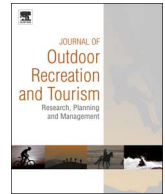




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Does involvement in one outdoor activity reduce participation in other activities: Are enthusiastic fishers only fishers?



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ABSTRACT

This study examined involvement in outdoor recreation activities, focusing on whether individuals who are involved in one recreation activity at a high level are less or more likely to participate intensively in other outdoor activities. Participation in fishing in Finland was taken as a starting point. The data were obtained from a large national population survey that included 3592 respondents who participated in fishing. Three groups were distinguished based on behavioral involvement in fishing. The high behavioral involvement (HBI) group reported the highest annual frequencies for most outdoor activities. The moderate behavioral involvement (MBI) group were modestly active in fishing, and moderately active in outdoor recreation in general. Compared to the other groups, the low behavioral involvement (LBI) group participated least frequently in fishing and were also less active in many other recreational activities. The results imply that behavioral involvement in outdoor recreation is cumulative in nature.

Management implications: The study provides interesting findings for rural tourism and land use management:

- A high level involvement in one activity is not necessarily reducing the participation intensity in others.
- In order to understand activity clusters and key activities in a region, it is strongly recommended to investigate the whole palette of outdoor recreation activities.
- Within the group of fishermen various subgroups exist, which are characterized by different motivation and behavioral patterns.
- These insights may help in offering substitutes for fishing activities or new service packages that include a broader array of activities for people to participate, and to extend their stay and enhance their contribution to the regional economy.

1. Introduction

The concept of behavioral involvement is defined by Kim, Scott, and Crompton (1997) as the time and intensity of effort expended in pursuing a particular activity (also Stone, 1984). Previous studies have focused on the level of behavioral involvement, from low to high, associated with a single recreation activity (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Lee & Scott, 2004; Scott & Shafer, 2001). Although there is an extensive body of literature related to the overall interest in and participation in particular activities considered in isolation (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Havitz, Kaczynski, & Mannell, 2013; Kim et al., 1997; Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2003; Moore, Scott, & Moore, 2008), fewer studies have investigated the mutual relationships between behavioral involvement in various recreation activities at the same time. As pointed out by Lee and Scott (2004) and Scott and Shafer (2001), the recreation literature has not focused on the level of

behavioral involvement in outdoor recreation in relation to the other activities, i.e. whether those individuals who are involved in one outdoor recreation activity at a high level are less or more likely to intensively participate, in terms of both probability of taking part and frequency of occasions, in other outdoor recreation activities. In other words, the current literature does not reveal whether participation in different outdoor recreation activities is mutually reduced or cumulative.

The approach applied in this study was to take one activity as a starting point. Here, we examine behavioral involvement in fishing, and the association between the level of involvement in fishing and participation in a selection of 18 common outdoor activities. Some of the previous literature on recreational fishing provides insights into fishing behavior, expressing the idea that participants can be placed on a continuum from general interest and a low level of participation to specialized interest and a high level of participation (Bryan, 1977).

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Although recreational fishers have been widely researched since the study by Bryan (1977), the outdoor activity profiles of recreational fishers have not previously been investigated to a great extent. No information is available on whether those who are very active participants in fishing also participate in a variety of other recreational activities, or are less likely to do so.

Previous studies have demonstrated a variety of fishing motives, including relaxation and being outdoors, enjoying the silence and experiencing nature, strengthening social bonds, and learning, as well as subsistence motives (Arlinghaus & Mehner, 2003, 2004; Burger, 2002; Schramm & Gerard, 2004). Based on the wide variety of fishing styles and motives, we can expect different fishing styles to offer a range of benefits. It can be assumed that individuals who behaviorally are particularly involved in a certain fishing style may have other recreational activities in their activity selection that offer similar benefits to the chosen style of fishing, and reflect similar motives (Gibson & Chang, 2012; Scott, Baker, & Kim, 2014).

A comprehensive population data on outdoor recreation offered an opportunity to study the behavioral involvement in fishing based on measurements, with which we could not only consider the frequency of participation in one activity, i.e. fishing, but could relate fishing to combinations of different recreation activities. Our aim was, first, to gain insights into the activity profiles of fishers with varying levels of involvement. Second, we investigated how the level of behavioral involvement in one activity may be reflected in participation in others. Our interest was in analyzing whether those individuals who are involved at a high level in fishing, expressed in terms of the frequency of participation, skills, and fishing equipment purchased, are more or less likely to intensively participate, in terms of the number of different activities and frequency of participation in other outdoor activities (Cordell et al., 1997; Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Lee & Scott, 2004; Scott & Shafer, 2001).

The expected results should lead to better understanding of the selection of outdoor activities or activity types, and the combinations of activities performed by individuals (Manning, 2011). Thus, beyond pure interest in behavioral involvement in recreation activities, the information could benefit recreation and tourism agencies in both the private and public sectors, enabling them to assess the interests of clientele from a broader perspective. This will be essential if environmental changes, such as changes in the climate or in water quality conditions, create a need to adapt the provision of services. Information on recreation activities that may substitute or complement the primary activity in the case of poor activity opportunities is valuable for managers at a given tourism destination (Nicolau, 2011; Sutton & Ditton, 2011).

2. Review of literature

Stone (1984), in the context of consumer research, has suggested that the concept of 'behavioral involvement' refers to 'witnessed behavior or behavior understood to have taken place'. Involvement from a behavioral perspective can be used as a summary of behavioral acts, and seen as investment of time and physical resources (Carlson & Frone, 2003). The literature on behavioral involvement has focused on participation in leisure in general (e.g. Havitz & Dimanche, 1997, 1999; Jun et al., 2012) or on particular activities (e.g. Kim et al., 1997, Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Kyle et al., 2003; Moore et al., 2008). Another aspect of behavioral involvement defined by Stone (1984) is the degree of involvement from high to low. Behavioral involvement in the context of outdoor recreation can be measured by the frequency of participation, amount of money spent, travelling associated with the activity, distance travelled, ability or skills, ownership of equipment and number of memberships (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999; Kim et al., 1997; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Stone, 1984). The skills developed through past experience are signs of long-lasting and intensive participation in the activity (Kuentzel & McDonald, 1992; Miller & Graefe, 2000).

Concepts that are closely associated with behavioral involvement are specialization (Lee & Scott, 2004; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992; Scott & Shafer, 2001) and participation constraints (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997). The concept of specialization is characterized by a strong input in terms of time and money, learning skills and improving knowledge, developing experience, and identifying oneself with one activity (Lee & Scott, 2004). In fishing activities, specialization can be observed in the choice of fishing style and in fishing skills, including knowledge of fishing areas and investment in fishing equipment, as well as other types of effort such as the time spent in documenting or sharing experiences of fishing trips or tying flies (Scott & Shafer, 2001). Literature of specialization in recreational fishing activities has discussed linkages between several topics such as preferences of management of fishing sites (Chik-Ok & Ditton, 2006), fishing opportunities (Beardmore, Haider, Hunt, & Arlinghaus, 2013), or fishing motivations (Chipman & Helfrich, 1988). Kuentzel (2012) has pointed out that research on behavioral involvement can benefit from using these concepts when interpreting actual recreation behavior.

The concept of constraints on participation also supports the interpretation of the behavioral involvement. One consequence of involvement at a high level is found to be the tendency for individuals to participate with a high frequency in one leisure activity at the expense of others (Bryan, 1977; Scott et al., 2014). The high degree of involvement in one activity may cause a constraint on participation in other activities. For example, if a person focuses on fishing at a high level of involvement, this may create a constraint on participation in other activities, because the favored activity will take resources such as time and money away from the other activities (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Scott & Shafer, 2001; Scott et al., 2014; Sievänen, Neuvonen, & Pouta, 2003). In economic terms, a recreational experience is a final good that is produced by allocating household resources such as skills, time, and monetary resources to the activity. If the resources are allocated to one activity, they cannot be directed to other activities (e.g. Feather, Hellerstein, & Tomasi, 1995).

Our study concentrated on variables that measure past behavior. Behavioral involvement was characterized with variables that express individual interest and input in terms of time and money, i.e. the resources that people invest according to their preferences and opportunities for recreation activities.

This study focused on behavioral involvement (BI) measured by variables referring to actual behavior. According to the findings above, our two hypotheses were:

H1. The level of involvement in fishing is inversely related to the level of involvement in outdoor recreation in general

H2. The level of involvement in fishing is inversely related to participation rates and frequency of participation in other outdoor recreation activities

These hypotheses of reduced behavioral involvement in recreation was tested by identifying recreationists in one activity (fishing) on a continuum from low to high. With the behavioral involvement continuum, we described the other outdoor recreation activities performed by fishers having different levels of involvement in fishing. These segments were also described according to some of their socio-economic factors.

3. Methods

3.1. Finnish recreational fishing studies

Fishing is considered to be among the ten most popular outdoor activities¹ in Finland, where 44% of the adult population has reported

¹ Participation in the ten most popular outdoor recreation activities among the population aged 15–74 years, based on the national outdoor recreation inventory: walking

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