Differentiating Between Active and Passive Discontinuers of Two Leisure Activities

Sheila J. Backman
Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management
Clemson University
Clemson, South Carolina 29631

John L. Crompton
Department of Recreation and Parks
Texas A & M University
College Station, Texas 77843

In contrast to the substantial body of published leisure research which has investigated differences between users of leisure services, very little published research has focused on differences among discontinuers. Previous investigators have recognized that discontinuers are not a homogeneous group, but little attention has been given to identifying variables which could be used to differentiate meaningful subgroups among discontinuers. Respondents were classified into one of two categories, active or passive, based on their propensity to transmit negative information. Two hypotheses were tested to determine if selected internal and external variables could be used to differentiate between the two groups of discontinuers. Results of the discriminant analysis revealed that variables such as side bets and values were useful for discriminating between active and passive discontinuers of golf and tennis.

KEYWORDS: Discontinuance in Leisure Activities; Active and Passive Discontinuers; Word of Mouth; Side Bets; Values; Barriers; Non-participation; Ceasing Participation

Leisure researchers have long recognized the importance of investigating a variety of dimensions relating to individuals who participate in leisure activities, but it is only in recent years that a small but growing amount of effort has been devoted to investigating the substantial segment of the adult population who do not use recreation resources and facilities. From a theoretical perspective, progress has been made in identifying constraints which inhibit an individual's participation in leisure activities; in describing the characteristics of non-participants; and in developing conceptual models of non-participation (Godbey, 1985; Jackson, 1988). The insights emerging from non-participation studies are likely to be useful to practitioners, since most public agencies seek to encourage non-participants to use existing resources.

Recently, Jackson and Dunn (1988) have provided empirical evidence suggesting that replacement rates for different categories of activities vary widely. They reported that only two of their nine activity categories were able to attract sufficient numbers of new users to replace those who ceased to participate. The remaining seven activity categories had a declining
number of participants. The extent of the decline varied across the activity categories. The finding that many of the activities experienced decline is consistent with the results of Warnick and Howard's (1985) four-year study of participation levels in golf and tennis.

Very little is known about why some individuals continue to participate while others discontinue. Individuals who discontinue their participation pose a substantial problem to practitioners' efforts to increase total participant numbers. The retarding impact of discontinuance has been noted. For example, Rogers (1983) points out that large segments of discontinuers may slow down the level of use of products and services. Similarly, Snow (1980) found that “in general, activities with the highest rates of participation are those least frequently listed as being discontinued” (p. 63). Previous investigations have recognized that discontinuers are not a homogeneous group (Jackson & Dunn, 1988), but there has been little reported effort to identify variables which could be used to differentiate meaningful subgroups within the category of discontinuers.

Midgley (1976) proposed that an individual's propensity to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication following discontinuance may be a useful variable for delineating between subgroups of discontinuers. He argued that active rejecters, those discontinuing and engaging in negative word-of-mouth communication, are likely to be perceived by potential adopters as more credible sources of information than the resource suppliers' promotional efforts. Thus, the spread of negative interpersonal communication by active rejecters is likely to substantially inhibit or impede an agency's efforts to recruit new participants.

This paper develops a conceptual model of discontinuance, incorporating active and passive discontinuers, and making use of theoretical contributions suggested by rural sociologists and consumer researchers from their studies of discontinuance. The model is limited to individuals who have had prior experience, and incorporates selected personal and environmental response variables which the literature suggested were likely to impact discontinuance. Finally, the paper reports the results of an empirical study which explored the utility of using these personal and environmental response variables to distinguish between subgroups of discontinuers.

The Concept of Discontinuance

A conceptualization of discontinuance in the context of leisure activities is illustrated in Figure 1. Participants' evaluations of an activity may lead either to a decision to continue using it (continuance) or to not continue using it (discontinuance). Discontinuance is the rejection of a previously used activity and may occur after initial use or after any subsequent use. Antil (1984) suggests that first-time users and repeat users of services are qualitatively different because consistent use suggests psychological attachment to the service. This conceptual model focuses on discontinuers who in the past consistently participated in a recreation activity, rather than on discontinuers who withdrew from the activity after an initial use.
Following Midgley (1976), discontinuers are categorized as being either active or passive. Active discontinuers have discontinued using the activity and transmit negative information about it. Passive discontinuers do not transmit negative information after their discontinuance. Conceptually, it was deemed important to distinguish between the subgroups because former participants comprising the active subgroup may have substantially more impact on discontinuance than passive discontinuers. Evidence from consumer behavior studies suggests that interpersonal communication through word-of-mouth is likely to be more influential in stimulating individuals to initiate or change behavior than non-personal communication (Richins, 1983). Midgley (1976) has shown that active rejecters do slow down the demand for, and subsequent use levels of, goods through their transmission of negative word-of-mouth communication.

A decision to complain is postulated to be influenced by both personal and environmental response factors. Conceptually, the personal variables selected for inclusion in the study represent a participant’s general orientation or input, whereas the environmental response variables reflect a response to factors in the task environment. Internal personal variables include locus of control, values, motivation, innovativeness, and involvement, while external response environmental variables include side bets, constraints, price sensitivity, and perceived skill level. The five personal and four environmental response variables were selected because previous studies in the literature had suggested their relevance.

**Personal Variables**

Locus of control appears particularly relevant to discontinuers’ propensity to complain. According to Lefcourt (1966), people with internal locus of control perceive that they are in control of their own behavior and that positive or negative experiences are the result of their own behavior.
In contrast, “externals” perceive that they are not in control of their behavior, or of positive or negative experiences associated with their behavior, and that fate, chance or luck controls their behavior. Iso-Ahola and Mannell (1985) suggested that internals tend to participate more frequently and develop a stronger liking for skill activities than externals. There is empirical evidence in the consumer behavior literature (Settle & Golden, 1974) which supports the notion that externals may be more likely to complain than internals, because they attribute negative experiences to the activity rather than to their own lack of skill.

The second personal variable, values, has been shown to assist in explaining beliefs, attitudes and behaviors related to consumption of selected goods and services (Prakash & Munson, 1986). Rokeach (1973) suggested that values are employed as standards against which individuals evaluate themselves as well as others. Several investigators have reported that personal values influence perceptions of the importance of products (Smith & Beatty 1984), beliefs and brand choices (Henry, 1976) and recreation choices (Jackson, 1973). Hence, values may influence which services are perceived to be important. This may directly influence discontinuance in a recreation activity, and propensity to transmit negative information about the activity.

Three dimensions of motivation, intrinsic/extrinsic, personal competence, and mastery are also relevant to understanding continued use of a recreation activity. Csikzentmihalyi (1975) has pointed out that continued use of a recreation activity is likely to be influenced by its intrinsic value to a participant. Additionally, Deci (1975) has suggested that the concept of perceived personal competence is fundamental to intrinsic motivation. Activities which provide the opportunity to feel competent and in control are likely to be intrinsically motivating. However, individuals also participate in leisure services for reasons extrinsic to the activity. For example, it may be more important for the individual to be with friends than to be participating in a specific activity. Individuals characterized by intrinsic motivation may transmit negative information upon discontinuance, because they seek to reduce cognitive dissonance associated with withdrawal or because some other variable has forced their discontinuance.

Innovativeness is a characteristic which all individuals possess to some degree (Hurt, Joseph & Cook, 1977; Midgley & Dowling, 1978) and refers to their propensity to change. Those who are sensation seekers seeking high levels of stimulation tend to be high in innovativeness and may discontinue use of a recreation service if the service does not provide sufficient challenges. Active discontinuers may have higher degrees of innovativeness than do passives, since the propensity to complain requires the individual to take public action.

Involvement, the fifth personal variable, affects individuals' judgments by providing an internal frame of reference which regulates their attachment to services (Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965). Level of involvement mediates how individuals behave toward recreation services. Results of
studies in consumer behavior (Howard & Sheth, 1969; Zaichowsky, 1985) and in the leisure field (Bloch & Bruce, 1984) revealed that individuals exhibiting high and low involvement respond to services differently. Highly involved discontinuers may complain because they perceive the activity to be personally important, whereas passive discontinuers do not.

In summary, the literature suggests that the personal variables of locus of control, values, motivation, degree of innovativeness, and level of involvement may impact an individual's propensity to complain after discontinuing participation in a recreation activity.

*Environmental Response Variables*

Becker (1960) suggested that participants accumulate investments such as equipment, friends, money, learning costs, club memberships, magazine subscriptions and skills when engaging in leisure behavior. Similarly, Bloch and Bruce (1984), Bryan (1977), and Buchanan (1985) have proposed that a participant's level of involvement is related to the extent of his or her investment or side bets in that activity. Abramson et al. (1958) concluded that consumers engage in a psychological accounting and evaluate costs of discontinuance against the benefits received from continuing. Active discontinuers may perceive the costs of discontinuance to be greater than passive discontinuers, thus contributing to their propensity to transmit negative information about a service.

Constraints refers to barriers or blockages which inhibit an individual's use. Several studies have been reported that identified constraints which influenced users to discontinue participation in leisure activities. Boothby, Tungatt and Townsend (1981), identified five major categories of barriers which led their respondents to withdraw from sporting activities. They were: (a) loss of interest; (b) lack of facilities; (c) unfitness and physical disability; (d) leaving a youth organization and (e) moving away. These findings were consistent with those of Show (1980) who reported that his respondents cited similar responses for discontinuing participation in selected leisure services. Further, he pointed out that some constraints to participation were temporary while others were permanent, and that those who cited transitory reasons for discontinuance indicated a desire to participate in the future. These findings are consistent with those of Rogers (1983) who noted that discontinuance may be a permanent or transitory state.

Active and passive discontinuers may differ with respect to the types of constraints which led to their discontinuance. Previous researchers have shown that people vary in their tolerances to price changes. Pricing has been the focus of much attention in consumer behavior, because price changes can have a substantial impact on the profitability of a service. Although pricing has not received much attention in the public sector, some researchers have reported that the price to participate in a leisure service was not frequently mentioned as a constraint by non-participants.
(Howard & Crompton, 1984; Jackson, 1983). However, the total monetary cost of participation has been identified as a variable which influences discontinuance (Snow, 1980).

Iso-Ahola and Mannel (1985) suggest that an individual’s perception of his or her skill level as not matching that of others may influence a decision to discontinue. This proposition is consistent with the findings of Csikzentmihalyi (1975), who reported that level of enjoyment of a recreation activity is reflective of perception of skill level in relation to the challenge the activity presents. Furthermore, if the skill level is perceived as being too high for the level of challenge, then the individual will experience boredom and withdraw from the activity. On the other hand, if the skill level is too low for the challenge inherent in the activity, then there are likely to be feelings of anxiety and withdrawal from the activity. Perception of low competence in comparison to others may influence some participants to perceive that they do not have the skill to enjoy using the service and this may influence a decision to discontinue. It is likely that discontinuers who perceive their skill level to be higher in comparison to their friends will transmit negative information to reduce the cognitive dissonance associated with withdrawal.

In sum, environmental response variables, such as side bets, perceived constraints, price sensitivity, and perceived skill level may impact a discontinuer’s propensity to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication related to the activity.

Two hypotheses were developed for empirical testing based on the literature reviewed and the conceptual model shown in Figure 1. They considered personal variables and environmental response variables, respectively. They were:

H:1 Past participants’ locus of control, values, motivation, degree of innovativeness, and level of involvement will discriminate between active and passive discontinuers.

H:2 Past participants’ side bets, perceived constraints, price sensitivity, and perceived skill level will discriminate between active and passive discontinuers.

Methodology

To test the hypotheses, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from discontinuers of golf and tennis in Austin, Texas. A sample of discontinuers, as defined in this study, is notoriously difficult to identify. A judgment sampling approach was used to derive a sample of 80 golfers and 80 tennis players who had regularly participated in those activities, but not during the past 12 months. When they agreed to participate in the study, they were given a questionnaire and asked to return it in a prepaid envelope to the researchers. To encourage individuals to respond to the survey, each non-respondent was telephoned one week following distribution of the survey. One week later each non-respondent was mailed a
package containing a follow-up letter and a survey. Two further telephone
calls were made to encourage response, after one and two weeks following
the mailout.

Overall response rates were 55.5 percent for golf and 50.0 percent for
tennis. Although the use of a judgment sampling approach and the achieved
sample sizes of 44 for golf and 40 for tennis limits generalizability of the
findings, the sample size is comparable with the number of discontinuing
golfers (n = 453) and racquet sports players, which included tennis players,
(n = 44) who were identified in a general population survey by Jackson
and Dunn (1988) and used by them to explore the discontinuance
phenomenon. Approximately 69 percent of the golf sample and 48 percent of
the tennis sample were male, while 63 percent of the golf sample and 83
percent of the tennis sample were over the age of 35.

Criterion Variable

Discontinuance was operationalized as a categorical variable with two
levels. To measure an individual’s status, discontinuers were asked if they
had complained to anyone prior to their withdrawal. Discontinuers were
categorized as either active discontinuers or passive discontinuers. Active
discontinuers referred to respondents who discontinued and transmitted
negative information about the service after withdrawal. Passive discontinu-
erers referred to respondents who discontinued but did not transmit neg-
active information about the service.

The predictor variables included both personal and environmental
response variables which the literature review suggested were related to
discontinuance. Locus of control, values, motivation, degree of innova-
tiveness, and level of involvement were selected as personal variables for in-
vestigation. The environmental response variables included were side bets,
perceived constraints, price sensitivity, and perceived skill level.

Personal Response Variables

Locus of control was measured by using seven items from Rotter’s
(1966) 29 item locus of control scale. The criterion used to select these
items was the strength of the inter-item correlation obtained in a pretest.
Respondents’ total scores were computed by summing their seven item
scores. Each item was scored 0 for external and 1 for internal. Hence, the
maximum total score for this scale was 7. The scale achieved alphas of .80
and .76 for the golf and tennis sub-samples, respectively.

List of values, developed by Kahle (1983) at the University of Michigan
Survey Research Center as an alternative to VALS (Mitchell, 1985), was
used to assess respondents’ two most important values. Respondents were
presented with a list of nine items representing internal and external values.
Internal values consisted of self-respect, warm relationships with others,
sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, fun and enjoyment in life, be-
longing, being well respected and security. The external values were: sense
of belonging, being well respected and security. First, respondents were asked to select the two values which were most important to them. Second, they were requested to rank the two selected values in importance. Respondents were classified by the researchers into three categories based upon whether their first and second choices were internal, external or a combination of internal and external choices. A dummy variable was created and used in subsequent hypotheses testing.

A fourteen item Likert-type scale was used to assess (a) personal competence, (b) mastery, and (c) intrinsic/extrinsic motivation dimensions for participation. The items selected to represent the personal competence dimension were drawn from Iso-Ahola and Allen (1982). Each of these items was selected because it correlated highly with the personal competence dimension: (a) to use personal skills; (b) to develop personal skills; (c) to perform well; and (d) to engage in competition. The mastery scale, developed by Unger and Kernman (1983) was comprised of four items: (a) I feel like I’m conquering the world; (b) I get a sense of adventure; (c) I feel like a champion; and (d) I feel like I have been thoroughly tested.

The six items selected to represent the third dimension of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation were adapted from an instrument developed by Graefe (1980). These items were: (a) a good game of golf is one in which I have a low score; (b) the lower my score the happier I am; (c) to play a good game of golf is as important as winning the game; (d) the best indicator of a good game of golf is winning; (e) I enjoy it for its own sake, not for what it will give me; and (f) a good score is the best indicator of a good game. To assess tennis players’ intrinsic motivations this scale was adapted to reflect the game of tennis. The motivation scale reliability was .89 for golf discontinuers and .87 for tennis discontinuers. This scale was then factor analyzed using principal components to extract the initial factor solution. To determine which factors to use in further testing, eigenvalues of 1 and a scree test were used. An oblique rotation was used to rotate the factors. Factor scores were computed for each dimension and used in subsequent hypotheses testing.

Innovativeness was measured by a 7 item Likert-type scale adapted from Hurt et al. (1977) and Midgley and Dowling (1978). Discontinuers’ innovativeness was assessed by summing responses over the seven items. Reliabilities of the scales for golf and tennis assessed by computing coefficient alphas were .86 and .83.

Respondents’ levels of involvement with golf or tennis were assessed by summing responses to a twenty item semantic differential instrument developed by Zaichowsky (1985). The maximum score was 140 and the minimum 20. Reliabilities of the involvement scale, assessed by coefficient alpha, for golf and tennis were .90 and .87, respectively.

Environmental Response Variables

Respondents’ side bets scores were computed by summing over an eight-item Likert-type instrument. Items selected for this scale were drawn
from previous research by Bloch and Bruce (1984), Bryan (1977) and Buchanan (1985). A total score for each respondent was computed to indicate his or her intensity of side bets. The coefficient alpha for the side bets scores were .86 for golf and .80 for tennis.

To measure respondents' constraints, a 23 item Likert-type scale was developed. These items were selected from Crompton and Lamb's (1986) constraints taxonomy. The alpha levels for this scale were .86 and .89 for golf and tennis, respectively. Principal components factor analysis was used to extract the initial factor solution. To determine which factors to use in further testing, eigenvalues of 1 and a scree test were used. An oblique rotation was implemented to rotate the factors to aid in their interpretation. Factor scores were computed for each dimension retained and used as predictor variables in subsequent hypothesis testing.

Price sensitivity was measured by asking respondents to indicate the level of price decrease necessary to include participation. Respondents were asked to indicate if a decrease (a) under $3.00, or (b) from $3.00 to $5.00 or (c) over $5.00 would be necessary for them to resume their participation.

Perceived skill level was assessed by asking respondents to indicate if they perceived their skill level as being higher, lower or the same as that of their friends. A dummy variable was created and used in hypotheses testing.

Results

Discontinuers indicating that they had transmitted negative information were classified as active discontinuers, whereas those who had not were classified as passive discontinuers. Fifty percent of discontinuers of golf were classified into active and 50 percent into the passive discontinuers groups. Tennis players in this sample were more likely to be passive discontinuers (58.6 percent) than active (41.4 percent) discontinuers. Results of a chi-square test revealed no significant association between types of discontinuance for both golf and tennis and age or gender.

Two group discriminant analysis was used to determine if the predictor variables would discriminate between active and passive discontinuers of golf and tennis. Four discriminant analyses were performed. Only functions statistically significant at the .05 level were retained for interpretation. The $F$ ratio and probability associated with Wilks' lambda were used in interpreting the statistical significance of the function. The relative importance of the predictor variables was assessed by inspection of the total structure coefficients.

Hypothesis 1

Two group discriminant analysis was performed using locus control, values, motivation factor scores, degree of innovativeness, and level of involvement as predictors of the criterion variable, active and passive discontinuance of golf. Table 1 displays the discriminant function which emerged
TABLE 1
Results of Discriminant Analysis, Using Personal Variables for Golf Discontinuers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilks' Lambda</th>
<th>Approximate F</th>
<th>NDF</th>
<th>DDF</th>
<th>p&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.57</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canonical Correlation</td>
<td>Squared Canonical Correlation</td>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variables</th>
<th>Structure Coefficients</th>
<th>Active Discontinuers</th>
<th>Passive Discontinuers</th>
<th>Univariate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Rewards</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Mastery</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Competence</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Rewards</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Involvement</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>67.34</td>
<td>71.23</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovativeness</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>24.24</td>
<td>22.05</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Choice</td>
<td>-.49</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Choice</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>6.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Means on Canonical Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Means</th>
<th>Canonical 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Discontinuers</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Discontinuers</td>
<td>-.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

from the analysis. Inspection of Wilks' lambda and the associated F statistic reveals that the function did significantly discriminate between active and passive discontinuers of golf. The adjusted canonical correlation suggests that there was a moderate association between the predictor variables and the discriminant functions. Approximately 42 percent of the variance in differences between active and passive discontinuers of golf was attributed to the predictor variables.

Inspection of the group means on the canonical variable shows that active discontinuers achieved negative mean scores, whereas passive discontinuers reported positive mean scores (Table 1). The most important predictor variables, those which contributed the most to the function, were the degree of innovativeness and internal and external value choices. A direct relationship was found between innovativeness and active discontinuers, and an inverse relationship between innovativeness and passive discontinuers. Passive discontinuers had a greater propensity to choose in-
ternal values, whereas active discontinuers chose external values more frequently than did passive discontinuers. The results suggest that personal variables can be used to discriminate between active and passive discontinuance.

A discriminant analysis using the same independent variables as predictors significantly discriminated between active and passive discontinuers of tennis (Table 2). The squared canonical correlation suggests that 69 percent of the variance can be attributed to group differences, so there was a strong association between the predictor variables and the function. The structure coefficients displayed in Table 2 reveal that the strongest predictor variables were personal competence, extrinsic regards, intrinsic regards and internal choice values. These findings suggest that two motivation factors and choice of internal values tend to be associated with active discontinuers rather than passive discontinuers.

Since respondents' personal variables significantly discriminated be-

### TABLE 2

Results of Discriminant Analysis, Using Personal Variables for Tennis Discontinuers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilks' Lambda</th>
<th>Approximate F</th>
<th>NDF</th>
<th>DDF</th>
<th>p&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canonical Correlation</th>
<th>Squared Canonical Correlation</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variables</th>
<th>Structure Coefficients</th>
<th>Active Discontinuers</th>
<th>Passive Discontinuers</th>
<th>Univariate F</th>
<th>p&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Competence</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Rewards</td>
<td>-.39</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-.46</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Rewards</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>7.87</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Involvement</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>60.95</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovativeness</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>21.95</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Choice</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Choice</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group Means on Canonical Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canonical 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Discontinuers</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Discontinuers</td>
<td>-.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Copyright © 2010 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.
Copyright © National Recreation and Park Association
tween active and passive discontinuers of golf and tennis, the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 2

Results of the constraints factor analysis for past golf participants were inconsistent with the Crompton and Lamb (1986) typology. Due to the small sample size (40) in comparison to the number of items (23) and the inconsistency, this variable was deleted from further analysis for golf.

Hence the discriminant analysis was performed using side bets, price sensitivity, and perceived skill level as predictors of active and passive discontinuance in golf. The data in Table 3 reveal that the function which emerged from the analysis was significant, so the alternate hypothesis was accepted. However, only 32 percent of the variance associated with the function can be attributed to group differences.

The total structure coefficients displayed in Table 3 reveal that side bets, perceived skill level (about the same) and price sensitivity (low), were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilks' Lambda</th>
<th>Approximate F</th>
<th>NDF</th>
<th>DDF</th>
<th>p&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.67</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canonical Correlation</td>
<td>Adjusted Canonical Correlation</td>
<td>Squared Canonical Correlation</td>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>Proportion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Predictor Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Structure Coefficients</th>
<th>Active Discontinuers</th>
<th>Passive Discontinuers</th>
<th>Univariate F</th>
<th>p&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side Bets</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>22.40</td>
<td>17.12</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Sensitivity ($3.00 to $5.00)</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Sensitivity (Over $5.00)</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Skill Level (higher)</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Skill Level</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group Means on Canonical Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canonical 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Discontinuers</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Discontinuers</td>
<td>-.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
most important predictors of active or passive discontinuance of golf. The
group mean scores on the canonical variable show that respondents in the
passive discontinuers group scored substantially lower on the predictor
variables than did active discontinuers.

Comparing the total structure coefficients and canonical group means,
revealed that active discontinuers were associated with high side bets scores,
and perception of their skill level as being higher than that of their friends.
In contrast, passive discontinuers were directly associated with price sen-
sitivity (low). These findings suggest that different environmental response
factors influenced passive and active discontinuance of golf.

The final discriminant analysis was used to determine if side bets,
perceived constraints, price sensitivity, and perceived skill level would dis-
criminate between active and passive discontinuers of tennis. The variable,
perceived constraints, was retained for this hypothesis because results of
the factor were consistent with the Crompton and Lamb (1986) typology.
Again the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The structure coefficients
displayed in Table 4 suggest that the most important predictor variables
were side bets, perception of skill level (higher), perception of skill level
(about the same), price sensitivity (low), and promotion/pricing constraints.

Active discontinuers reported higher side bets scores than passive dis-
continuers, and perceived their tennis skill to be similar to that of their
friends, which contrasted with the responses of passive discontinuers. Pas-
itive discontinuers perceived promotion/pricing constraints as barriers to
participation. Although active discontinuers reported significantly higher
side bets than did passive discontinuers, they indicated that a larger price
decrease would be necessary for them to participate in tennis.

Concluding Comments

This study of discontinuance was based on a conceptual framework
which suggests that former participants of leisure activities can be catego-
rized as active and passive discontinuers. The purpose of the study was
to determine if there was utility in using personal and environmental re-
sponse variables to differentiate between the two categories of discontin-
ners. The findings suggest that personal and environmental response vari-
bles can be used to differentiate between active and passive discontinuers.

The finding that the variable side bets differentiated between active
and passive discontinuers, suggests that propensity to transmit negative
information is influenced by the number of side bets or investments an
individual has made in the service. For individuals who had accumulated
memberships, invested time to develop skills, or purchased equipment
related to the sport, it may be necessary to complain to reduce cognitive
dissonance resulting from withdrawal. This proposition is based on cog-
nitive consistency theory, and suggests the individual will complain to re-
duce the perceived losses incurred upon withdrawal. Attention should be
focused on the types of side bets which are associated with active and passive
### Table 4
Results of Discriminant Analysis, Using Environmental Response Variables for Tennis Discontinuers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilks' Lambda</th>
<th>Approximate F</th>
<th>NDF</th>
<th>DDF</th>
<th>p&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.21</td>
<td>60.07</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canonical Correlation</th>
<th>Squared Canonical Correlation</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Group Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variables</th>
<th>Structure Coefficients</th>
<th>Active Discontinuers</th>
<th>Passive Discontinuers</th>
<th>Univariate F</th>
<th>p&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabler Constraints</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Constraints</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion/Pricing</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>-.85</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Constraints</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Constraints</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Constraints</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution Constraints</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Bets</td>
<td>-.36</td>
<td>19.80</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Sensitivity</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>($3.00 to $5.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Sensitivity</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Over $5.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Level</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(about the same)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Level</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Group Means on Canonical Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Discontinuers</th>
<th>Passive Discontinuers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-15.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discontinuers. Further studies may reveal that active and passive discontinuers may acquire different types of investments prior to discontinuing their participation.

The findings of this research suggest several directions for future investigations of discontinuance. It would be useful to examine the nature of opinion leadership in the context of discontinuing. For example, it may be postulated that the loss of opinion leaders from an activity would have a substantially greater impact on attendance rates, than would the loss of...
non-opinion leaders. As the number of opinion leaders declines, attraction of new participants (or replacers) may become more difficult. Research could be designed to address the interrelationships between opinion leadership and passive and active discontinuers. A related area would be to determine the impact of negative word-of-mouth communication among potential and existing participants. Negative word-of-mouth communication may be more important than television, radio, magazine or newspaper promotion developed to attract new participants, because interpersonal forms of communication tend to be viewed as more credible sources of information. A longitudinal perspective which would facilitate study of word-of-mouth communication would be particularly useful.

References


