport and sports events (Getz, 1998; Saayman *et al*., 2005; Scott & Turco, 2007). Mountain biking, which forms part of cycle tourism, continues to grow as a recreational activity. In recent years, cycle tourism has become a competitive sport placing demands on resource managers to provide facilities and unrestricted access to favoured cycling destinations (Newsome, 2010).

Mountain biking comprises a complex demographic profile that needs to be understood in terms of its impact as a leisure and sporting activity (Newsome, 2010). Simonsen and Jorgenson (1996) believe that all cycling participants fall into one homogeneous group. However, Faulks *et al*. (2006) differ from this opinion and explain that most participants are motivated by the common variable, the 'bicycle', but participants include a wide variety of individuals, which could lead to different market segments.

According to Kruger and Saayman (2012), sport event organisers should not only attempt to achieve a balance between first time and repeat participants, but should also be aware of the attributes that differentiate these participants. Marketers should firstly attract new participants through highlighting the attributes of the event to potential participants. Secondly, they need to continue the existing participant base by keeping them content with all aspects of the event in an efficient and effective manner (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005). Hence, marketers should follow a two-pronged market segmentation approach, where both groups of participants are considered to ensure the sustainability of the sport event (Kruger *et al.*, 2011).

Despite calls for research, limited studies have been carried out on how first time participants differ from repeat participants at sport events (Filo *et al*., 2008; Wood *et al*., 2010; Myburgh *et al*., 2014). In this regard, to date, limited research has also focused on mountain bikers in particular. However, since international mountain biking events cannot necessarily grow in terms of participant numbers, the challenge for organisers now is to attract and retain the most lucrative markets and to achieve a balance between, for example, national and international, novice and professional cyclists. Understanding the reasons why participants return is, therefore, vital for organisers to manage these participants.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The goal of this research is twofold: firstly, to identify the main motives of mountain bikers to compete; and secondly, to determine which factors (socio-demographic, behavioural and motives), influence the intentions of mountain bikers to repeatedly participate in an event and undertake travel.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research relies on motivation theory. In sport, a distinction is commonly made between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In general, intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity purely for pleasure, fun and satisfaction derived from doing the activity (Deci, 1975; Vallerand & Losier, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000). These motives are consistent with the self-determination theory which states that people are pushed to achieve goals through intrinsic pressures, which lead to more positive experiences (Vallerand & Losier, 1999). When intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for fun, for experiencing feelings of competence, achievement and self-determination and for the challenge, rather than for external motivations or rewards (Pelletier *et al*., 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, pertains to the participation in sport to derive tangible benefits, such as material (trophies) or social (prestige) rewards (Deci, 1975; Vallerand & Losier, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Another model, the trans-theoretical model (TTM) by Prochaska *et al*. (1992), has also traditionally been the most widely adopted model for examining engagement in sport and physical activity. The TMM suggests that mediation of behaviour involves progression through five stages - pre-contemplation (not ready, no intention of becoming active), contemplation (getting ready, thinking about becoming physically active), preparation (ready, making small changes in physical activity behaviour), action (meeting a criterion of activity, but only recently) and maintenance (meeting a criterion of activity for a sustained period). The current

research specifically focuses on the aspects that influence the last stage of the intentions of mountain bikers to continue their participation. Therefore, this model seems to be very suitable in this research context instead of looking solely at different types of motivations, such as intrinsic and extrinsic as used in the self-determination theory (Deci, 1975; Ryan & Deci, 2000) - which is also important - or the progression towards self-actualisation following the hierarchy of needs of Maslow (1943).

It is important for every sport event and other tourism product to determine the motives of participants (intrinsic and extrinsic), because it is the starting-point of marketing, which helps professionals make the most suitable travel and event arrangements that meet the requirements of each individual traveller and/or participant (Mohammad & Som, 2010). In addition, a better understanding of what motivates participants to compete in different sporting events will lead to more effective marketing communication, enhance the event experience and identify the key components on which participants base their decisions (Kruger *et al*., 2011; Kruger *et al*., 2012; Kruger & Saayman, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Profiles of mountain bikers and their motivation

Mountain biking is defined as a type of cycling undertaken primarily on "off-paved roads, purpose-built single track trails, fire roads, access roads and multipurpose trails" (FCS, 2005:6). Although road cycling and mountain biking both use a bicycle, they are two very different sports (Milton, 2010; Rauter & Topič, 2010). These differences are evident in the size of the events, the length (time to complete and duration), type of bicycle, distance and the terrain on which the bicycles are ridden (Lopes & McCormack, 2005).

The research on mountain bikers by Cessford (1995) and Getz and McConnell (2011) revealed that mountain bikers tend to be younger male participants. Getz and McConnell (2011) also found mountain bikers to be in their late thirties, with 'active' types of interests and professional backgrounds. These cyclists also have a high level of education, a high degree of club involvement and high level of experience in the sport. Research has further indicated that the majority of professional mountain bikers participate in the activity frequently (Koepke, 2005). Koepke (2005) found that bikers ride an average of four to six times per week during the season. Most of the riders are also involved in other sports like running, walking and tramping. The more experienced cyclist spends much more money on their bikes, as well as improvements on them. Mountain bikers also demonstrate a diverse need for a variety of activity preferences based upon challenging riding, natural forested settings, single-track, speed and excitement experiences, scenery and general variety in riding conditions (Cessford, 1995).

With regard to motivational differences, LaChausse (2006) identified nine motives of competitive and non-competitive cyclists. These were health orientation, weight concern, goal achievement, competition, recognition, affiliation, coping, life-meaning and self-esteem. It was found that mountain bikers were mainly motivated by life-meaning while road cyclists were motivated more by competition and goal achievement. These results correspond with the results found by Streicher and Saayman (2010). Gadja (2008) identified eight motives for mountain bikers in the United Kingdom. These were, in order of importance, stimulation/excitement/

experiencing flow, riding/socialising with friends, escapism and separation, scenery and contact with nature, exercise/fitness workout, exploration and discovery of new areas, developing and improving skills and speed, and risk. In their study of the motives of mountain bikers and road cyclists, Rauter and Topič (2010) found that the main reason for the performance of mountain bikers is the love of the sport itself (intrinsic motivation) while the road cyclists are driven by a wish for sport results, reputation (prestige) and money. Mountain bikers appreciate risk, the search for new adventure and getting to know more people. King (2010) explored the experience of mountain biking of young people (between the ages of 13 and 25 years), and found that young females were motivated more by self enhancement and health and fitness reasons, while young men were motivated more by group identity, lifestyle, the challenge of mountain biking and being outdoors.

Getz and McConnell (2011) identified four motivation dimensions for mountain bikers. These were athleticism, social, prestige and excitement of which athleticism and excitement were the most important motives to compete - especially motives such as "to challenge myself", "have fun" and "for the thrill of it". These results confirmed the notion that active sport tourists need to compete and improve their skills. However, mountain bikers did not appear to value winning compared with other active cycling tourists. Previous research also indicates that the reasons for participation may vary by gender (Masters *et al.*, 1993; King & Burke, 2000), level of participation and type of activity (Ogles & Masters, 2003).

Return intentions in a travel and sport context

Revisit intention refers to the willingness or plans of tourists to revisit the same destination again (Cole & Scott, 2004). In the context of this research, revisit intention also refers to the plans of participants to take part in the same event again in the future. Destination and event organisations are concerned with the reasons underlying tourist revisit intention, since the cost of retaining repeat visitors is much less than that of attracting new visitors (Um *et al*., 2006). Other reasons for aiming to attract repeat visitors include the notion that repeat visitors signal that they are satisfied visitors/participants, they are generally loyal to the event or attraction, they become ambassadors of the event, and satisfied participants promote the event by word of mouth (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999; Oppermann, 2000; Tang & Turco, 2001; Caneen, 2004; Li *et al*., 2008). In particular, the host destinations of sport events are concerned with long-term economic benefits and local development and, therefore, need to persuade event participants to stay beyond the period of the event or to attract them to return to visit the destination as a non-sport tourist (Chalip & McGuirty, 2004).

Previous research has examined determinants, such as socio-demographics, group size, motivations and past behaviour of return intention in the leisure travel and sport context. Various studies have also focused on retaining the youth to continue their participation in sport (Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009; Poobalan *et al*., 2012; Guzman & Kingston, 2012; Atkins *et al*., 2015), as well as the influence of a coach-created motivational climate (Alvarez *et al*., 2012; Ntoumanis *et al*., 2012). In addition, differences have been identified between first time and repeat visitors (participants), indicating that previous experience matters and those groups might have distinct perceptions about future intentions.
With regard to socio-demographics, Gitelson and Crompton (1984), Lau and McKercher (2004) and Li *et al*. (2008) found first timers to be younger than repeaters. Moreover, Kruger

and Saayman (2014) revealed that among males, first time and repeater numbers are similar, but among women fewer women undertake repeat participation. Sport event participants in general tend to be male and well educated (Turco *et al*., 2003; Chalip & McGuirty, 2004; Funk *et al*., 2007). Surprisingly, it appears that very few studies have included socio-demographics to explain intentions, even though general consumer behaviour theory suggests this relationship (Solomon *et al*., 2013).

With regard to group size, a study among triathletes participating in Ironman South Africa found that repeat participants travel in larger groups than first time participants (Myburgh *et al.,* 2014). Regan *et al*. (2012) found that effective destination image, and enduring involvement in the event category influence group-oriented travel behaviour to major events; however, no distinction between first-time and repeat athletes was drawn.

Concerning motivations, diverse findings have been reported. The motives intrinsic achievement and escape and relaxation were the most important motives to participate for both first-time and repeat athletes (Kruger & Saayman, 2015). In contrast, first timers are more curious (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991), and are more motivated by external factors (Alegre & Juaneda, 2006), when compared with repeaters. First time participants were mostly motivated by challenge, inner vie and intrinsic achievement and control, whereas repeat participants viewed event novelty, challenge, inner vie, and health and fitness as the most important motives to participate (Myburgh *et al*., 2014). Based on all these findings, it is no surprise that first timers participate in more activities compared to repeaters (Kemperman *et al*., 2004; Lau & McKercher, 2004). Atkins *et al*. (2015) found that enjoyment and self-esteem contributed the most to young sport participants.

Finally, pertaining to past behaviour as a potential determinant of intentions, it has been shown that previous experience of the event is an important driver of behavioural intentions of tourists (Petrick *et al*., 2001; Um *et al*., 2006), and active sport tourists (Hallmann & Breuer, 2010). It was also shown that for active sport event tourists, first timers were unsure that they would return, and concerning travel to other tourist attractions, it is noteworthy that the results confirmed that repeaters do visit attractions in the area (Kruger & Saayman, 2015).

Despite this research, a consensus on the determinants of return intentions of tourists and the correlations between influential factors and repeat travel remains underdeveloped (Chen & Funk, 2010). Weed (2005) pointed out that studies have acknowledged that sport event participants, who enjoy their sport tourism experience, would like to repeat the experience in the future; however, exploratory studies focusing on why the experience is enjoyable and why participants would like to repeat it are lacking.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative paradigm was followed to address the research questions. Data for this research were collected at the SKS Mountain bike Marathon in Sundern, Germany on 27 April and 28 April 2012, and at the ABSA Cape Epic Race in South Africa on 24 March 2012.
The SKS Mountain bike Marathon is held annually in the last weekend (two days) in April with over 1600 participants taking part in the 2012 event. The event consists of three races (100km, 50km and 30km), and the route is along very rural and hilly terrain. The ABSA Cape Epic, on

the other hand, is one of the biggest endurance mountain bike events in South Africa, attracting over 1200 participants. The race is held over an 8-day period and includes a trail prologue. The route is approximately 800 kilometres and mostly consists of gravel paths, rocky uphill's, river crossings, technical downhills and routes in the forest (Cape Epic, 2012). At both events, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the participants using non-random sampling, namely a convenience sampling approach. This was due to ease of accessibility.

Measures

Twenty (20) motivational items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with respondents being asked to indicate the importance of each item on the scale (1=not at all important; 2=less important; 3=neither important nor less important; 4=very important and 5=extremely important). The motivation items were based on the research conducted by LaChausse (2006), Gadja (2008), King (2010), Rauter and Topič (2010), as well as Getz and McConnell (2011). They were selected after checking for their adequateness for the mountain bike context based on discussions with mountain bikers and faculty staff. The items included in the motivation section included self-actualisation, prestige and competitive related motives. In addition, socio-demographic information was requested relating to gender, age, education, behavioural variables concerning experience with the event, the sizes of the party travelling with the participant to the event, their intentions for return participation in the event, and return visits to the destination (Table 1).

Sampling procedures

The questionnaire was distributed to the participants of the races on the day before the race took place in the area where they could pick up their bib numbers, on the race day in the same area, and in the finish area. In Germany, 263 questionnaires were returned, of which 41 were excluded from the analysis due to incomplete answers and 17 respondents were excluded because they did not qualify as sport tourists, being from the hosting destination. Thus, the final sample size for the German sample amounted to n=205. A total of 205 completed participant questionnaires were administered for the Cape Epic in South Africa. An onsite intercept survey was conducted, with field workers handing out questionnaires during registration at the Forum, Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. Participants were approached while they were queuing for registration. Respondents were briefed about the purpose of the research beforehand to ensure that they participated willingly and fieldworkers were also trained to ensure a representative sample at both events in terms of gender, race and nationality.

Participant characteristics

Considering the sample from South Africa, the majority of participants was male (89%), well-educated (87% have at least A-levels), and with a mean age of 39 years (39.22±8.558). They travelled with 3 persons on average and had participated at least once before in the event. Similar characteristics apply to the German sample: 75% were male, 1 third (38%) were well-educated, the mean age was 38 years (37.96±9.787), and they travelled with 3 other persons. However, on average, they had already taken part in the event 3 times. Table 2 presents an overview of these results.

Table 1. **OVERVIEW AND OPERATIONALISATION OF VARIABLES**

Variable	Description	Scale
Gender	Female=1, Male=0	Dummy
EDU	Higher education (at least A-levels)	Dummy
Age	Age of respondent in years	Metric
Party size	Size of group party travelling	Metric
Experience	Number of times participated in the event	Metric
Country	Country of the event (Germany=0; South Africa=1)	Dummy
Re-participate	Intention to re-participate in the event (Yes=1, else=0)	Dummy
Revisit	Intention to revisit the destination/attractions (Yes=1, else=0)	Dummy
Motives#	**Description**	**Scale**
Get away	To get away from my routine.	Ordinal
Relax	To relax.	Ordinal
Family/friends	To spend time with family and friends.	Ordinal
Meet people	To meet new people.	Ordinal
Sociable	It is a sociable event.	Ordinal
Enjoy	Because I enjoy cycling.	Ordinal
Well organised	Because the event is well organised.	Ordinal
Endurance	The event tests my level of fitness and endurance.	Ordinal
International	It is an international event.	Ordinal
Team	I am participating as part of a team.	Ordinal
Challenge	The event is a huge challenge.	Ordinal
Pride	To feel proud of myself and to feel a sense of achievement.	Ordinal
Must do	It is a "must do" event.	Ordinal
Identity	To share group identity with other cyclists.	Ordinal
Health	To improve my health.	Ordinal
Goal	I am pursuing a personal goal of participating in a predetermined number of cycling events.	Ordinal
Club	Because I am participating as part of a club.	Ordinal
Professional	Because I am a professional cyclist.	Ordinal
Addicted	I am addicted to training and this event sets training targets for me.	Ordinal
Preparation	Because this race allows me to train, qualify or prepare for other events, such as the Ironman, etc.	Ordinal

Measured on a five-point Likert scale (1=*not important at all* to 5=*extremely important*)

Data analysis

Data analysis included several steps. Initially, mean values were analysed indicating sample proportions for binary variables (Table 2). The summary statistics include an overview of the mean values of each sample (South African and German), and the total sample. In addition, motives were tested for differences using independent t-Tests. To reduce the data considering the motives, exploratory factor analysis was carried out using all 21 motives.

Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was employed. In a first round of analysis, the single motives *challenge* and *pride* had factor loadings smaller than 0.4 and were loading

on 2 factors. The motive *goal* was also loading on 2 factors. Thus, these were excluded from further analysis (all analyses going beyond the summary statistics). Consequently, the motive *identity* had a factor loading smaller than 0.4 and was also excluded from the subsequent analyses. Following the screen test and the Kaiser criterion, a 5-factor solution was suggested. Finally, all factor loadings were higher than 0.5 and could, therefore, be considered significant (Hair *et al.*, 2010). In addition, all communalities were higher than 0.4.

Thereafter, logistic regression analyses using (a) intention for return participation, and (b) intention for return visits to the destination were employed. Socio-demographic indicators (gender, education, age), behavioural components (party size, experience, country), and the 5 motive factors retrieved from the factor analysis served as independent variables.

RESULTS

Table 2. **SUMMARY STATISTICS AND RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT t-TEST FOR MOTIVES BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICAN AND GERMAN SAMPLES**

Variable	**Total sample** Mean±SD	**South African sample** Mean±SD	**German sample** Mean±SD	**t-Score for motives**
Gender	0.184±0.388	0.113±0.318	0.251±0.435	
EDU	0.627±0.484	0.873±0.334	0.381±0.487	
Age	38.55±9.237	39.22±8.558	37.96±9.787	
Party size	3.403±2.550	3.345±2.216	3.643±2.863	
Experience	2.186±2.106	1.516±1.618	2.821±2.313	
Commitment	0.212±0.501	0.068±0.253	0.356±0.480	
Motives				
Get away	3.073±0.409	3.017±1.314	0.312±1.111	0.855
Relax	2.997±1.210	2.92±11.333	3.066±1.072	1.153
Family/friends	2.935±1.204	2.667±1.288	3.167±1.089	3.992*
Meet people	2.889±1.210	2.976±1.288	2.814±0.938	-1.410
Sociable	3.177±1.082	3.195±1.231	3.162±0.965	-0.292
Enjoy	4.468±1.096	4.449±0.833	4.485±0.599	0.482
Well organised	4.033±0.717	3.952±0.927	4.101±0.839	1.612
Endurance	3.968±1.493	3.998±1.105	3.951±0.894	-0.360
International	3.215±0.995	3.573±1.260	2.904±1.264	-5.076*
Team	3.303±1.304	3.720±1.147	2.938±1.439	-5.737*
Challenge	4.032±1.366	4.438±0.768	3.681±0.899	-8.801*
Pride	3.997±0.915	4.351±0.831	3.696±0.960	-7.022*
Must do	3.190±0.959	4.012±1.089	2.480±1.311	-12.160*
Identity	3.148±1.433	3.173±1.248	3.126±0.984	-0.382
Health	3.284±1.110	3.173±1.234	3.376±1.026	1.705
Goal	2.908±1.128	2.781±1.449	3.010±1.263	1.597

(Continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Variable	**Total sample** Mean±SD	**South African sample** Mean±SD	**German sample** Mean±SD	**t-Score for motives**
Club	2.238±1.352	1.853±1.182	2.556±1.405	5.161*
Professional	1.949±1.354	1.727±1.245	2.133±1.224	3.096*
Addicted	3.419±1.248	2.976±1.414	3.787±0.846	6.525*
Prepare	2.659±1.208	2.422±1.415	2.857±1.337	3.024*

SD=Standard deviation * $p<0.05$

The single motives were rated differently by the 2 samples. The 3 most important motives (based on the mean values) for the South Africans were *enjoy* (4.449±0.833), *challenge* (4.438±0.768) and *pride* (4.351±0.831), while for the Germans *enjoy* (4.485±0.599), *well organised* (4.101±0.839) and *addicted* (3.787±0.846) were rated the highest. The motives were tested for differences between the 2 groups and the t-Test statistic revealed significant ($p<0.05$) differences for the motives *family and friends, international, team, challenge, pride, must do, club, professional, addicted* and *prepare*. Consequently, the 2 groups differed significantly on 50% of the motives. Notwithstanding these differences, the data were reduced to find common factors among the motives.

Table 3. **EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS: PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS WITH VARIMAX ROTATION**

Variable	**Factor 1** Dedication	**Factor 2** Social interaction & relaxation	**Factor 3** Event status and team	**Factor 4** Enjoyment	**Factor 5** Health & fitness
Get away		0.627			
Relax		0.723			
Family & friends		0.683			
Meet people		0.754			
Sociable		0.705			
Enjoy				0.826	
Well organised				0.787	
Endurance					0.711
International			0.702		
Team			0.789		
Must do			0.738		
Health					0.715
Club	0.755				
Professional	0.778				
Addicted	0.668				
Prepare	0.701				

(Continued)

Table 3. (continued)

Variable	**Factor 1** Dedication	**Factor 2** Social interaction & relaxation	**Factor 3** Event status and team	**Factor 4** Enjoyment	**Factor 5** Health & fitness
Eigen value	3.974	1.961	1.684	1.234	1.034
% Variance explained (61.80)	24.838	12.254	10.527	7.712	6.464
Mean value	2.550	2.990	3.230	4.260	3.630
Cronbach's Alpha	0.771	0.754	0.620	0.560	0.452
KMO			0.755		
Bartlett's Test for sphericity			1201.827*		

* p<0.001

The results of the exploratory factor analysis are summarised in Table 3. The eigenvalues of all factors were greater than 1.0 and the overall variance explained amounted to 61.80%. Bartlett's Test for sphericity exposed a significant χ^2 of 1201.827. The analysis revealed a 5-factor solution. The 1st factor comprised the variables *Club* (β=0.755), *Professional* (β=0.778), *Addicted* (β=0.668) and *Prepare* (β=0.701), and was, therefore, labelled ***dedication***. This factor had the lowest mean value of 2.55. The 2nd factor entailed the variables *Get away* (β=0.627), *Relax* (β=0.723), *Family & friends* (β=0.683), *Meet people* (β=0.754), and *Sociable* (β=0.705), and was named ***social interaction and relaxation*** and has a mean value of 2.99. The 3rd factor included 3 variables, *International* (β=0.702), *Team* (β=0.789) and *Must do* (β=0.738), and was labelled ***event status and team***. This factor had a mean value of 3.23. The 4th factor, ***enjoyment***, comprised the variables *Enjoy* (β=0.826), and *Well organised* (β=0.787) and, based on the mean value (M=4.26), was regarded as the most important motive to participate in the events. The 5th factor referred to the variables *Endurance* (β=0.711) and *Health* (β=0.715), and was labelled ***health and fitness*** and obtained the 2nd highest mean value of 3.63.

The results of the logistic regression (Table 4) suggested that the estimated model for ***intention for return participation*** is significantly predictive (χ^2=47.098; -2LL=302.354; p=0.000), with R^2 McFadden amounting to 13.47%. Three variables contributed significantly to the overall model. These included 3 factors, namely *dedication, enjoyment* and *health and fitness*. The analysis of the odds reveals that the odds for intention to revisit increase significantly by 1.479 per additional unit in *dedication* under control of all other variables. A positive effect was also attributed to *enjoyment* (Odds=1.706) and *health and fitness* (Odds=1.465). The 2nd estimated model using ***intention for return visits*** to the destination as a dependent variable was also significant (χ^2=85.395; -2LL=217.472; *p*=0.000). R^2 McFadden was 23.93%. In total, 2 variables exerted a significant influence on intention to revisit: *country* and *dedication*. Taking part in the South African event led to an increase in odds by 6.509 to revisit the destination. There was a significant negative effect of the factor *dedication* (Odds=0.599) on revisit intention.

Table 4. **LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS: INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE AGAIN AND TO REVISIT AS DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

Variable	**Intention to re-participate** Coefficient (Odds)	**Intention to revisit** Coefficient (Odds)
Female	-0.457 (0.633)	-0.936 (0.392)
EDU	-0.219 (0.803)	0.474 (1.607)
Age	-0.025 (0.976)	-0.005 (0.995)
Party size	0.040 (1.041)	-0.152 (0.859)
Experience	-0.016 (0.984)	0.018 (1.019)
Country	-0.705 (0.494)	1.873 (6.509)***
Dedication	0.392 (1.479)*	-0.512 (0.599)**
Social interaction & relaxation	-0.146 (0.864)	-0.038 (0.962)
Event status & team	0.279 (1.321)	0.214 (1.239)
Enjoyment	0.534 (1.706)***	-0.047 (0.954)
Health and fitness	0.382 (1.465)**	0.089 (1.093)
Constant	1.081 (2.949)	-1.650 (0.192)
Pseudo R^2 Mc Fadden	13.47%	23.93%
χ^2	47.098	85.395
-2LL	302.354	217.472
p	0.000	0.000

* $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ *** $p \leq 0.001$

DISCUSSION

The results revealed that if one wants to attract the mountain bike market, their profile appears to be similar in all the studies conducted internationally. The profile of mountain bikers based on the socio-demographic variables, confirms that mountain bikers are male, well-educated and in their late thirties, which is congruent with previous findings (Cessford, 1995; Koepke, 2005; Getz & McConnell, 2011).

Moreover, across mountain bike events, some single motivations differ slightly. For example, 'family and friends' was significantly more important in the German sample whereas the South Africans consider their event to be a 'must do' as more significant. In general, five distinct motives (as dimensions including several motivations) were identified. The five motives identified for participating in the two mountain biking events, in order of importance are *dedication, social interaction and relaxation, event status and team*, *enjoyment*, and *health and fitness*. Mountain bikers are, therefore, motivated more by intrinsic than extrinsic motives, which are consistent with the self-determination theory which states that participants are pushed to achieve goals through intrinsic pressures. These motives, furthermore, support the results obtained by LaChausse (2006), Gadja (2008), Rauter and Topič (2010), King (2010)

and Getz and McConnell (2011). However, the combination and importance of the motives are unique to this research confirming once again that motives differ from one event to the next.

The logistic regression identified three variables that exert a significant influence on return participation. These are the motives *dedication*, *enjoyment* and *health and fitness*. These motives differ substantially from the motives identified by Myburgh *et al*. (2014) and Kruger and Saayman (2015), that had an influence on repeat participation in their respective events; emphasising that the type and nature of the sport and participant influence intentions to re-participate. Hence, the type of cycling and the type of participant greatly influence the motives to participate. Kruger and Saayman (2015) identified intrinsic achievement and escape and relaxation as the most important motives for both first-time and repeat visitors, while Myburgh *et al*. (2014) identified event novelty, challenge, inner vie, and health and fitness. Thus, the results show that mountain bikers are not only devoted and loyal to their sport, but also to the respective events with intrinsic motives being the strongest drivers for repeat participation.

In support of Kruger *et al*. (2012) and Krugell and Saayman (2013), the results emphasised that the type of event can greatly influence the intentions of participants to return as visitors to a destination where the event is held. This supports the TMM highlighting the progression through the five stages and pointing in particular to action and its link to maintenance, which represents the last and final stage. This is portrayed through intention to return. With regard the aforementioned, two determinants were significant, namely *country* and the motive *dedication*. This means, that participants of the Cape Epic held in South Africa, are more likely to revisit the destination than the participants of the German event. This can be ascribed to the type of event and the greater attractiveness of the South African destination. A possible explanation for this could be the event itself, the difference in the route distances, the timing of the two events, the fact that only teams of two can participate in the Cape Epic, and there are no individual cyclists. The Cape Epic is furthermore an eight-day race compared with the SKS Mountain bike Marathon, which is only a two-day event. From the identified motivations and t-Test analysis, it is clear that challenge is a very important motive for participants in the Cape Epic, which could also explain their affinity with the race since it provides the ultimate mountain bike challenge. These results support the self-determination theory, which states that challenge is an important motive to compete in sports.

The motive *dedication* exerted a negative influence on re-visit intentions of participants to the host country. Results concerning the motive *dedication*, therefore, suggest that when one participates in an extreme endurance sport, such as mountain biking, aspects such as devotion are necessary to compete in this type of sport. Therefore, it is an important motive to participate in a particular event. It does not, however, play a significant role when choosing a destination where the events are held. For these participants, the event is more important than the destination. However, the results should be interpreted with caution, especially when the nature of the two events and the differences between them are taken into account. This also corresponds with the notion by Taylor (2010) that factors that influence participation by cyclists in mountain biking are diverse, complex and interrelated. The findings further challenge current sports motivational theories and indicate that while the motives identified are applicable to participation in sport events, they are not applicable to repeat travel to a particular destination as a result of the sport participation.

IMPLICATIONS

The profiles of mountain bikers are similar in both current studies, as well as those in other studies carried out internationally. This has the advantage that the marketing campaign used nationally will most probably be successful for the international market. Mountain biking events can, therefore, apply a universal marketing strategy to attract participants. Marketers and organisers of cycling events should certainly take the results of this research into consideration, not only to sustain the respective events, but also to grow the sport of cycling. However, the distinct nature of each race needs to be incorporated in marketing material in order to emphasise the characteristics of the race and route. This will attract participants with different levels of experience suitable for each race. Further research is required to understand the different cyclists who participate in different mountain biking events.

Coupled with this, promotional activities of different events need to focus on different motives based on the type of event. The communication message for short and middle distance events, such as the German event, should stress the fun factor of a well-organised event and challenge dimension ('check training against the real thing'). On the other hand, the marketing campaign for longer distance events, such as the Cape Epic, should combine the characteristics of the event (time, duration, terrain and skill required), as well as emphasise team work, which is key to the event. Furthermore, it is recommended that the route for mountain biking events change periodically in order to manage the impact and give cyclists an added challenge of an unfamiliar route.

The advantage that mountain biking events offers, which was also a key finding in this research, is that the sport of mountain biking can appeal to various participants, since their motives for participating in the respective events differ. Mountain biking can thus appeal to a variety of participants in terms of fitness level, endurance and challenge. There are various mountain biking events held all over the world. These events should work together to not only promote their events, but also to create greater awareness of the sport. This in return could also increase tourism to the areas where these events are held thereby contributing toward sport tourism in the host countries. The main goal of sport organisers should be to make mountain biking events accessible to all people, irrespective of their fitness level, gender, race or geographic location.

LIMITATIONS

This research has some limitations. The first limitation concerns the sampling procedures employed at the two events: The sampling was rather non-random as a result of the accessibility of participants instead of using a systematic and random approach. In addition, the two events studied were slightly different in nature, in particular, considering the duration of the events and the length of the races offered. Nonetheless, it is evident from the results that the socio-demographics are alike, though this does not apply to all the motivations.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was twofold: firstly, to identify the main motives of mountain bikers at these events and the results indicated five primarily intrinsic motives. The second objective was to identify the factors that influence the intention of mountain bikers for return

participation in an event and their intentions regarding return visits to the host destination. This kind of study has not yet been undertaken in mountain biking literature to the best of our knowledge. Three variables were identified for intentions of participants to re-participate, namely *dedication*, *health and fitness*, and *enjoyment*. With regard to the intention of participants to revisit the destination, two variables were significant, namely *country* and the motive *dedication*; however, in this case, the motive had a negative influence. In this study, the role that the event plays are noteworthy since the data from two different biking events were used and show great resemblance in terms of socio-demographic characteristics. However, motives and behaviour differed to some extent, and is an issue that requires further research. In the case of comparing events, consideration might be given to establishing what the event specific factors are, that play a role in riders returning to the event, especially in the field of endurance events.

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