Discriminating Between Continuers and Discontinuers of Two Public Leisure Services

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ABSTRACT: Leisure researchers repeatedly have posed the question, "Why does one individual continue to participate in an activity, while another does not?" The decision to continue or discontinue participation in leisure services is likely to be influenced by internal and external variables. The utility of using selected internal and external variables in differentiating between continuers and discontinuers of two public leisure services is examined in this study. Discriminant analysis revealed that an individual's level of involvement, strength of attitude toward the service, and side bets were generic predictors of an individual's continuance in a leisure activity. On the other hand, values and perceived skill level tended to be activity-specific predictors of continuance in a leisure activity.

KEYWORDS: Continuance, discontinuance, side bets, level of involvement, values, perceived skill level, attitude.

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In recent years, leisure service agency managers have been increasingly aware of the importance of developing marketing strategies to retain existing users of a service if delivery of the service is to remain viable. If a user ceases to participate in a service, then to retain the same level of viability, a new participant has to be recruited. It has been reported that recruitment of new users of a product or service is six times more expensive than investing in retention of existing users (Rosenberg and Czepiel 1984).

Studies have reasonably successfully identified the variables that distinguish between participants and nonparticipants (Snepenger and Crompton 1984). Progress has also been made in identifying constraints and barriers to participation in leisure services (Howard and Crompton 1984, Jackson 1983). However, little is known about why some participants continue to use selected recreation services, while others discontinue their participation.

A decision to continue or discontinue participation in selected leisure services is likely to be influenced by two categories of variables. They are a) those internal to the user and b) those external to the user (Pervine and Lewis
1978). Internal variables refer to those differences that emerge from within individuals, while external variables refer to those that describe different responses to the external environment.

Previous investigators (Howard and Crompton 1984, Witt and Goodale 1981) have used internal and/or external factors to describe similarities and differences between users and nonusers. Another group of researchers (Boothby et al. 1981; Jackson 1988) have cited internal and external factors that serve as important contributors to a decision to discontinue participation in leisure services. However, the authors are not aware of research that has addressed identifying similarities and differences between continuers and discontinuers of leisure services. The intent of this paper is to investigate the utility of using internal and external variables to distinguish between continuers and discontinuers of two selected leisure services.

The paper is divided into two sections. First, a conceptual model of continuance and discontinuance is presented. Following this, the results of an empirical study are offered to illustrate the similarities and differences between continuers and discontinuers of two selected public leisure services. Finally, implications for future research and marketing are offered.

The Continuance-Discontinuance Phenomenon

A concept of the continuance-discontinuance phenomenon is depicted in Figure 1. Continued use is manifested by repeat use and is represented as a feedback loop. As consumers continue to use the service, it is likely that variables internal to the participant and variables external to the participant may influence their evaluations of the service.

Discontinuance refers to withdrawal from a service in which there was previous participation. The serrated feedback loop between discontinuance and confirmation indicates that discontinuance of the service may only be a temporary state. At some future time, continuance is possible. Thus continuance or discontinuance is the outcome of a user's evaluation of the service each time the service is used.

Variables That Influence Continuance-Discontinuance

A decision to continue to participate or withdraw from a leisure service activity is likely to be influenced both by variables internal to the consumer and by environmental variables. Six internal variables were selected for inclusion in the study: a) motivation, b) locus of control, c) level of involvement, d) values, e) degree of innovativeness, and f) service attitude.

Motivation has been the subject of several investigations of recreation behavior (Iso-Ahola 1980, Neulinger 1981, Unger and Kernman 1985, Holland, 1985). Individuals' continued use of a selected recreation is likely to be associated with the service by the service's ability to continue to provide benefits for the participant. These benefits may be satisfied by the service itself or by the rewards associated with consuming the service.
Model of the Continuance-Discordance Process

Source: Rogers 1983
The second internal variable, locus of control, appears to be relevant to the study of continuance and discontinuance because consumers differ in their perceptions of what is under their control (Rotter 1966). Witt and Goodale (1981) have demonstrated that internal or external locus of control was related to individuals’ perceptions of constraints inhibiting participation in a leisure service. Additionally, Deci (1975) reported that internals are more likely to participate in activities for intrinsic benefits and continue the activity even after benefits external to an activity have been removed, whereas externals participate for benefits that are extrinsic to an activity and tend to discontinue when the reward is removed (Deci 1975). Thus, locus of control may be responsible for a decision to continue or discontinue participation.

Level of involvement with a leisure service reflects the extent to which a service is perceived to be personally important. Involvement refers to concern for an issue because it is intrinsically involving and is related to an individual’s needs and values. Sherif and Cantril (1947) suggested that the more an activity or issue is integrated with an individual’s values, the higher his or her level of involvement is likely to be. Hence, continuers’ levels of involvement may be substantially higher than those of discontinuers since they continue to participate in the service; discontinuers, however, withdraw from the service.

Personal values have been found to influence perceptions of the importance of products, choice criteria, and product evaluations (Howard and Woodside 1984); beliefs and brand choices (Henry 1976); and recreation choices (Jackson 1973). Just as values may influence which services are perceived as being important, they may also influence the level of continued use or discontinuance of a recreation service.

Midgely and Dowling (1978) suggest that innovativeness is a personality characteristic that all possess to some degree. Innovativeness refers to a propensity to adopt services that are perceived to be new or novel. Those who are high in innovativeness tend to be more willing to take a risk and engage in a changed behavior than those who are characterized by low innovativeness. Participants seeking high levels of stimulation tend to be high in innovativeness and may continue to use a recreation service if the service provides sufficient new challenges. If the challenges are not sufficient, then those who are high in innovativeness may discontinue use.

Several researchers have examined the relationship between participants’ attitudes and behaviors (Anderson and Brown 1984, Mannell 1982, Vingerhoets and Buunk 1987). Although empirical studies have not strongly confirmed the attitude-behavior relationship, it has been reported that consistency between attitude and behavior improved when consumers had previous experience with the service (Fazio and Zanna 1981; Koslowski, Kluger and Yinon 1988). Hence it is likely that continuers are characterized by a more positive attitude toward the service than discontinuers.

Three external environmental variables were selected for inclusion in the study: a) constraints, b) perceived skill level, and c) side bets. Constraints are those barriers or blockages that inhibit continued use of a recreation service.
There is empirical evidence in the recreation literature to support the notion that constraints do inhibit the extent of participation (Godbey 1985, Howard and Crompton 1984, Jackson 1983, Searle and Jackson 1985). In a recent review of the literature, Jackson (1988) pointed out that more than one hundred different items have been suggested as constraints that influence an individual’s decision not to use a leisure service. It is generally recognized that constraints affect the ability to participate.

Perception of low skill competence in comparison to other participants may lead individuals to perceive that they do not have the skill to use the service, and this may lead to a decision to discontinue. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) suggested that enjoyment of a recreation service reflects self-perception of skill level in relation to the challenge the activity presents. If the skill level is too high for the level of challenge in a recreation service, then boredom will be experienced; if the skill level is too low for the challenge inherent in the activity, then feelings of anxiety are likely to be experienced.

Finally, the extent to which users have accrued side bets may mediate the continuance-discontinuance decision. For example, golfers may accumulate equipment and club memberships that together represent a substantial investment in the service. Because of the extent of the side bets, the participant may not be willing to withdraw from the service. Buchanan (1985) suggests that “No one side bet may be important enough to induce continued participation, but in sum, they may constitute a series of side bets that the individual cannot or will not forego.” Hence, those who discontinue using a leisure service are likely to have fewer side bets than those who continue.

Methodology

The original intent was to test the usefulness of internal and external variables independently in discriminating between continuers and discontinuers in two activities, golf and tennis, which would have led to four hypotheses. However, the uninterpretable results emerging from the factor analysis of the perceived constraint items for discontinuing golfers mean that only two external variables, side bets and perceived skill level, were used with the golfing sample. Hence, they were merged with the internal variables and a single hypothesis was formulated for golfers. The three hypotheses tested were:

1. **Level of involvement, values, locus of control, innovativeness, attitude, motivation factors, side bets, and perceived skill level will discriminate between continuers and discontinuers of golf.**

2. **Level of involvement, values, locus of control, innovativeness, attitude, and motivation factors will discriminate between continuers and discontinuers of tennis.**

3. **Side bets, perceived constraints, and perceived skill level will discriminate between continuers and discontinuers of tennis.**
Samples for each activity were drawn from three public golf courses and three public tennis centers. Cluster sampling was used to select both samples. The initial samples consisted of 420 continuing golfers and 205 continuing tennis players. The different sample sizes reflected the lower carrying capacity of the tennis centers.

Similarly, two samples of discontinuers were selected: one sample of golfers and one sample of tennis players. A judgment procedure was used to select the discontinuers samples, since collection of data from a general population of discontinuers would require a very large probability study, and this was beyond the financial resources available for this study (see for example Jackson and Dunn 1988).

A questionnaire and a prepaid return envelope were distributed to continuers and discontinuers who agreed to participate in the study. The response rates for continuing tennis players and golfers were 73 percent (N=134) and 61 percent (N=264), respectively. The response rates for discontinuing golfers and tennis players were 69.3 percent (N=46) and 63 percent (N=41), respectively.

**Instrumentation**

The criterion variable was continuer or discontinuer. Respondents were classified as continuers if they participated in the service during the past twelve months, or as discontinuers if they had previously participated in the service but not during the previous twelve months.

Two classes or predictor variables were used, internal and external. The internal predictor variables used were locus of control, motivation, innovativeness, service attitude, values, and level of involvement. The external predictor variables were side bets, perceived constraints, and perceived skill level (Table 1).

Locus of control was determined by asking respondents to respond to seven items from Rotter’s (1966) locus of control scale. Items for the scale were selected according to the strength of the interitem correlation, which was obtained in a pretest. The alpha level for the scale for continuers was .67 and for discontinuers it was .69. Total scores were computed for each respondent by adding the seven items used in testing the hypotheses.

To assess motivation for participation in each of the services, respondents were asked to respond to a fourteen-item, 5-point Likert-type scale. Responses were factor analyzed using principal components, and the dimensions emerged for golf and tennis: extrinsic rewards, perceived competence, mastery, and intrinsic rewards. Factor scores were computed for each respondent and used in subsequent hypothesis testing.

Attitude toward golf or tennis was measured by summing responses to a sixteen-item semantic differential scale. The items were chosen from the evaluative domain to reflect a respondent’s general feeling toward the service. Factor analysis of this scale revealed one factor containing sixteen items. Inspection of the item to factor correlations revealed no correlation below .60. The alpha for this scale was .89 for continuers and .94 for discontinuers. Total scores were computed for each respondent and used in hypothesis testing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Measurement approach</th>
<th>Alpha levels</th>
<th>Hypothesis testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
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<td>.69</td>
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<td>Motivation</td>
<td>14-item Likert scale</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovativeness</td>
<td>7-item Likert scale</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service attitude</td>
<td>15-item semantic differential</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Kahle's list of values (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of involvement</td>
<td>Zaiychowsky (1985) 20-item scale</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Side bets</td>
<td>8-item Likert scale</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.86</td>
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<td>Perceived constraints</td>
<td>21-item Likert scale</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived skill level</td>
<td>1) higher, 2) lower, 3) same as friends</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Innovativeness was measured by a seven-item Likert-type scale adapted from Hurt, Joseph, and Cook (1977) and Midgley and Dowling (1978). The alpha was .72 for continuers and .79 discontinuers. Respondents’ total scores across the scale were computed and used in hypothesis testing.

Kahle’s (1983) list of values, an alternate to VALS, was used to assess respondents’ choice of values. Respondents were asked first to select two values from a list of nine, representing the internal and external values that were most important to them, and second to rank order the two selected values. Values selected were classified into three categories: a) first- and second-choice internal; b) first- and second-choice external; and c) a combination of internal and external choices. A dummy variable was created and used in hypothesis testing.

Zaiychowsky’s twenty-item semantic differential scale (1985) was used to assess each respondent’s level of involvement. The alpha for continuers was .95, and for discontinuers it was .92. Total scores were computed for each respondent and used in testing the hypotheses.
To assess side bets, an eight-item Likert-type scale was developed, and eight items were included to measure respondents' accumulations of investments in golf or tennis. The items were the measured extent of club memberships, the number of magazine subscriptions, equipment purchases, the amount of money spent on the activity, the degree of time spent watching the activity on television, the extent of discussion of the activity with friends, the centrality of the activity to business, and the extent to which close friends also participate in the service. The items selected for inclusion were derived from Becker (1960) and Bloch and Bruce (1984). The alpha for this scale was .85 for continuers and .86 for discontinuers.

The 21-item Likert-type scale used to measure perceived constraints was derived from a taxonomy of constraints developed by Crompton and Lamb (1986). The responses were factor analyzed using principal components, followed by an oblique rotation. The seven factors that emerged for golf discontinuers were not as definitive as those developed by Crompton and Lamb (1986). This may be attributed to violation of the sample size assumption for the discontinuers' sample. Although only 46 respondents were classified as discontinuers, 21 constraints were used in the analysis. Sample sizes of less than 50 are generally regarded as poor (Tabachnick and Fidell 1983). Thus the constraint predictor variable was dropped from subsequent hypothesis testing for golf.

Although the sample size assumption was also violated for tennis, six factors emerged: price distribution and promotion, interest, individual, social, facility, and family. They corresponded with the number and composition of factors from previous analyses. Thus, the seven factors were retained and used in subsequent hypothesis testing in the context of tennis. Factor scores were computed for each respondent for each dimension emerging from the analysis, and they were used as predictor variables.

Perceived skill level was assessed by asking respondents to compare their skill level to that of other participants and to indicate whether it was: a) about the same, b) higher, or c) lower. A dummy variable was developed from these data and used in the hypothesis testing.

Results

Discriminant analysis was used to determine how the continuer and discontinuer groups differed from one another. The $F$ ratio and probability associated with Wilks' lambda were used to interpret the statistical significance of the function. Structure coefficients were used to determine the impact of the predictor variable on the criterion variable.

Hypothesis 1

Two group-discriminant analyses were performed using level of involvement, values, locus of control, innovativeness, attitude, motivation factor scores, side bets, and perceived skill levels as predictors of continuance and discontinuance for golf. The discriminant function emerging from the analysis was statistically significant. As shown in Table 2, the adjusted canonical correlation
suggests that the degree of association between the predictor variables and the function was substantial. Approximately 62 percent of the variance was explained by the function.

The most important predictors were attitude toward golf, level of involvement, intrinsic rewards, and side bets. The findings show that continuers perceived golf more favorably than did discontinuers. Also contributing to the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilks' Approximate</th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>lambda</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NDF</td>
<td>DDF</td>
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<td>Significance</td>
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<td>32.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>.001</td>
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<table>
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<th>Adjusted canonical correlation</th>
<th>Squared canonical correlation</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variables</th>
<th>Structure coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Side bets</td>
<td>.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovativeness</td>
<td>.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level of involvement</td>
<td>.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation factors</td>
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<td>Extrinsic rewards</td>
<td>.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived competence</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic rewards</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf attitude</td>
<td>.93</td>
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<td>Values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal choice</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External choice</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived skill level</td>
<td>(about the same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(higher)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group means on canonical variable, canonical 1
Continuers .49
Discontinuers -3.34
discrimination between the two groups was respondents' level of involvement with golf. Discontinuers reported lower group mean scores for involvement than did continuers. The remaining structure coefficients were not interpreted because they correlated below the .30 level. The findings suggest that internal variables and external variables can be used to discriminate between continuers and discontinuers of golf.

Because the discriminate function was statistically significant, the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 2

Discriminant analysis was performed using the same ten predictor variables for continuers and discontinuers of tennis. The discriminant function that emerged after the discriminant analysis was statistically significant. The squared canonical correlation revealed that approximately 70 percent of the variance could be attributed to differences between continuers and discontinuers of tennis.

The most important predictor variables were level of involvement, attitude toward tennis, and choice of external value (Table 3). Since the remaining structure coefficients correlated below .30, they were not interpreted. The group mean scores on the canonical variable indicate that continuers had substantially different responses to the predictor variables than did discontinuers. Level of involvement, attitude, and choice of external values were directly associated with continuers.

Continuers reported higher mean attitude scores and mean level of involvement scores than did discontinuers. The alternate hypothesis was accepted because the discriminant function did discriminate between the groups.

Table 3
Results of Discriminant Analysis using Internal Variables as Predictors of Continuance-Discontinuance for Tennis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilks' lambda</th>
<th>Approximate</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>NDG</th>
<th>DDF</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.29</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>.0001</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Canonical correlation</th>
<th>Adjusted canonical correlation</th>
<th>Squared canonical correlation</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
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<tr>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>2.35</td>
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Table 3 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variables</th>
<th>Structure coefficients</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extrinsic rewards</td>
<td>.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrinsic rewards</td>
<td>.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal competence</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of involvement</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis attitude</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovativeness</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal choice</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External choice</td>
<td>.33</td>
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Group means on canonical variable, canonical 1

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuers</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuers</td>
<td>-3.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 3

The discriminating analysis for hypothesis 3 used the three external predictors. The function that emerged from the discriminant analysis was stastically significant (Table 4). The squared canonical correlation suggests that only a small proportion of the variance can be attributed to differences between continuers and discontinuers of tennis.

The most important external predictor variables were side bets, perceived skill level (higher), and individual and social constraints, as shown in Table 4. Continuers' and discontinuers' group mean scores on the discriminant function indicate that the respondents in the continuers' group achieved higher mean scores than did respondents in the discontinuers' group. Continuers reported higher mean scores for side bets and perceived their skill levels as being higher than did discontinuers.

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted because the function did discriminate between the groups.

Concluding Comments

The results of this study highlight the need for managers to develop marketing strategies that focus on building relationships with current particip-
Table 4
Results of Discriminant Analysis using External Variables as Predictors of Continuance-Discontinuance for Tennis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilks' lambda</th>
<th>Approximate F</th>
<th>NDF</th>
<th>DDF</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.54</td>
<td>10.42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>.001</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted canonical correlation
Squared canonical correlation
Canonical correlation
Eigenvalue
Proportion
Cumulative

| .67 | .64 | .45 | .83 | 1.00 | 1.00 |

Predictor variables
Structure coefficients

Perceived constraints
- Individual constraints
- Interest constraints
- Price distribution and promotion constraints
- Facility constraints
- Social constraints
- Family constraints

Side bets
Perceived skill level
- about the same
- higher

Group means on canonical variable, canonical 1
Continuers
Discontinuers

perts to facilitate consumer retention. The finding that continuers reported significantly higher numbers of side bets or investments and were more highly involved in the service than were discontinuers suggests that a relationship strategy needs to focus on two components: a) encouraging participants to invest in products related to enhanced enjoyment of the service and b) encouraging the participants to integrate the service into their lifestyles by making it habitual and increasing their level of expertise.

To encourage current users to invest in the service, managers could provide space where current users could examine magazines related to their activity. In addition, managers could develop fact sheets for participants describing different skills or rule changes related to the activity. These publications would provide participants with the opportunity to increase their knowl-
edge of the service. Provision of a comfortable area where participants can socialize with others may contribute to higher involvement, since continuers reported enjoying the opportunity to discuss their activity. Exposure to skill-development clinics to improve levels of expertise or to experts who may serve as role models may contribute to increasing the levels of involvement.

To accommodate continuers who reported frequent viewing of their activities on television, managers may wish to install widescreen televisions in an area where players can gather and socialize while watching the activity of interest. Video tapes featuring "legendary" performances could be very beneficial. These tapes could be rented to users for home use or viewed at the facility. These services would provide current participants with social opportunities related to their activities.

To encourage consumer use of the service, managers may wish to develop a frequent-users program. Such a program could reward high usage of facilities or purchases of services. Participants would receive credits for matches played and purchases similar to airlines' frequent-fly programs. The rewards could be based on the number of credits accumulated. Items such as guaranteed playing time during prime time, video tapes of great matches, instruction, balls, or gloves would have to be carefully selected so that they were valued by the participants.

It seems probable that individuals progress through a series of stages of relative continuance or discontinuance before reaching either of those permanent states. The results of this study suggest that manifestations of such stages may be identified by monitoring participants' attitudes, levels of involvement, and extent of side bets, since these three variables appear to be generally useful for discriminating between continuers and discontinuers. Other discriminating variables, such as values and perceived skill, may also be useful, but their relative usefulness seems likely to vary substantially across activities. Changes in these variables may be useful indicators of increased propensity to continue or discontinue depending on their direction. Additional research may reveal the extent to which these stages can be identified and described by these variables.

Continuers may evolve through stages from initial trial through consistent use to confirmation. Future research on the continuance/discontinuance phenomenon may usefully examine factors that influence individuals to withdraw from services at each of the stages. For example, individuals in the trial stage may cite different constraints from those in the confirmation phase. Additionally, discontinuers whose withdrawal is permanent may perceive that different constraints influenced their decision to withdraw than do temporary discontinuers.

Although it was not a focus of this study, it would be useful to identify variables that influence individuals to continue to participate in selected activities. Several researchers have suggested that individuals' continued use of a service may be related to their commitment (Buchanan 1985) or loyalty (Backman 1988; Selin et al. 1988; Howard et al. 1988). Although retention rates are important to the success of a program, its long-term success is likely to be dependent on ascertaining whether user loyalty is genuine or spurious (Backman and Crompton 1988).
Previous research has shown that products and services with high rates of discontinuance generally have low rates of continuance (Snow, 1980) suggesting that it is important for managers to be aware of the relationship between rates of continuance and discontinuance. Rosenberg and Czepiel (1984) advocate that managers develop service profiles that provide information related to the number of continuers, rates of discontinuance, rates of repurchase, and rates of attrition. Over time this would provide information regarding the loyalty mix of participants for each of the services.

References


