Family influences on Masters sport participation

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The nature of family influences on sport participation in Masters athletes

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The nature of family influences on sport participation in Masters athletes
Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the nature and source of family influences on sport participation in Masters athletes of varying skill and training commitment levels (from recreational to elite competitors). Participants were 14 married adults (nine men and five women) aged 46-61 years ($M=50$) from Ontario, Canada. Ten from the group had teenaged or university-aged children. Semi-structured interviews were aimed at understanding the role of family members in the athletes’ sport involvement, the athletes’ experiences of family support, absence of support, and family conflicts. Key themes in the data were: spousal (and children) support by ‘allowing’ (i.e., not questioning or complaining about sport participation); scheduling (as a source of, and to avoid, conflict) with spouse; spouses (and parent/children) training together/training separately; and the indirect influence of children. This study shows that both positive and negative forms of family support can be negotiated to allow for ongoing sport participation in mid-later life. It brings together insights from research on the leisure constraints negotiation process, family and leisure participation, gender issues in leisure and social support in sport and physical activity contexts.

Key words: middle-age; older adults; physical activity; qualitative research; social support.
The nature of family influences on sport participation in Masters athletes

Introduction

Masters athletes are a unique group of people who train and compete regularly in various Masters sports, such as swimming, cycling, long distance running, track and field, ice hockey, volleyball, rugby, and football/soccer. Age is the primary qualifier for Masters sport participation (although some events, like swimming, have age-specific qualifying standards), which results in athletes of varying skill and training commitment levels. Competition in Masters sport typically begins at 30 years of age, but the starting age can vary depending on what is considered to be past the typical age of peak performance for that sport (e.g., Masters swimming commences at 25 years and gymnastics begins at 22 years; Weir et al., 2010). Involvement in Masters sport is an expanding leisure trend across Western nations (Baker et al., 2010; Dionigi, 2008). The participation levels of middle-aged and older people in many Masters sports is increasing around the world, and the number of national and international competitions held exclusively for Masters athletes (such as the World Masters Games) is rising (see Dionigi et al., 2011; Hodge et al., 2008; Weir et al., 2010). The philosophy underlying the Masters sporting movement is ‘sport for life’ and its core values are to promote and encourage mature adults to practice and participate in sports and physical activities regularly throughout life (O’Bryan, 1985, see also http://www.imga.ch/). For the purpose of this study, sport participation is defined as a serious leisure pursuit in mid-later life. Stebbin’s (1992; 1999) concept of serious leisure, where the emphasis is on identity management, committed involvement, perseverance and personal effort (usually with like-minded enthusiasts), is typical of Masters sport participation.

Some researchers, particularly sports scientists, have strongly advocated competitive sport as an optimal type of physical activity for middle-aged and older people (e.g., Hawkins et
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al., 2003) because it offers unique benefits that go beyond regular non-competitive physical activity (see Dionigi, et al., 2011). Moreover, Hawkins et al. proposed that Masters athletes represent models of ‘successful ageing’ because they typically report greater levels of health and functioning when compared to their age-matched sedentary contemporaries. However, Fick et al. (1997) and Stebbins (1999) argued that family obligations and the lack of support by family members, such as spouse and/or children, for serious leisure pursuits can ‘be a constraint that pulls people away from desired participation in their chosen hobby or serious leisure activity’ (Shaw and Dawson, 2001: 218-19). Research on family and leisure participation has highlighted the necessity to consider notions of time demands, negotiation of constraints, negotiations with significant others, motivation and gender (Crawford and Godbey, 1987; Jackson et al., 1993; Shaw and Dawson, 2001; Son et al., 2008; Thompson, 1999; Thompson et al., 2002). In general, significant others, particularly family members, can be a source of conflict, constraint, disapproval, compromise, obligation, or indifference (Hammock et al., 1990).

At the same time, family members can be an important source of social support and influence for middle-aged and older adults in the context of sport, leisure and physical activity (Chogahara et al., 1998; Hodge et al., 2008; Martire et al., 1999; Roper et al., 2003; Stebbins, 1999, Son et al., 2008; Young and Medic, 2011). In a sporting context, social support has been defined by Scanlan et al. (2003: 379) as the ‘support and encouragement the athlete perceives significant others provide for their involvement in sport.’ Research in the broader field of social influences on health have identified four major dimensions of social support: instrumental (companionship, direct encouragement, tangible assistance); emotional (showing understanding and care); informational (advice, knowledge assistance) and esteem support (affirmation,
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This study focuses on the complex nature of family influences and the impact of family dynamics on sport participation in Masters athletes from the perspective of current mid-life sport participants. It attempts to provide insight into the role family members play in supporting and/or constraining mid-later life sport involvement, as well as the negotiations that take place at the family level in order to maintain (or re-engage with) sport participation. Our study is unique because it brings together insights from existing research on leisure constraints and social support in sport and physical activity, with work of leisure and family scholars, to inform the influence of family on mid-life Masters athletes’ sport participation.

Examining how married couples (with or without children) negotiate family influences on leisure participation is important because it can contribute to theories in leisure and sport studies, while also offering strategies that can help people overcome family constraints to leisure participation during middle-age. Mid-life is typically characterised (in contemporary Western societies) by competing pressures associated with raising children, caring for parents, employment, self-responsibility for health and changes in family structure, which can impact one’s leisure time (Thompson et al., 2002). Our research could also provide practical implications for the provision of leisure-based sport and health promotion programs.

Social Support, Leisure Constraints, Family and Physical Activity in Mid to Later Life

Social support, interpersonal relationships, and family influences have been identified as key factors affecting the participation of middle-aged and older people in physically active leisure pursuits (Alexandris and Carroll, 1997; Cotter and Sherman, 2008; Chogahara et al., 1998; Chogahara, 1999; Sasidharan et al., 2006; Son et al., 2008; Thompson et al., 2002). A
review of the literature by Chogahara et al. (1998) suggested that three key and distinct sources of social influences among older exercisers included family members (spouses, children, parents, siblings, or extended family), peers, and health professionals (including exercise leaders and physicians). Social support research has shown that older adults with higher perceptions of social support from family members, peers, and health professionals tended to adhere to exercise classes and demonstrated self-efficacy for physical activity (Chogahara et al., 1998; Dionigi, 2007; Duncan and McAuley, 1993; Sasidharan et al., 2006; Scully, 1998; Wankel et al., 1994).

Much of this research, however, has focused on positive social influences and the source of these influences, such as family support and friend support, with little attention being paid to the complex nature of such support or negative social influences (Cotter and Sherman, 2008; Chogahara et al., 1998). This one-sided perspective and focus on social influence as a positive, supportive construct in physical activity settings has been questioned in the literature (e.g., Krause, 1995) because it does not acknowledge claims made by social exchange or social equity theorists. Exchange theorists argue that influences in social relationships involve rewards and costs that need to be negotiated (and reciprocated) by individuals, which can have both positive and negative consequences (Burg and Seeman, 1994; Liang et al., 2001). Social equity theory postulates that mutual benefits are gained by both people/groups involved in giving and receiving support (Lawrence and Schigelone, 2002; Liang et al., 2001).

In 1987, Crawford and Godbey highlighted the potential of social exchange theory in making sense of constraints on leisure participation in a family context ‘...due to its consideration of the impact of psychological forces of attraction and restraint upon behavior’ (1987: 125). They argued that leisure participation is highly dependent on people’s ability to successfully negotiate multiple intrapersonal, interpersonal (including family influences) and structural
constraints that can result in modified practices in order to maintain leisure involvement. As an extension of this work, Jackson et al., (1993:5) speculated that:

the confrontation and successful negotiation of leisure constraints can enhance participation as people rearrange their schedules, spending priorities, and other aspects of their lives to accomplish their leisure-related goals.

Jackson et al. also proposed that motivations play a key role in leisure constraints negotiation through their ‘balance’ proposition. On a cognitive level, like the ‘social exchange depiction of the negotiation process as a decision-making confrontation between “rewards,” or motivations, and “costs,” or constraints,’ how a person responds to leisure constraints may be interpreted as the result of the balance between constraints and motivations (Jackson et al., 1993: 5). Son et al. (2008: 202) claimed that ‘researchers have not examined the relationships among constraints, negotiation, motivation, and participation among middle-aged and older adults’. Further research on this process of negotiation, particularly in family contexts of middle-aged sport participants, is needed to provide empirical evidence in support of these theories.

On a broader, cultural level, family and leisure researchers have examined the role gender plays in negotiations, motivations and leisure participation. Through the use of discourse analysis, Shaw and Dawson (2001) showed how the meanings individuals place on leisure (and the way they negotiate social relationships) must be considered in the context of culturally regulated practices and beliefs, such as the ideologies of gender, motherhood, fatherhood, familism and marriage. Thompson (1999) examined gender relations in sports participation and discussed issues of social support, child care and domestic responsibilities, reciprocity and satisfying leisure experiences for mothers and family members. These findings were contextualised in broader structures and discourses associated with motherhood, wifehood and heterosexuality.
To date, the sport-specific literature on social support and family influences in middle-aged and older populations has focused heavily on individuals who participate in physical activities that are not as frequent or intense as Masters athletes (Young and Medic, 2011). From the few studies that have been conducted on Masters athletes, it appears that family members can be a source of support as well as conflict in their sporting lives. For instance, a case study by Roper et al. (2003) highlighted the importance of spousal support for an 88-year-old Masters runner, while Grant (2001) described the family negotiations a group of New Zealand Masters athletes (aged in their 70s) had to undertake to avoid conflict. Golding and Ungerleider (1991) showed how social support can enhance training motivation in Masters track and field athletes (mean age 50.1 years), as well as how the time and energy devoted to training can limit an athlete’s investment in social relationships. In a study on the spousal support of runners, Fick et al. (1997) argued that commitment to leisure, running in particular, can be a source of strain on family relationships if couples are not accepting of each other’s leisure interests. Finally, Stevenson (2002) described how Masters swimmers had to modify their training schedules, make preparations for morning swims, and take care of parenting and work obligations to accommodate their commitment to swimming, while Young and Medic (2011) showed that Masters swimmers experienced pressure from their spouse and children to continue with physical activity. Given these complex and conflicting findings, further research is necessary to examine the extent, source, and nature of both positive and negative social influences, the impact of family dynamics on sport involvement, and how Masters athletes negotiate these factors (Young and Medic, 2011). In particular, Fick et al. (1997) argued that more research is needed to identify the ways in which individuals effectively balance their commitment to a serious leisure pursuit (e.g., Masters sport participation) and family life.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the nature and source of family influences on sport participation in Masters athletes of varying skill and training commitment levels (from recreational to elite competitors). The study is part of a larger research project which examined Masters athletes’ motivations, developmental outcomes, and family influences associated with their sport participation. The current study focuses on the latter; in particular, the dynamics and influence of family relationships (e.g., the nature and impact of having a spouse who was or was not an athlete and having children or not) on Masters athletes’ sport participation. These two sources (i.e., spouse and/or children) of support were identified in participant interviews as having the most influence on sport involvement.

Method

Research Design

This study takes an exploratory, qualitative approach. Exploratory research is like an inverted pyramid in the sense that the focus is originally broad, with no explicit theory or hypothesis set out in advance, but becomes progressively sharpened as the study proceeds (Blumer, 1969). Qualitative methods are appropriate when exploring people’s lives and experiences because central to ‘qualitative research is understanding people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it’ (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998: 7). Furthermore, the goal of qualitative research is not only ‘to understand social life by taking into account meaning, [and] the interpretive process of social actors’, but also ‘the cultural, social and situational contexts in which those processes occur’ (Jaffe and Miller, 1994: 52). Therefore, our approach was primarily inductive, which is a flexible one that begins with the researchers having read widely to gain a sense of key theoretical issues in the field before proceeding to collect data,
provide description, analyse the data and finally apply theories and previous research findings to explain or interpret the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

The advantage of a ‘loose’ inductive approach to research is that the key findings are identified in the data, rather than based on preconceived theories that may be irrelevant. Nevertheless, we recognise that there is always an element of deduction involved in any research when one is consulting previous studies and theories related to the area of research interest. Therefore, our goal was to use theories and findings from previous research on social and family support/issues in physical activity and leisure contexts to provide explanations of the data, rather than force the data to fit predetermined theories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

**Participants**

Fourteen married adults (nine men and five women) aged 46-61 years ($M=50$) participated in this study. The participants were theoretically (or purposively) sampled (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002) based on their current involvement in Masters sport (a range of skill, competitive and commitment levels), age (between 45 and 62 years), gender (men and women), family status (married) and language (ability to speak English). Participants who varied in competency levels and the type of sport they played were recruited from both a large urban centre (population 2.5 million) and a small town (population approximately 18,500) in Southern Ontario, Canada. All participants were Caucasian, heterosexual and ten of the sample had teenaged or university-aged children while the remaining four participants did not have any children. There was an average of 16 years Masters sport experience across the sample and participants were involved in the following sports: swimming, running, cycling, triathlon, Dragon boating, volleyball, ice hockey, and triathlon. Refer to Table 1 for participant
demographic details. With regard to self-definitions of involvement, ‘elite’ referred to consistent podium performances for their age-group and typically more hours of training per week, whereas ‘recreational’ referred to athletes who participated regularly, but not as often as the more elite athletes and they did not achieve results in the top ranks for their age-group.

*Insert Table 1 about here*

**Data Collection**

Each participant was interviewed once (either by the second or third listed author) in locations that were convenient for them, such as their residences, places of employment, coffee shops, or sport venues. Interviews lasted 40 minutes to 2 hours. Institutional ethics approval and participant consent were obtained prior to conducting interviews. The semi-structured interviews (following Patton’s (2002) approach) were aimed at understanding of the role of family members in the athletes’ sport involvement, the athletes’ experiences of family support, absence of support, family conflicts and family dynamics. Some sample questions include: What role does your family play in your current sport participation? To what extent do your spouse and children (if appropriate) support your participation in Masters sport? Have you experienced any family conflicts with regard to your sport involvement? How have you negotiated with family members to maintain your sport involvement? Who is your most influential family member (and how/why)?

**Data Analysis**

Each of the 14 interviews was transcribed verbatim for manual coding and analysis. An inductive analysis approach (Côté et al., 1993; Côté et al., 1995) was used to identify themes in the data. The first stage of analysis involved using descriptive coding categories within each transcript to determine the nature and source of family influences specific to that individual.
Next, initial themes were generated across the entire group of Masters athletes by combining similar coding categories and dropping others across the complete data set. Initially four broad raw data themes (each with numerous sub-themes) were identified (and agreed upon among the authors) with regard to spousal and children influences on sport participation. These raw themes included: Spousal support for sport involvement; Scheduling sport involvement with spouse (and children); Children direct/indirect influence on initial sport involvement and; Children support/non support.

This process of cross-case analysis allowed the data to be grouped together under these initial (descriptive) theme categories. That is, quotes and excerpts taken from the interviews were identified as ‘meaning units’ within each broad raw theme using the coding method, described above. Common features from meaning units were identified, compared and organised into categories to form the various sub-themes within each of the broad themes (Côté et al., 1993; Tesch, 1990). For example, within the “Spousal support for sport involvement” theme, the following categories/sub-themes emerged: Supports by ‘allowing’; Supports by encouraging/engaging and; Supports by discussing/understanding (refer to Table 2 for the raw data themes, the various categories/sub-themes within each raw theme, and the number of participants who spoke about each theme).

*Insert Table 2 about here*

The next stage of analysis involved identifying relationships among these coded categories/sub-themes, and across the categories in each raw data theme, in an attempt to develop higher order themes (more refined concepts) from these initial themes by linking similar sub-themes together or discarding irrelevant sub-themes (Van Manen, 1998). Ongoing discussions among the three authors enabled critical reflection on the emergent themes and facilitated
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consensus and verification on the representativeness and interpretation of the findings. The key higher order themes indentified in the data were: spousal (and children) support by ‘allowing’ (i.e., not questioning or complaining about sport participation); scheduling (as a source of, and to avoid, conflict) with spouse; spouses (and parent/children) training together/training separately; and the indirect influence of children. The following section describes each theme.

**Findings**

1. **Spousal (and Children) Support by ‘Allowing’**

   Half of the participants in the sample described how their spouse supported their sport participation by merely allowing it, regardless of whether their spouse was also physically active. A couple of the participants who had children also mentioned that their children provided a similar kind of support. That is, their spouse and/or children did not question or complain about their partner’s or parent’s participation in sport. For example, Daniel, a 49 year-old runner said:

   My wife has always been encouraging, but not really influential…she hasn’t stopped me, put it that way … just [by] kind of leaving it alone and not saying, ‘Why are you doing that [running] instead of doing this?’ She recognises the importance of it…. [or] either resigned herself [to the fact that her husband is a runner][laughs].

   Scott, a 55 year-old swimmer, shared a similar experience with his wife (who was not an athlete):

   …well my wife is very good, she allows me the time away… My wife is always understanding, she... lets me go to the pool and all that. It’s not really a problem or issue or something…She doesn’t go watch me. It’s kinda boring to watch, but she’s delighted that I compete. And she’s very delighted that I work out.

   The use of the words encouraging and understanding in the above quotes indicated that their wives offer them emotional and expressive support with regard to sport participation, which
was common among about a quarter of the sample. However, the emphasis was on how their spouse ‘hasn’t stopped me’ or ‘lets me go’, which highlighted this notion of support by ‘allowing’. Christopher (a 49 year-old swimmer, runner, and cyclist) explained that social support for him was about his spouse allowing him to participate, as well as about compromising with his spouse (who also likes to keep physically active):

The whole time my wife’s been very good about it….she’s always let me do whatever I wanted to do, in that respect, you know… I used to want to run all the time, but then we just … decided to walk, so… we go walking together, and it’s become a real benefit for the both of us.

This finding of support by allowing was more common among the male athletes; however, one female participant made reference to it. Yolanda, a 49 year-old swimmer and volleyball player, explained how she talks about her sports involvement with her husband and children, but she relies on herself, not others, for motivation:

…you share what you do every day, or what your plans are for the day with your significant other. “So you’re going swimming? Oh, cool, what time is that?” Or then “Oh, good, I’m glad you went.” Or when you come back, “You smell like chlorine, but I like that smell.” So that’s an encouraging thing in itself, right?… It’s never derogatory, it’s always positive… No, it’s not, it’s not that type of a [need] – I’m more of a self-motivated [person].

Therefore, these athletes explained how their partners were comfortable with the fact that their spouse was involved in sport. Their spouses did not question their regular participation, they understood that sport participation was important to their partner, yet this did not mean they actively supported them by watching their performances or participating with them.
Similarly, participants commonly believed that their children were happy that their parents were doing something that they enjoyed, but they did not provide any direct support or encouragement. For instance, Simon, a 54 year-old triathlete, said:

…my kids are all teenagers now, so they sleep in. I’m home before they’re even up in some cases, so. But that’s fine. So they’re not involved…No one really gives a damn. It’s just Dad doing his thing.

Simon described his children as being uninvolved in his sport participation, but he implied that this indifference did not bother him because his family was at a point in their lives where they accepted that each member was ‘doing their thing’. Similarly, Bob, a 59 year-old Dragon boater, explained that he does not expect support from his children:

…our son, although it would be hard to find evidence of him supporting us in a really positive way, in terms of coming out to watch races or anything, but… he’s fine with us going away for the weekend, and there’s never a complaint, or, if we’re both at practice then he’s making his own dinner or whatever, and there’s never a complaint. So in the end, I think he is supportive, although it’s not a really outgoing way of supportive. And I’ve got no problems with that, I don’t really expect him to come out and watch our races and things.

Bob described how, by not complaining, his child provided family support by allowing. Only some of the participants commented that their children watched and/or admired their participation in sport. For example, Cathy, a 56 year-old Dragon boater, explained ‘…the kids are really supportive too, like there are times that they’ll travel to Toronto Island … to watch us paddle.’ In other words, most of the Masters athletes in this study, males in particular, spoke more about their partners or children being supportive by letting them ‘be’, than they did about
these family members offering any kind of instrumental or informational support for their sport participation. Therefore, it appears that this kind of expressive support or ‘allowing one to be’ is significant and accepted in family contexts.

2. Scheduling with Spouse

Scheduling sport training and competitions came up frequently in athlete interviews. Many athletes spoke about their schedule as a source of tension or conflict between them and their spouse. Others described how they managed and negotiated their schedule with their spouse to avoid conflict, maximise their time together, and/or support each other’s needs.

Half of the participants described situations in which their sport training and competitive schedule was a source of conflict. For example, Bob, aged 59 years, said:

Well, we [Bob and his wife] started in Dragon boating together… [but] we’re now on different teams, in different clubs, so we’re not practicing together, or necessarily going to meets together. Sometimes they overlap, sometimes they don’t. So that puts a strain in the sense [that] sometimes I’m away one weekend and she’s away another weekend, which limits our time together… [Also] I would spend more time training outside of Dragon boating and… on occasion I guess it’s been a bit of a sore point, but never anything too bad.

Bill, a 46 year-old runner who also participated in a range of team sports, explained how he had to change his schedule in order to spend more time with his wife:

I used to participate in a volleyball league on Friday nights. And I travel a lot for business, so I’d come on a Thursday, and then I’d go out and play volleyball on Friday nights, and my wife wasn’t playing, so that became a source of conflict. So I had to back
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away from that this year. So, that’s usually the conflict. It’s usually a time restriction thing more than anything.

Like many of the participants who discussed time commitment to sport as a source of conflict, Bill recognised it was affecting his wife (who was not an athlete), so he made changes to his schedule to spend more time with her. He further explained how he compromised his sport involvement to avoid affecting others (and to ensure he remained married!):

… you’ve got to find that balance with sports [and family]…That is one of the reasons I got involved with running more so than, let’s say sailing, for example. Because running is something you will do at six in the morning when it’s not going to affect anybody else, whereas sailing - that does very much [affect others] because that does involve travel and it involves being away quite a bit. So if I was totally selfish…I would probably be spending all of my time sailing… but I probably wouldn’t be married anymore either [laughs].

Alternatively, others whose spouses were not athletes spoke about deliberately designing their sport schedule to avoid conflict by ensuring that they spent time with their spouse. Scott, a 55 year-old swimmer, explained that:

For the most part I keep [training] to two evenings a week and I go early on Saturday and Sunday mornings [while his wife is still in bed]… She usually sleeps in, so it doesn’t interfere with our time together that much.

Angela, a 46 year-old triathlete, trained during work hours in order to spend time with her husband before and after he goes to work:
…honestly, the morning…it’s time I spend with my husband. During the day from 9:00 to 5:00, I always try to get my cycling done before he comes home, and then in the evening I try to do stuff with him.

Patricia, a 47 year-old volleyball player and Dragon boater, who is married to an active man, has negotiated that both her and her husband train during their work time so they can be together outside of this time:

…because it’s [sport participation] a priority we manage it…now that they [children] are older there really isn’t anything between my part-time schedule stopping me from doing what I want, as long as I can manage my work – I can do it [train] on my own time. And my husband is sort of self-employed so I say to him, “If you golf or go to the gym, do that during work hours so that after work you’re here with the family,”…balance, yeah.

Furthermore, some athletes spoke about the ongoing management of scheduling and described how at times it was a source of conflict and at other times it was a deliberate attempt to avoid family conflict. By way of example, Julie, a 50 year-old ice hockey player and Dragon boater, explained that even though she enjoys going away to festivals to participate in sport, it has made her question her actions:

…if it’s a weekend festival I’m gone a whole weekend so it’s time [Laughs]…and although my husband has never said it, I can … sense something there, you know? Is it a good time to go away this weekend because we should have been doing something around the house, you know?

At the same time, later in her interview, Julie commented that she has rearranged her sporting schedule because family comes first:
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So… it [sport participation] can be time consuming [but] not necessarily…we had a vacation… over the summer, so that made me withdraw from a tournament because we had a family commitment… but I don’t think that’s so much a negative thing, it’s more a family commitment versus sport so [Laughs] and I have to choose my family before sport [Laughs]… that’s where we get a well balanced [lifestyle].

Clearly, athletes were willing to be flexible and compromise to ensure that they satisfied their own sporting desires and their commitment to family. Although women tended to be the ones to express a sense of responsibility to their husband, family and home, some men (quoted above and below) also acknowledged these marital and parental obligations. Therefore, a notion of reciprocity and balance was evident in the support athletes’ shared with their spouse and family.

A couple of the participants were explicit in discussing how they deliberately scheduled their training to support each other’s needs, as Bill (age 46) explained:

The critical thing is that you need support from each other, in our different endeavours … somebody has to pick up the slack if you are away, involved in sport. Last weekend, for example, I was at a race all weekend, so, I pretty much had to rely on her [his wife] to look after the family while I was away.

Bill is describing the logistical support his wife offers him (i.e., handling child care while he is racing); however he reciprocates this support when his wife participates in her leisure pursuits. Kevin, a 46 year-old runner, discussed the negotiation that took place with his wife to (re)schedule a plan that worked for both parties:

I think what has been kind of like teamwork … is, you know, she knows my routine and so she tries to do something within that routine as well. We used to run together [but] that wasn’t working for her… because of the different pacing so I would run ahead and
run back, but first I didn’t know, but it was discouraging her because here I am running ahead – so it was finally, “Let’s just run on our own.” So [now] we go out at the same time [but do not run the same course] and that makes the schedule okay, she likes to run in the morning and I like to run in the morning…

The decision to train together or train separately with family members was commonly discussed by the participants within this sample. More than half of the athletes talked about how they trained with or without their spouse and/or children for varying reasons.


As an extension of the previous theme on scheduling, this theme describes how many athletes (whose family members were also athletes) believed that they were being supported by (or supporting) their spouse and/or children by training with or without them. More participants spoke about training separately from their spouse, than they did about training together. Yolanda, a 49 year-old swimmer and volleyball player, was one of the few in the sample who said that her and her husband’s sporting interests change according to each other’s sport participation:

…when we got married we started playing badminton… it would be our night out…

And then – he started playing volleyball because I started playing volleyball, and that’s it. Now he’s playing golf, because it’s fun playing golf [laughs]. Now I’m playing golf because he’s playing golf…So it’s a source of togetherness, time spent doing something.

Consistent with the previous two themes, however, most of the athletes discussed training separately to their partners, for various reasons. However, this was not necessarily perceived by the study participants as a negative thing. Daniel, a 49 year-old runner, explained that if he was to run with his wife it would be more about:
…supporting her than anything to do with me. It would be just to keep her company.

We run at a completely different pace… it’s uncomfortable for both of us to run at each others’ pace…no [we don’t train together]. She does her own thing and I do mine.

Similarly, Bob, a 59 year-old Dragon boater, commented that it was easier for him and his wife to train separately:

We’ve tried [training together] over the years … We have equipment at home, but because we use it differently we really don’t end up training together… I mean, sometimes we’re training at the same time, but we’re not in the same room [laughs].

These findings associated with spouses letting one another do their own thing reinforced the first theme of support by allowing. However, this theme shows that even if the athlete was involved in the same sport as their spouse, it did not necessarily mean they trained together. This outcome was usually the result of partners having different competency levels and/or different training techniques, which meant it was easier and more enjoyable to train apart. At the same time, many of the participants explained how they did different physical activities (not necessarily related to their sport) together with their spouse, such as skiing, walking, tennis, coaching, or a gym class.

On the other hand, some of the athletes who had physically active children talked about training with their children. For example, Christopher (a 49 year-old swimmer, runner, and cyclist) said:

We’re fairly active [the whole family], we’re very active. My son loves to run – we love running together, that’s another thing we do together, and uh, and so it’s kind of neat, actually, so I go running with my son, and then go, I’ll go swimming with my daughter…
Julie, a 50 year-old ice hockey player and Dragon boater, believed that her 26 year-old daughter was the most influential family member in regards to her sport participation:

…she plays recreation hockey now for women…and is always encouraging though and it was great when I started and [we] would come out and play together, you know, moms against the daughters kind of thing… So that offered some fun recreational time together.

Julie also told a story about her children training with her to support her participation in an upcoming event:

[The kids] like to come out and try to train … I mentioned that I was going to do a….duathlon in August….Both of them wanted to help train with me. They were going to run with me and…cycle with me to help encourage me to do it.

Despite the above findings, most of the athletes did not speak of this direct type of social support from their children with regard to their current sport participation. Instead, it was found that the athletes experienced various types of indirect influences from their children, as shown in the final theme.

4. The Indirect Influence of Children

Many of the female participants who had children described how their children’s involvement in sport influenced their own sport participation. Also, it was evident that for several of the athletes there was a general value placed on sport and physical activity within the immediate family, which indirectly played a role in the athlete’s ongoing sport participation.

For example, Julie (age 50) described how her children’s involvement in ice hockey encouraged her to play:
My children were playing hockey at the time, and rather than sitting on the stands I [thought] I better learn to play myself [laughs]… for the physical aspect of getting involved.

When Julie was talking about her daughter being her ‘biggest inspiration’ in terms of her own sport participation, she elaborated:

… being a parent of someone like that having to travel with her [you] had to get to know your stuff [laughs] and my son, as well, played hockey…so they were both kind of inspirations to me…who’ve helped me [laughs] get to where I am I guess… [in terms of] general health and fitness [because] they encourage that…

Patricia (age 47) shared a story of how her children’s participation in volleyball led to her becoming a coach and then re-engaging as a player later in life:

Now, volleyball I started playing in my 20s, just recreationally and then when our kids got to be a certain age we decided to start coaching…So it really morphed into something bigger than that - we wanted our kids to be active, and to ensure that, we participate more too with the coaching and things …

Similarly, Patricia spoke of the general, physically active culture in her family, as well as how they supported each other with regard to sport and physical activity:

…we will go watch them [her children] play and things like that so its kept us together in that respect – and when we go on vacation we do active things – we are talking about doing a bicycle trip the six of us, which should be interesting [laughs].

A couple of the male athletes believed that their own involvement in sport influenced their children’s sports participation, which in turn encouraged them to maintain their participation in Masters sport. For instance, Bill (aged 46) commented:
… the value of a healthy lifestyle, you know, I think that it’s beneficial. When you look at my family, I have kids, I think that it has a very positive aspect on their lives as well…you know, in setting that example. I think it’s something good for them and it has positively impacted their involvement in sport as well. I’ve always been running so the kids are involved as well… sport’s becomes their lifestyle….I think there is a natural transfer of the interest in sport because we’ve always been physically active and involved in sport…

Bill, like some of the other men in the sample, considered himself a role model to his children. Simon, a 54 year-old triathlete, explained how he got involved and stayed involved in sport so that he would be fit enough to play with his children:

We didn’t have [kids] until I was in my mid-thirties … that’s part of the reason I got into [triathlon] originally … because I was determined … to be active with my children, which I think was a precursor for me to stay involved, or get more involved over the years.

Given the above justification, it would be interesting to determine how children view their parent’s involvement in Masters sport. Further research is needed to better understand children’s appreciation of their parent’s sport involvement, and its alignment with their parent’s intentions.

Another key indirect family influence was the fact that many of the athletes had more time to devote to Masters sport participation because their children were more independent. Simon (quoted above) also described how his kids are now at an age of independence, so he has the freedom to train for and compete in sport when he chooses. Bob (age 59 years) shared his perspective on this point:
I got into [Dragon boating] at a point where my kids were getting past the age where I was coaching their teams, and they didn’t need us there, or as much as they did when they were younger. And that was definitely, for me anyways, a big part of why I had time available. I don’t think I could have committed this much time through my 30s and 40s because I was spending a lot of time with my kids.

This finding appeared to be related to the stage of life that most of the participants were currently experiencing. Therefore, life stage plays a key role in the nature of family influences and impact of family dynamics (such as the age of children) on Masters athletes’ sport participation.

**Discussion**

This study has advanced understandings of family influences on sport participation in Masters athletes by showing that both positive and negative forms of family support can be negotiated and balanced to allow for continued (albeit, in some cases, modified) sport participation in mid-later life. Overall, our findings supported Chogahara (1999: S365) who found that ‘family members are not solely supportive nor solely unsupportive’ with regard to their partner’s or parent’s involvement in physical activity. Although some social support researchers may argue that this common notion of compromise or indifference (i.e., support by allowing) expressed by family members represents negative support or absence of support (Hammock et al., 1990), our study showed that the sense of freedom to continue sports participation without family interference or expected involvement was not necessarily a negative experience. It appeared that these Masters athletes received and required less support from their families with regard to their ongoing sport participation when compared to previous work on social support in physical activity and sport settings for older (Chogahara et al., 1998; Dionigi, 2006; 2007; Grant, 2001; Roper et al., 2003; Sasidharan et al., 2006; Scully, 1998) and younger
Family influences on Masters sport participation

(Stevenson, 2002) athletes. This finding may be a reflection of the age and gender of the participants, the stage of life they were currently experiencing (including the family structure and dynamics), the level of commitment the athletes have in Masters sport, and their ability to negotiate leisure constraints to find a ‘balance’ between leisure pursuits and family obligations. The findings will be discussed relative to research on negotiating leisure constraints, sport commitment and motivation, family dynamics and life stage, and gender and reciprocity.

**Leisure and negotiation: Empirical support for the ‘balance’ proposition**

Themes 2 and 3 highlighted how athletes and their spouses were both providers and recipients of support at different times. These findings can be explained by social equity theory which argues that mutual benefits and respect can be achieved by both people involved in giving and receiving support (Lawrence and Schigelone, 2002; Liang et al., 2001) and social exchange theories which postulate that social relationships entail rewards and costs (Burg and Seeman, 1994; Liang et al., 2001). Therefore, our findings on ‘balance’, negotiation and modification to training schedules provide empirical data in support of the social exchange theory and the balance proposition made in leisure constraint research (e.g., Crawford and Godbey, 1987; Jackson et al., 1993). These leisure theorists have argued that individuals actively negotiate through constraints (such as rearranging training times to spend time with family members) and ‘thus succeed in initiating or continuing leisure participation, albeit in a way that may differ from how they would participate if constraints were absent’ (Jackson et al., 1993: 2). It appeared that the Masters athletes’ successful negotiation and rescheduling with family members resulted in enhancing their leisure experience through more enjoyable training, allowing for family leisure time and having the freedom to express their athletic identities. Jackson et al. (1993: 5) argued
that such outcomes highlight ‘the the need to reevaluate assumptions about the nature of constraints and their effects on people's leisure decision making.’

In extending the work of Crawford and Godbey (1987), Jackson et al.’s (1993) balance proposition argued that an interaction between motivations and constraints affects the level of leisure participation which results. More recently, Son et al. (2008: 210) examined a motivation-balance model based on Jackson et al.’s balance proposition in the context of active leisure in mid- to late-life and found that motivation positively influenced negotiation strategies which, in turn, positively influenced participation’. Our findings provide qualitative evidence supporting this model, which indicates the need for ongoing assessments of Masters athlete’s motivation levels, in addition to their participation levels, and whether their negotiation strategies with family increase as their motivation for sports participation increases, and vice versa.

Therefore, the participants in our study, like the participants in the study by Grant (2001), demonstrated the ability to balance work, sport and family demands through the use of coping strategies that were both logistical (e.g., scheduling, training together or apart at the same time, training during work hours) and psychosocial (e.g., focusing on the health benefits of each family member’s active lifestyle). As argued by Son et al. (2008: 211) this ability to successfully negotiate could be because middle-aged and older people ‘have experienced years of competing demands and desires. As a result, they may have already developed strategies and identified resources to negotiate some constraints to leisure participation.’ Thompson et al. (2002: 139) agreed, ‘…by midlife one has perhaps settled into leisure lifestyles through years of negotiation and adaptation that are comfortable and acceptable.’

The ability of our participants to manage and maintain their identity, resolve family conflicts, and negotiate or juggle responsibilities over time contradicts research by Golding and
Ungerleider (1991) and Stevenson (2002). These studies have shown how a high level of identification, motivation and commitment with a leisure activity separate from the family (such as Masters sport) has the potential for individuals to relinquish family activities. The participants in our study did not seem ‘to “sacrifice” (to some extent) their relationships with their spouses and their children’ to the same extent that the Masters swimmers reported in the research by Stevenson (2002: 144). Nor did the time and energy devoted to training appear to limit their investment in social relationships, as was found among Masters track and field athletes in a study by Golding and Ungerleider (1991). Alternatively, our final theme on the indirect support of children showed that some athletes felt that they had more time and energy to devote to sport participation because their children were independent. While mid-life can be a time of pressure and competing obligations, some changes in circumstances, such as diminishing childcare responsibilities, can lead to an increased commitment to leisure (Kleiber, 1999; Thompson et al., 2002).

**The committed athlete and family dynamics in mid-life**

The level of commitment, motivation and depth of involvement in Masters sport demonstrated among participants meant that they placed less emphasis on the need for direct social support. Much of the research on social support and family influences on physical activity participation is focused on how positive family influences can help engage and maintain people in exercise programs (Chogahara et al., 1998; Sasidharan et al., 2006). Alternatively, people involved in Masters sport already demonstrate an established sense of identity as an athlete (Dionigi, 2008; Fick et al., 1997; Stevenson, 2002). Thus, they do not necessarily rely on social support from family members to maintain their participation in Masters sport, regardless of whether they were new to Masters sport or not, the length of hours they spent training and
whether their spouse and/or children were also athletes. For example, those who trained the most (such as Kevin and Angela) both spoke about how they negotiated with their partners in similar ways to Scott and Patricia (who trained the least hours in the group). So, from our data analysis we could not determine a point on an ‘intensity’ continuum where family support dissipates.

With regard to those who recently began Masters sport compared to those who have been playing sport since they were young, we found that people who started later in life (such as Scott, Julie and Bob) appeared to have less active support (i.e., support by allowing) than those who had been involved in the sport from a younger age, such as Kevin and Angela, regardless of whether their spouse and/or children were also athletes. Kevin and Angela spoke about teamwork and compromise with their spouse (who was an athlete and not an athlete, respectively) so they could be with family and maintain their sport participation. Further quantitative research could examine these commitment variables, such as length of time in Masters sport, spouses’ interests and amount of training, in relation to social support, to determine any differences in this regard.

Our findings aligned with and contradicted some of the results from Young and Medic’s (2011) examination of social influences on the sport commitment of Masters swimmers. Young and Medic drew on the expanded sport commitment model by Wilson et al. (2004) which distinguishes between two forms of sport commitment - ‘wanting’ to do something (functional commitment) and ‘having’ to do something (obligatory commitment). On the one hand, our findings showed minimal indication that the athletes continued in sport to please their children or spouse, despite this being the strongest social influence on Masters swimmers obligatory commitment in Young and Medic’s study. On the other hand, our findings support Young and Medic’s argument that social constraint from family members could be perceived through a more
functional, rather than obligatory, lens among highly committed Masters athletes. For instance, our study showed that participants were indirectly influenced by their children to begin and maintain sport participation and many shared aspects of their Masters sport involvement with their children. While this could be perceived by athletes as social pressure to continue in sport to maintain a positive relationship with one’s children, Young and Medic suggest that reframing these pressuring influences in a way that is consistent with one’s own needs and values (e.g., the importance of spending time with one’s children) can result in these family influences being viewed through a functional lens. Future research on family dynamics and life-stage factors should focus on understanding the changing influences of spouses and children on the sport involvement of Masters athletes as they transition from early adulthood to middle and later adulthood. In addition, gender roles in the family and their influence on leisure participation must be considered.

**Gender and Reciprocity: A reflection of contemporary, Western families?**

In regard to gender differences, female athletes (particularly those with husbands who were not also athletes) spoke more than the male athletes about: feeling guilty because they were not attending to chores around the house; how children influenced their involvement in sport and; choosing family before sport. Men spoke more than women about their spouse having to take on extra child care and domestic responsibilities to ensure they could play and train for their sport, especially when their spouse was not an athlete. These findings are consistent with past studies on gender, sport and family leisure because the words of participants appear to reflect or be influenced by ‘the ideology of motherhood as devotion to children, care giving, and self-sacrifice’ (Shaw and Dawson, 2001: 219). Similarly, Thompson (1999) found that women who were players of sport themselves went to great lengths to ensure their participation did not
interfere with domestic duties or their support for family members. Also, they viewed their participation in sport as a reward that was negotiated with their spouse/family and appreciated because it allowed them a satisfying leisure experience. Therefore, like these studies, our findings show how the talk and practices of some of our participants work to uphold traditional cultural norms associated with motherhood, wifehood, familism and heterosexuality.

At the same time, in contrast to the above understandings of women’s leisure, a notion of acceptance and reciprocity was evident in the support athletes’ shared with their spouse and family with regard to sport participation. Similar to the experiences of committed Masters swimmers in a study by Stevenson (2002), our participants reorganised their schedules to accommodate for sport, family and work commitments, regardless of gender. That is, there were examples of men staying at home with the children while their wives participated in leisure and vice-versa, as well as both male and female athletes training during work hours so they could spend more time with their spouse. This was particularly evident among athletes whose spouse was also an athlete. Likewise, Thompson (1999: 9) found that women expected some reciprocity for the support they provided their husband and children to play tennis because ‘it contributed to a marital partnership’. The minimal gender differences identified in our study could be because of the release of ‘the restrictive effects of earlier, gender-prescribed lifestyles’ (Thompson et al., 2002: 139). That is, our finding ‘…may be an indication of domestic relations having become more equitably negotiated in mid-life’ (Thompson et al., 2002: 140). In the context of family leisure, Shaw and Dawson (2001; 229) argued that finding few gender-related issues, such as the unequal division of childcare responsibilities, may be a reflection of ‘recent cultural changes in the image of fatherhood’. A contemporary image has emerged of fathers and husbands as
involved and caring parents (Forna, 1998; Shaw and Dawson, 2001), which would provide an interesting avenue of further research in a sporting context.

Like Fick et al. (1997), our findings showed that male and female athletes can find satisfaction and achieve positive outcomes from committed leisure participation without abandoning their commitment to family. Fick et al. interviewed 342 spouses of runners (222 women and 120 men, aged 21-76 years) and concluded that spouses who were supportive of their partners’ running perceived lower leisure-family conflict than spouses who were least supportive. Our study extends and supports these findings by showing that, from the perspective of the athlete, emotional support (by allowing and accepting sport participation) from significant others, such as spouse and children, and engaging in ongoing negotiations with family members, were ways in which family conflict can be minimised. Therefore, the ability of family members to negotiate, compromise and reciprocate support may be characteristic of contemporary, Western families who can find a balance between sports participation and family life.

**Conclusion**

This study has provided insight on the multidimensional nature of family relationships among Masters athletes of varying levels of skill and commitment. It has shown that both positive and negative forms of family support can be negotiated to allow for ongoing (albeit modified) sport participation in mid-later life. In particular, our findings indicate that social support is not as significant for the already committed (as it is for the sport beginner), but, at the same time, a lack of acceptance and allowance of sport participation by spouses or children can be a potential source of conflict if it is not managed effectively within the family. Theoretically, this study has contributed to knowledge in gender and leisure, the constraints negotiation process in mid-life, and family and leisure participation by bringing these lines of inquiry together in a
Masters sport context. This information can also assist promoters and practitioners of sport and physical activity in designing the most effective social support interventions and resources for retaining and/or engaging people in sport and exercise by highlighting the importance of determining and addressing individual family needs and circumstances.

Clearly, much more qualitative and quantitative research is needed to gain a better understanding of the complex and conflicting nature of family influences and impact of family dynamics on sport participation in Masters athletes. Our study was limited to white, middle class, Western, heterosexual couples with or without (teenage or adult) children. More research with a wider sample of families, such as same-sex couples with or without children or single-parent families, from a range of cultures and socio-economic statuses is needed. Also, we examined the nature of family influences on Masters athletes at one point in time, with a wide range of ages (47-61 years). To examine the changing nature and ongoing process of family influences on leisure participation, it should be studied over time and within distinct age cohorts which may experience different constraints, negotiation, motivation, and leisure participation.
References

Alexandris, K., & Carroll, B. (1997) Demographic differences in the perception of constraints on recreational sport participation: Results from a study in Greece. Leisure Studies, 16(2), 107-125.


Family influences on Masters sport participation


Family influences on Masters sport participation


Table 1

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Masters Sport(s)</th>
<th>Current Hours Training/Week</th>
<th>Age Started Sport</th>
<th>Years in Masters</th>
<th>Self-definisions of Masters involvement</th>
<th>Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Probation Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Running</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>County Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Volleyball/Dragon Boating</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20/46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Part-Time Nurse/Part-Time Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ice Hockey/Dragon Boating</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40/47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Fitness Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Dragon Boating</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Consulting/Semi-Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Running</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Running/Others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolanda</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Swimming/Volleyball</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8-20s/40</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>High School Guidance Counsellor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Swimming/Triathlon/Cycling</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Museum Researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Dragon Boating</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Special Education Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Swimming/Running/Cycling</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Auto Plant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norm</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28-33 (then returned at age 43)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Symphony Musician</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roger</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10-20s (then returned at age 46)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2

**Raw Data Themes and Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Theme</th>
<th>Categories/Sub-themes</th>
<th>Number of participants making reference to this point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spousal support for sport involvement</td>
<td>- Supports by allowing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Supports by encouraging/engaging</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Supports by discussing/understanding</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Does other physical activities with me</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Plays a different sport to me</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Introduced me to sport/serves as a good role model</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Absence of spousal support</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Spousal over-encouragement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling sport involvement with spouse</td>
<td>- Spouses training together/training separately</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Schedule as a source of conflict with spouse</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Schedule designed to avoid conflict with spouse</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Schedule to support each other’s needs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children direct/indirect influence on initial sport involvement</td>
<td>- General value placed on sport/physical activity in the immediate family</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children’s involvement in sport influences them</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children encouraged them to get involved in sport</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children indirectly influence their sport involvement (e.g., parent has more time to devote to sport participation because children are more independent)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children support/non-support</td>
<td>- Children play sports and/or train with parent</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children watches and/or admires parent’s sport involvement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children indifferent (i.e., don’t care, think it is odd, or ‘allow’ it)</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>