

‘An Investigation into whether
Mountain Biking
Facilitates Escapism and Mental Freedom’

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Outdoor Leadership BA (Honours)

Submitted April 2004

‘This Dissertation is an original and authentic piece of work produced in fulfilment of my degree regulations. I have fully acknowledged and referenced all secondary sources. I have read and understood the Academic Regulations and am fully aware of any breach of them.’

GLEN PROBERT

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an investigation into any feelings of escapism and the mental benefits of this escapism to a participant of the sport of mountain biking.

The secondary research looks at past and present theories related to the mental benefits of sport to a participant, the benefits of the outdoors to a participant and finally the benefits of the specific sport of mountain biking.

The primary research is based upon an accumulation of data through the medium of a questionnaire to assess what mountain bikers experience in their normal environment compared to the mountain bike environment, how these differ and what they might be escaping from and to through mountain biking.

This research found that mountain bikers do indeed experience escapism, and it is a fairly prominent feature in what mountain bikers search for in the sport. There are many factors that the mountain bikers may choose to escape from or to, but the main learning point is that the mountain bike environment is versatile enough to help the participants find what they are looking for, be it a challenge, social interaction, self fulfilment or just getting really, really muddy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In collecting the research for this project I spoke to many mountain bikers, and many thanks must go to them for giving their time.

I wish to thank my tutor Paul Wilson for his excellent support and guidance throughout this project.

Thank you to all the facility providers – Craig at Hamsterly Forest and the Forestry Commission (Cannock Chase, Mabie, and Grizedale) for allowing me access to complete the research.

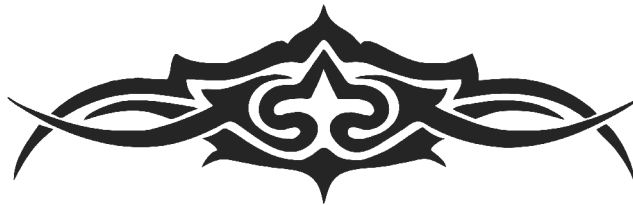
Many thanks go to my Mum and Dad for their complete support throughout my studies, which I could not have done without.

Finally a big thank you to Edward (Bill) Cracknell and all the mountain bikers I have ever had the pleasure of riding with, for without you I would not have the passion for the sport that I do today.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of:

Jason McRoy

(1971 – 1995)



RIDE FREE

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1) INTRODUCTION

Mountain biking is still fairly young in its life compared to other outdoor sports such as rock climbing and mountaineering, having only really been ‘born’ in the early seventies.

Richard and Worland (1997) invited Gary Fisher, one of the fathers of the sport to write an introduction on the past history of mountain biking for their book ‘The Complete Book of Mountain Biking.’

Fisher says ‘So when did it all start? Well it all depends on whether you’re talking about off-roading or mountain biking. People have been riding bikes off-road since...well, since before roads were built. When the single-speed beach cruisers took off way back in the forties, I’m sure no one would have guessed where we’d end up half a century later.’

And how right he was! Following the first big heavy ‘klunkers’ that Fisher and his friends used to hammer down hills on, he then decided to design a bike that could also be ridden up hill and along tracks as well as down them, and so the first mountain bikes were created.

So, being so young compared to other outdoor sports, does mountain biking promote the same feelings of escapism and mental freedom that are generally identified with the outdoors – or is the sport simply a medium for people to try to regain some of their lost youth by spending too much cash on a technological two wheeled wonder?

This piece of research aims to investigate the mental benefits of mountain biking to a participant in terms of escapism into the sport and the mental freedom this can bring. However, with the technological advances over the past ten years the sport has exploded into specific separate ‘disciplines’ such as downhill, cross country, BSX and trials.

What this piece of research also aims to do is take the opinions of all of these separate disciplines to form one single consensus in an attempt to unify the sport once more. At every biker’s heart of hearts, do they all seek the same experiences and feelings?

Do they escape into the world of dirt, metal and pain, and more importantly, what effect does it have on their lives?

2. CURRENT SUPPORTING LITERATURE ON ESCAPISM AND THE BENEFITS TO A SPORTS PARTICIPANT

2.1 Sports psychology and mental benefits

It has been well documented that sport does not only have a positive impact upon the physiology of a participant, but upon the psychology of that person also.

‘Many of the qualities assigned to sport are well recognised – opportunity for self knowledge, personal achievement, good health, enjoyment, skill acquisition, social interaction, responsibility, development of confidence and so on.’ (Wesson, Wiggins et al, 2000)

According to eliteedge.com, these mental benefits are ‘self discipline’, ‘concentration and awareness’, and ‘confidence and success.’

The topic of sports psychology was first looked at in detail by Norman Triplett in 1897, according to Cox (1985).

‘Drawing upon field observations and secondary data, Triplett analyzed the performance of cyclists under conditions of social facilitation.’ (Cox, 1985)

From this grew the development in research looking for a connection between sporting achievement, personality and mental health. However, as stated by Wesson, Wiggins et al (2000) ‘the early research of the 1960’s and 70’s failed to produce many successful conclusions...this was mainly as a result of problems with validity and research methodology.’

It is because of this that ‘Sports psychology as a field of study is still evolving.’ (Cox, 1985), and as such there is very little literature analysing the mental benefits of mountain biking, especially to a limited field such as escapism in mountain biking. However, there is a substantial amount of literature available looking at the benefits to sport in general, and also specific literature to outdoor activities.

Wesson, Wiggins et al (2000) pay particular attention to the fact that our individual differences, our likes and dislikes are not only formed by our physical attributes such as height and weight, but by our psychology, which can be identified by our personality.

Wesson, Wiggins et al (2000) cite Gross (1992) defining personality as:

'Those relatively stable and enduring aspects of individuals which distinguish them from other people, making them unique but at the same time permit a comparison between individuals.'

The understanding of who we are is not only interesting, but vital to identifying what people feel when they partake in a sport such as mountain biking, and, if they experience escapism and mental freedom, how it is different from their usual life.

One of the key ways of identifying our personality was devised by Eysenck in 1964. This 'type' theory as it is known uses a questionnaire and personal inventory to identify a person a continuum between extroverted and introverted, neurotic and stable. (See appendix 1).

Wesson, Wiggins et al (2000) said that Eysenck found that extroverts need increased levels of stimulation, and can become bored very easily. Therefore, they tend to seek out new and challenging environments and situations to maintain their interest. Wesson, Wiggins et al (2000) also stated that 'Extroverts for example, achieve higher levels of arousal preferably in team orientated activities or those involving gross motor skills.'

Oposing this, they also note that introverts are naturally more excitable, and so do not seek such situations. It is because of this that introverts are more likely to achieve at sports with low levels of arousal, such as shooting and bowls.

Wesson, Wiggins et al (2000) summarise by saying that:

- Extroverts cope better in competitive and highly charge stressful situations
- Extroverts cope better in the presence of distracting stimuli (e.g. audience)
 - Extroverts can cope with pain more easily than introverts

Having now identified a sporting personality, it is now possible to see what happens to that personality when in a sporting situation.

When partaking in sport, the participant is affected by attention narrowing, whereby their focus on external factors away from the task at hand becomes shut out and irrelevant. These factors also come into the sport, where task irrelevant cues are cut out from the participants focus. When mountain biking for example, there is a definite focus on pedalling when on an uphill stretch, and the braking skills are shut out. However, when on some downhill stretches these skills are put in reverse order and it is the braking that is the focus of the rider's attention.

Cox (1985) states that: ‘An athlete’s ability to attend to appropriate stimuli during competition has been termed **attention focus**. The concept of attention focus includes the ability of an athlete both to narrow and broaden their attention when necessary.’

The mental benefits of sport can be identified primarily through the motivation of the people who participate, and what they expect to achieve through this participation.

Wesson, Wiggins et al (2000) list two main types of motivating factors, these being *extrinsic* – where the rewards for participating are external such as money, trophies and social status; and *intrinsic* – where the benefits are not tangible but internal, such as the feeling of success, well being and the complete immersion in one specific task irrelevant to the rest of the persons life.

It is this last source of motivation that is of most relevance to this research, as it is these feelings of success, well being and complete immersion away from ‘real life’ which are trying to be associated to mountain biking.

These feelings listed above are of major benefit to a person as a whole as they fulfil a certain ‘level of needs’ as described by Abraham Maslow.

Lifeworktransitions.com state how Maslow created a hierarchy of needs in the shape of a pyramid which shows how humans have fundamental needs such as food and shelter, and once these are achieved they seek the completion of the next level, these being safety needs. (See appendix 2) This then continues with belonging needs, followed by esteem needs and finally self – actualisation. It is this level that humans strive to achieve the most, as it is about being the best that they can be and achieving their own personal goals.

Lifeworktransitions.com says of this level; ‘This is where the feelings of success, well being and escapism from life are achieved the most, as the goals set at this level are personal, and so mean more to the person achieving them.’

If mountain biking does bring about feelings of success, well being and escapism to its participants, then it is able to help those people towards self – actualisation.

This is why people chose sports as a past time or as a hobby, commonly known as a ‘recreational activity’. As Wesson, Wiggins et al, (2000) describe, the word ‘recreation’ itself is actually an abbreviation of ‘re-create’, where by through exercise, both the body and the mind is recreated and rejuvenated to work at peak efficiency. This sort of recreating experience is not specific to the outdoors, but is more likely due to the physical distance that is put between the participants and their usual life.

Not only is it different physically, but mentally the outdoors is also a great catalyst for sense awareness in terms of smell, sight and hearing. The outdoors provides a scene where the human body experiences new feelings, often unheard of to the more urban person. These are often called 'magical' experiences.

Barnes (1997) says of such experiences:

'Magic moments; tend to have more spiritual and emotional connections than flow. They are often exemplified by feelings of 'quietness' and 'being at one' with nature or a deity or sharing with other people. Some people speak of magic moments as 'transcendence'.

The feelings that are described above are all part of the re-creating experience and because of their effects can be labelled as therapeutic, giving a therapeutic experience.

It is important here to note that **therapy** and **therapeutic** are two different things, although aiming for the same outcome. Therapy is a set course of treatment aimed at improving a person's health over a course of time, and is done by a certified therapist.

A therapeutic experience is also aimed at improving a person's health, but can be of a unique experience and does not need the presence of others to monitor the effect or value of the experience. Indeed, some find the best therapeutic experiences alone, such as a mountain biker out on a familiar solo ride.

Reed (2003) stated the difference between the two as follows:

- *'Therapeutic is a way of working. It is available to anyone as it is an approach to a thing you do and not a thing or activity itself. This is a subtle but vital distinction. Anyone can do 'therapeutic'.'*
- *'Therapy and medicine are based on research and evidence maintained behind a closely guarded professional boundary. This is needed in order to maintain standards and provide a benchmark for the validation of practice. You can only do 'therapy' if the guards let you pass. Therapy needs empirical evidence, training and proof of competence.'*

Whatever the differences in the labelling of the practice at hand, such experiences be they therapeutic or part of therapy, have the same outcomes and use risk to challenge the participant.

Even though these experiences affect the mental health of the participant, there are some physiological changes which bring about this change in thought. Priest and Gass (1997) examine how the body releases *endorphins* 'a hormone – like chemical released at times of stress.' These endorphins affect the nervous system by dulling down the feelings of pain or energy fatigue. It is these endorphins that are at work when people find themselves in sporting, risky or adventurous situations.

Priest and Gass look at two major reasons as to why people seek out these situations. First, they examine Ellis' (1973) '*optimal arousal theory of play*', where it is stated that a person's performance increases with an increase in that person's arousal, finally reaching an optimum point. After that, anxiety and stress lead to over arousal and performance suffers as a result. It is this optimal arousal that people seek, and 'since adventure is considered adult play' (Priest and Gass, 1997) this has given way to theories such as 'Zuckerman's (1979) identification of sensation seeking as to possible reasons to explain why people test and push their limits by taking risks. (Priest and Gass, 1997)

The second theory refers to Csikszentmihalyi's book titled 'Beyond Boredom and Anxiety', and explores the idea of a flow state.

'Flow describes a state of experience that is engrossing, intrinsically rewarding and outside the parameters of worry and boredom.' (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi 1991, cited Priest and Gass, 1997)

The flow state describes six key reasons as to why such an experience is worthy to the participant:

- 1) Clear goals that are achievable with immediate feedback.
- 2) Fully engrossed in the activity with pure, uninterrupted concentration.
- 3) Consciously screen out potential interruptions and unimportant information.
- 4) Self forgetfulness and heightened awareness of their internal workings.
- 5) Feeling of being in control.
- 6) 'The experience is 'auto telic' – so enjoyable and meaning full that they desire to repeat the activities in hopes of reproducing such a state.

Here, there is an excellent link to Cox's attention focus theory, where points two and three are also the key characteristics of attention focus in sport.

2.2 Mental benefits of the outdoor experience

The use of such therapeutic implications in the outdoors can be labelled as *therapy* **adventure therapy**, but the real underpinning theory of such an activity realises on the participant becoming involved in **experiential learning**.

'While the area of adventure therapy has developed as a discrete addition to the mental health field, many of the origins, principles and philosophies are founded in the field of experiential education.' (Gass, 1993)

Experiential learning is seen as beneficial as it places the student in direct contact with the subject. Gass (1993) explains that: 'All change has some form of experience as a base for

its origin, but experiential learning asks that the learner be placed as close as possible to that origin because this process is often more valuable for the transmission of knowledge than other forms of learning.'

Outdoor sports and the outdoor experience are two very different things which use the same medium but to serve a different purpose. When the word 'sport' is attached to the medium, it brings with it the essence of competition, the thought of a physical challenge and the feelings of success and failure.

Mortlock (2001) says of such experiences:

'Physical strength, power and skill have always been important to me. To express this in the world of the vertical was a delight in being physically alive. It was a conscious delight in my own physical capability, more than in the medium through which it found expression.'

This is an excellent example of the difference between outdoor sport and experience, but not only can Mortlock differentiate between the two he can analyse why.

The outdoors has often been associated with self reliability and the fact that the outdoors is a personal challenge – there are no team mates to help you out, and no excuses to rely on other people for success. The outdoor experience takes into account all of what Mortlock described above, but adapts it to a situation anywhere in the outdoors. The outdoor experience is not only a challenge for the body, but for the mind also. It challenges people to go to the edge of their comfort zone and look at how they feel at that very moment, and as they experience these feelings they will learn more about themselves and grow as a person indefinitely, as the experience has effected them at the emotional level of their true self.

Barnes (1997) analyses why the outdoors is such a useful tool in learning:

*'The reason why the outdoors is used as a learning medium for personal and team development is because, as well as being **fun**, it is so **powerful**.'* (Author's emphasis)

Barnes then lists a number of reasons as to why the outdoors has such an effect on people. The main reasons relevant to this research are:

- The outdoors is an equaliser – it puts everyone on a plateau, with people progressing through emotion.
- Real consequences can be used as learning points – people are in situations where their actions directly effect their well being,

- Everyday concerns are left behind – Learning can be a difficult experience when everyday concerns such as work or financial issues are constantly the back of a person’s mind. By transferring the learning to the outdoor environment and thus detaching it from the ‘real world’ these concerns are left behind.
- Emotions are heightened – Outdoor activities bring emotions, both good and bad, to the surface enabling them to be experienced, shared and built on.

With these in mind, it becomes apparent why the outdoors is so powerful, and why even without realising it, mountain bikers may get something out of each ride.

When partaking in an outdoor experience, this can be labelled as having ‘an adventure’. However, even this is a broad statement, and can be broken down further depending on the situation.

In his first book ‘The Adventure Alternative’ (1984), Mortlock examines four stages of adventure in the outdoor experience which can affect the people involved.

These stages are:

- **Play** – ‘The level of participation is well below the participant’s abilities, and as such has minimal involvement in emotion, skills and concentration. This is usually regarded as ‘pleasant’ or ‘fun’.’
- **Adventure** – ‘The person is in control of the situation, but is using experience and skill to overcome a problem. He is not disturbed by feelings of boredom and lack of involvement, or by the psychological stress of the next stage.’
- **Frontier Adventure** – ‘The person has fear of physical harm and psychological stress and is no longer in control of the situation. His skills are about to be tested, but the outcome is uncertain. The person is on a knife edge of success and failure – if he succeeds he will experience frontier adventure and experience feelings of satisfaction, if not elation. The degree of satisfaction and pride is proportional to the scale and intensity of the experience.’
- **Misadventure** – This is what the person feels if they do not succeed at frontier adventure. The challenge is beyond the control of the person, and ultimately can result in death, but more likely serious injury or psychological harm. This often causes negative and disruptive feelings.’

If mountain bikers do experience escapism and mental freedom, they will have to experience one of the four stages above to escape to, and this will be identifiable through the words they use such as ‘fun’, ‘in control’, ‘stressful’ or ‘painful’.

As stated, one of the main attractions of the outdoor experience is the personal challenge, and the feelings that accompany success. However, success is attainable in many walks of life; the real attraction of the outdoor experience is success because it (physical, psychological or both) with the presence of *risk*.

2.3 The theory of risk in the outdoors

'The definition of risk will provoke varying reactions across different professions. Medical practitioners may be interested in the biological changes which take place in the body when imminent danger makes the adrenal medulla produce the hormones adrenaline and noradrenalin which mobilises the body by, among other things, raising metabolic heart rate and diverting from the skin, stomach and intestines to the limbs...' (Gair, 1997)

The above statement supports Pavlov's stimulus – response theory, in that a certain situation (stimulus) will provide a specific outcome (response).

Wesson, Wiggins et al, (2000) state that;

*'The early behaviourist approach was based on what became known as **stimulus – response theories** or **theories of association** where the 'outcome' or 'product' was more important than the process.'* (Authors emphasis)

However, what this theory did not take into account was the fact that humans think, feel and are adaptable to situations and therefore responses may vary.

Theories supporting this are known as humanistic.

'Our day-to-day activities are not merely inconsequential habits, of no interest to the student of more profound matters, but on the contrary are relevant the explication of quite basic issues in philosophy and social science.' (Giddens, 1997)

As the humanistic view focuses on the components of a person being physical, psychological and emotional, it can be said that the humanist view fits in with escapism, especially to risky or different situations.

Horton (2004) states that;

'When all three (physical, psychological and emotional awareness) come together in a person they become a whole, and this is very empowering – hence why people seek this.'

Miles and Priest (1999) also examined the reasons why people seek out these risky experiences, and cite Brown (1995) as listing the following reasons:

- Increased self esteem
- Increased self confidence
- The exhilaration of overcoming a challenge
- A sense of achievement and well being

- Awareness of new life priorities

It is now notable that these feelings listed above are almost exactly the same feelings required to fulfil the self actualisation level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Therefore, when risk is involved in the outdoor experience, it is an excellent way of encouraging growth in the personality of the participant.

As regards risk taking in mountain biking, Cessford (1995) found that in his study, 51% of experienced mountain bikers listed speed, excitement and risk as a key feature of mountain biking. For the overall study (including intermediate and novice riders) 43% listed these same three as key features. Appreciating the view and scenery was listed by 38% as a top three feature overall. (See appendix 3)

Cessford (1995) also states that not only do mountain bikers seek out and experience risk, but that the level of risk is proportional to the amount of skill and experience of the rider.

'Most riders indicated a preference for experiencing fast downhills, and most indicated these types of experiences were essential to their riding enjoyment. The proportion desiring this was lowest amongst beginners, and those that did desire this, preferred to do so on more smooth and open tracks. With experience, the preference for speed and excitement increased, and the settings preferred for this emphasised rougher and more challenging tracks. Rider preference to mix speed with challenge was most pronounced amongst the experts, some of whom indicated preference for slow technical downhills. This suggested they were prepared to sacrifice the maximising of speed on downhills for a greater technical challenge.' (Cessford, 1995)

Unfortunately, there is little research data available on the specific subject area of mountain biking and escapism, hence the uniqueness of this study.

However, as now stated, there is a significant amount of literature supporting sports psychology and the general benefits of sport. Also as documented, there is a large proportion of outdoor research dedicated to the mental benefits of the outdoor experience. Finally, there is some supporting research into 'why people mountain bike' (Cessford, 1999) with some indication of an underlying desire to escape into the sport.

What this research now aims to do is provide a statement supported by primary research as to whether mountain biking does facilitate escapism, and what the mountain bikers are escaping to or from.

3. RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

3.1 The benefits and forms of research

‘The aim, as far as I can see, is the same in all sciences. Put simply and cursorily, the aim is to make known something previously unknown to human beings. It is to advance human knowledge, to make it more certain or better fitting...The aim is...discovery.’ (Veal cited Elias. 1986)

This statement is an excellent description of the core relevance of research to human beings, and as such justifies this research project.

The benefits of this research will be that the sport of mountain biking will have a clear idea of the mental benefits brought about through escapism to the sport, and offer reasons why people seek this escapism.

There are however, many methods in which data to come to these conclusions can be identify and obtained.

The first form of data collection is shown in the previous chapter of this dissertation, and involves the collection and analysing of information done by previous researchers and is know as **secondary data**. The benefits of this are described by Veal (1986);

‘Clearly, if information is already available which will answer the research question posed, then it would be wasteful of resources to collect new information for that purpose.’

However, if a research project has very little information available (such as this one), then not only does secondary data collection reduce wasted resources, but it examines supporting literature around the subject to help authorise the research’s validity.

‘A fundamental part of any research project is therefore to scour the existing published – and unpublished – sources of information for related research.’ (Veal, 1992)

The relevance of secondary data collection is highlighted by Verma and Beard (cited Bell, 1987);

‘Who suggest that researchers need to; ‘explain relevant relationships between the facts. In other words, the researcher must produce a concept or build a theoretical structure that can explain facts and the relationship between them...The importance of theory is to help the investigator summarize previous information and guide his future course of action. Sometimes the formulation of a theory may indicate missing ideas or links and the kinds of additional data required. Thus, a theory is an essential tool of research in stimulating the advancement of knowledge still further.

Following the identification of secondary data on a subject is the collection of **primary data**.

This form of information is the new data obtained by a researcher, which is to be collaborated, analysed and evaluated alongside the secondary data to provide a conclusion to the research.

Primary data collection is important as it provides the researcher with up to date information that can be specific to an area of study, whereas secondary data may be older, hence results changing over time. The research may also be of little exact relevance to the new topic being studied. Not only this, but primary information guarantees that the researcher is provided with the exact data found, and does not rely solely on the conclusions drawn by others.

Primary data collection can be done in many forms, each depending on the type of information required for the study. This information can be split into two main types; either quantitative or qualitative.

Quantitative data collection aims to collect data in the form of numbers which can be easily quantified to produce clear cut information in charts and graphs. This is useful for providing answers to closed questions such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’, but does not provide room for explanation or reasoning behind the answers.

Qualitative data focuses more on this aspect, using open ended questions to allow the source of the information to explain their answers. Here, the quality of the data takes president over the numeric value of the answer, and as such requires a closer analysis when information is evaluated. For this reason also, the information is difficult to graph or chart.

As this piece of research focuses on people’s individual feelings between mountain biking and escapism, the type of data collected is qualitative, as although it is more difficult to analyse, it allowed people to express their feelings without any boundaries set by the research technique.

3.2 The primary research method

To obtain the data needed for the primary piece of research, it was decided that a questionnaire would be the best source. This was because ‘questionnaires are a good way of collecting certain types of information quickly and relatively cheaply...’ (Bell, 1987).

The questionnaires were handed out at a variety of well known mountain biking locations, these being Hamsterely Forest, Grizedale Forest, Mabie Forest, the Polaris Endurance event (Spring 2004), and Cannock Chase. These locations were identified as collectively they attract every type of mountain biker – cross country racers, downhillers, recreational

riders and endurance athletes. It is quite noticeable how the sport of mountain biking has divided into these set disciplines, and by handing out this questionnaire to them all the results may show a common link between them all as to the benefits of escapism in the sport as a whole.

These locations were also chosen as they were easily accessible, and well advertised and known amongst the mountain biking community so as to ensure a good return on the questionnaires given out.

The people that the questionnaires were handed out to were not specific in terms of gender, age, race, experience or discipline. Whilst the questionnaires were being given out, they were distributed fairly equally between representatives of all of the above groups.

It was also decided that the sample size that the questionnaires would be given out to would be thirty five people.

This was based upon the three – fold criteria suggested by Veal (1992) of;

- the required level of precision in the results
- the level of detail in the proposed analysis
- the available budget

It was deemed that the precision of the results was not to pin point a specific theory behind each individual discipline, nor in different environments (racing, recreational or instructional), but the aim was to identify a basic trend between all the disciplines to give a basic answer to the research question with some information as to its origins. This meant that the sample size would be fairly small, but the level of detail from each questionnaire would be quite high, using around twenty questions to obtain some quite personal information.

Finally, the budget of printing the questionnaires and travelling to these various locations also played a big part in the actual size of the sample. It was deemed that all the questionnaires should be handed out in the presence of the researcher to ensure the subject was clear on the meaning of all the questions, and eliminate any variables that may occur through misinterpretation. This and the lower return rate on posted and an e-mailed questionnaire was why the information was collected in this way.

The use of the questionnaire classifies this research as empirical as the conclusions which were drawn are ‘based on data, or specifically collected information.’ (Veal, 1992)

The questionnaire itself was comprised of twenty one questions aimed at retrieving information around the topic of mountain biking and the feelings and thoughts of the participant before, during and after a ride. (See appendix 4)

The questions themselves came in a selection of forms; either open or closed (in a variety of styles) or using a likert scale to indicate degrees of preference, as shown below:

1	2	3	4	5
Stressed	Worried	O.K	Fairly Relaxed	Completely At Peace

The likert scales were especially effective as they were easy to code and display when it comes to analysing the data.

The questionnaire starts with some fairly basic ‘closed’ questions in order to firstly obtain some background data and to relax the participant into the mind frame of answering questions. It then develops into a mix of open questions; as this allows the respondent ‘to give their own views on the topic being researched’ (Bell, 1987) lists, scales and grids.

3.3 The Pilot Study

Before the final data collection took place, it seemed necessary to conduct a pilot study to determine the appropriateness of the use of a questionnaire and the format of the questionnaire on obtaining the correct information to answer the research subject.

Veal (1992) states that: ‘It is always advisable to carry out one or more pilot surveys before embarking on the main data collection exercise.’

The aim of the pilot study was to identify the suitability of the questionnaires wording, layout, and sequencing; to identify a response rate and estimated time period for completion and to analyse the data interpretation from the questions. The pilot study questionnaire can be (seen in appendix 5)

The pilot study took place at the visitor centre of Grizedale Forest on a Sunday afternoon, and collected data from ten respondents.

On speaking with the cycle hire assistant, it became apparent that the best time to do such research would be Saturday afternoons as this is when it is busiest.

From the pilot study, it was decided that the questionnaire needed slightly more spacing out to answer the questions, as some answers were written quite small.

Most of the questions in the pilot study made the final draft, apart from question fourteen which was disposed of due to the generalisation of the answers it created.

Question seven grew to include a larger choice of answers, and also allowed the respondent to choose two describing words. Question 15 changed to using a table to allow easier box ticking, and a similar table was added to gather the same information *before* a ride.

The pilot study was conducted in a way similar to an interview with the researcher asking the questions to the respondent. However, this was quite time consuming, and only allowed for one questionnaire to be filled in at a time. Therefore, it was also decided that with the relevant changes, the questionnaire would be understood clearly enough to allow the respondent to complete the research without the questions being verbalised to them.

3.4 The Data Collection Process

Following the results of the pilot study it was possible to conduct the final survey in a way that would retrieve the most accurate data in a safe and efficient way.

Before setting out to any of the locations to obtain data, a risk assessment was completed to safe guard the researcher whilst at work. (See appendix 6)

The questionnaire was handed out to mountain bikers after they had just completed a ride. This is important as the feelings they had experienced were fresh in their mind.

Also, the questionnaires were filled out by the mountain bikers when alone, so as to not be influenced by other people.

As stated before, the final data collection process was not dependent on specific gender, race or experience knowledge, and as such the questionnaire was handed out to gain a sample view from every demographic.

There are however, some external factors that may affect the responses to the questionnaire. For example, if a rider was in a negative mood following a crash or bad weather before giving information, then there may be the possibility of slightly negative answers. This was combated by allowing the rider some freedom in their answers to look at past rides as examples of their feelings as well as the ones they had just experienced.

Also, the weather may have played a great part in influencing the respondents, as this affects both the rider and the environment they are in.

3.5 Data Interpretation

Once all the data had been collected in through the questionnaires, it then need to be analysed correctly to identify the results.

These results on their own may mean very little, but it is the 'similarities and differences for groupings, patterns and items of particular significance' (Bell, 1987) that will lead to the conclusions.

To display this information and search for such similarities, it was necessary to put the data into an easier form to understand and observe – a graph, chart or table. To do this the Windows SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) package was used.

However, as some of the questions are completely open in the aim to extract the personal views of the mountain bikers without the boundaries of a question, these were analysed individually and categorised in relation to the answers given.

The variables to which this package identifies the separate answers were identified by the answers given by the respondents. This allowed the respondents full input into their answers without the boundaries of set answers to choose from.

To code this data, some answers have been grouped together, for example positive feedback may have been labelled as 'good' without the actual word being written as such. However, if an answer is specifically unique it is included as another variable in the coding.

When graphing the results from the tabled questions, each section was given its own graph to highlight the data it presents.

The data is presented in a simple pie chart form so that the results are easily displayed. Throughout the pie charts, some of the colours representing the variables change, and this is due only to the nature of the SPSS program.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Results database

Nearly all of the information gathered from the questionnaires has been coded and graphed so that it can be easily displayed and analysed in a graph form.

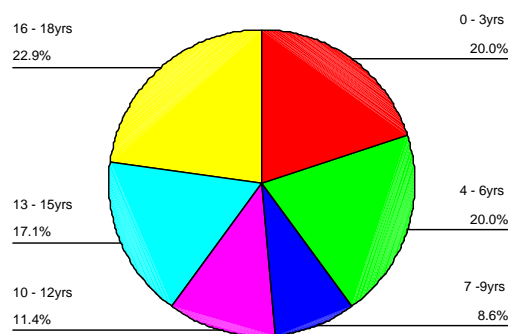
This was made possible through the use of the SPSS package, however question 20 asked for an in-depth opinionated response, and because of this it was too difficult to code into the database. Therefore, the answers to this question are reviewed the next chapter.

Also, as question seven asked for two responses, the answers have been sub-categorised into 7.1 and 7.2.

The answers to the tabled questions are categorised as 12.1 to 12.9 and 16.1 to 16.9.

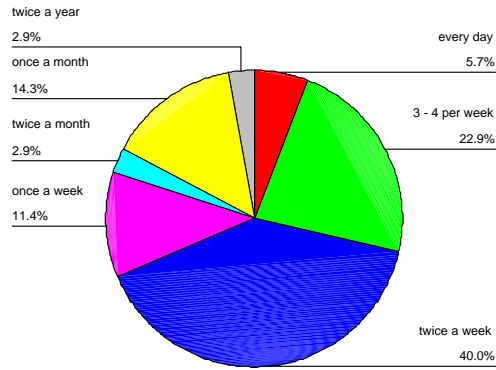
The graphs shown in this section are the ones that provided the most significant results for analysis. However, the questions that are not shown are graphed and located in appendix section 7, and may be referred to for comparison during the results analysis section of this paper.

Qu.1 How long have you been mountain biking for?



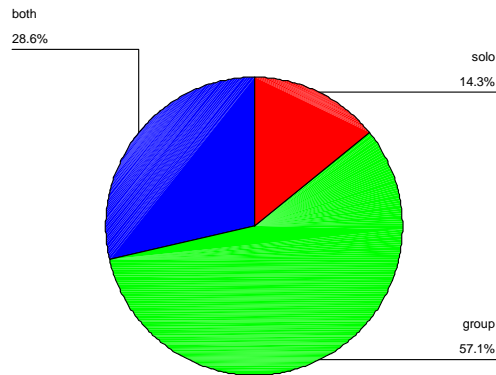
This graph shows that the experience of the people who filled in the questionnaire was quite evenly spread, and that the information collected was not biased due to the experience of the respondents.

Qu.2 How often do you go mountain biking?



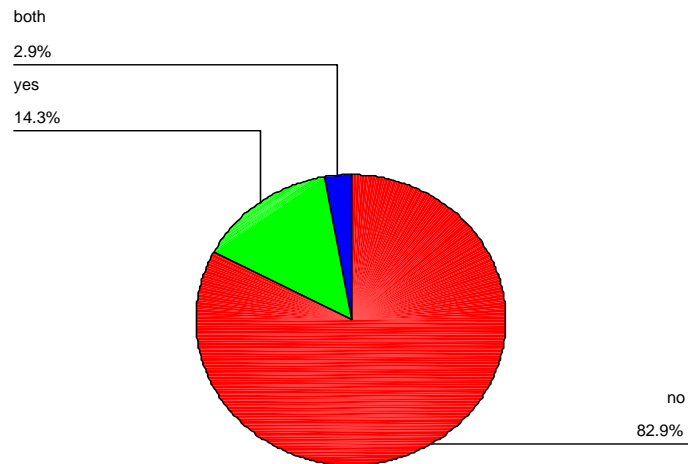
Again, this graph validates the legitimacy of the information obtained by showing that the majority (40%) of the respondents ride their bikes at least twice a week, hence showing that the information was gathered from current sources.

Qu.5 Do you usually ride solo or in a group?



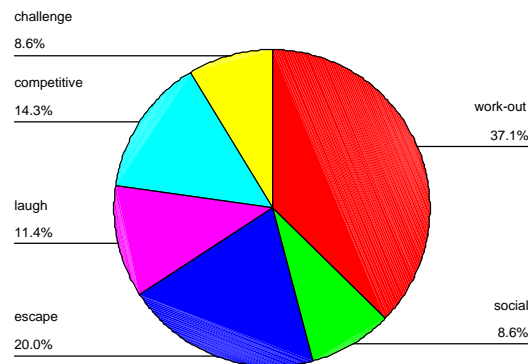
The graph above shows that the majority 57% of riders prefer to ride in a group with only 14% choosing to ride solo. 29% said they enjoyed riding both solo and in a group.

Qu.6 Do you work with this group?



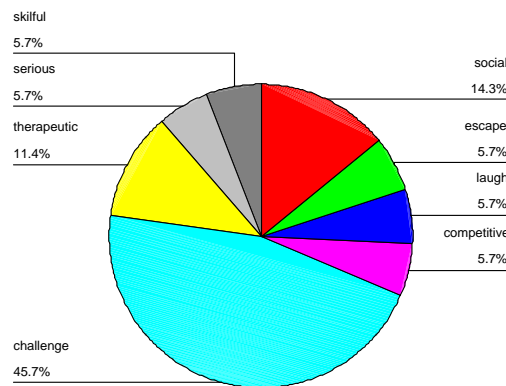
Of those that rode in a group, 82% indicated that they do not work with this group. Only 14% did work with this group and 2.9% did both.

Qu.7.1 Choose a word that best describes mountain biking to you.



The most common descriptive word that people first used in relation to mountain biking was 'work-out' with 37%. This was surprisingly followed with 'escape' with 20% and 'competitive' with 14%.

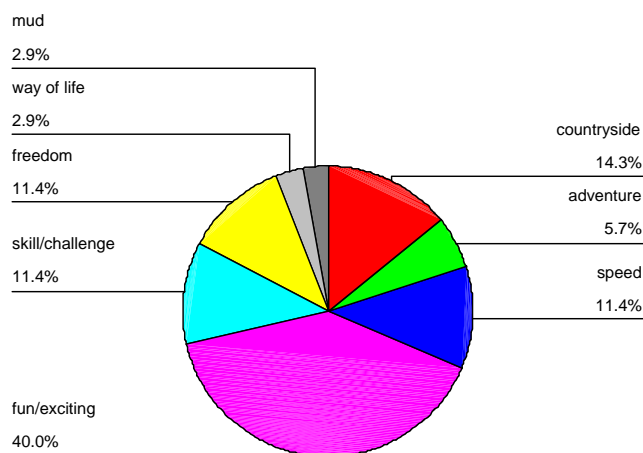
Qu.7.2 Choose a second word that best describes mountain biking to you.



When choosing a second word, 47% of the respondents described mountain biking as a 'challenge', followed by 'social' with 14% and 'therapeutic' with 11%.

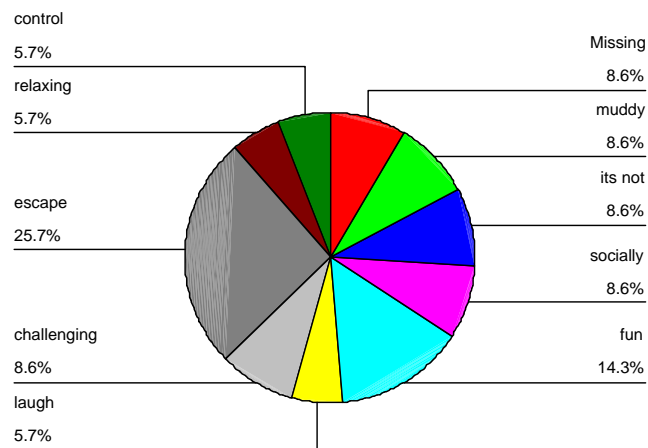
With the combination of the percentages from questions 7a and 7b, the most chosen descriptive word for mountain biking was 'challenge' with 28% followed by 'work-out' with 18% and 'escape' with 14%. The least chosen words were 'skilful' and 'serious' with only 4% of the total votes.

Qu.8 What appeals to you most about mountain biking compared to other sports?



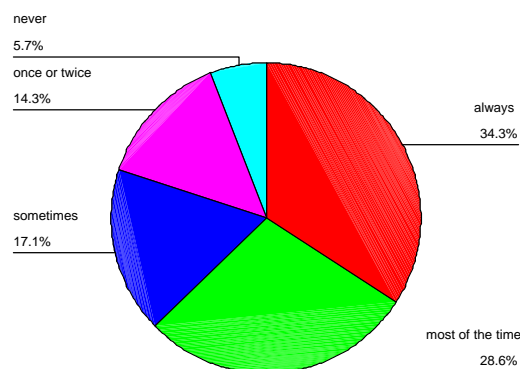
This graph shows that the majority of the respondents asked (40%) thought that the 'excitement' was the most enjoyable thing about mountain biking compared to other sports. This was shortly followed by 'being in the countryside' with 14% and 'skill/challenge', 'speed' and 'freedom' with 11%.

Qu.11 How is the mountain bike environment different from these?



From this question we learn that almost 26% of people view mountain biking as an 'escape' from their usual environments. This is followed by 14% of the respondents classing 'fun' as the difference from their usual setting. Surprisingly, the rest of the results from this graph are quite equally split with 'socially', 'muddy', 'challenging' and 'its not' gaining almost nine percent of the votes each.

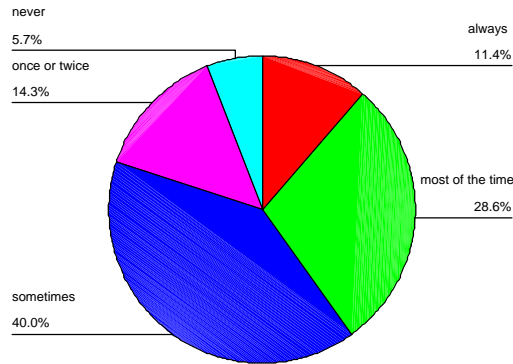
Qu.12.1 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Day Ahead



This graph and the following ones in section 12, displays information relating to how often the respondent thinks about certain subjects during the day. Similar information is also obtained later in section 16 in relation to what they think about during a ride to see the comparison between the two.

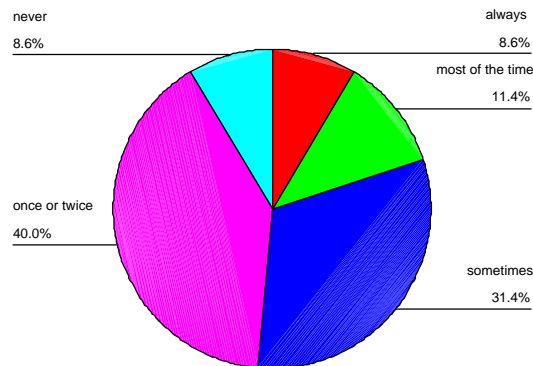
This graph shows us that 34% always think about the day ahead, whilst 28% think about it most of the time. Only 6% never think about the day ahead.

Qu.12.2 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Work



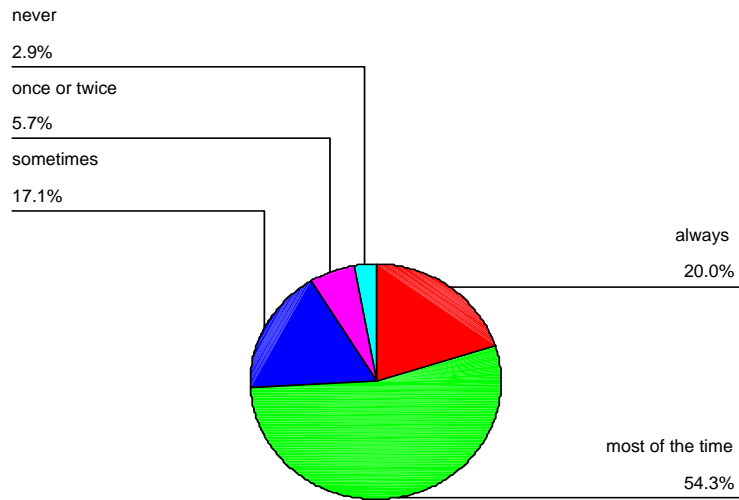
The graph above demonstrates that during a normal day, 40% of the respondents think about work only sometimes, with only 27% thinking about work most of the time.

Qu.12.4 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Danger



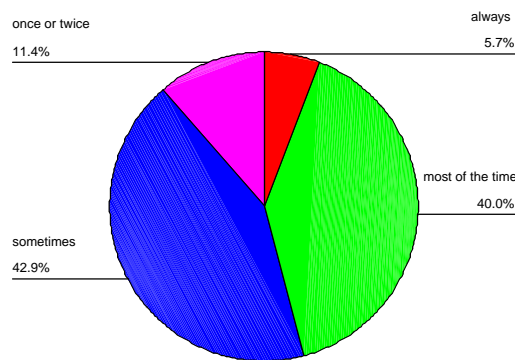
From this set of results we learn that in a normal day, 40% of the respondents thought about danger once or twice, followed shortly by 31% thinking about the danger of their environment 'sometimes'.

Qu.12.5 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Surroundings



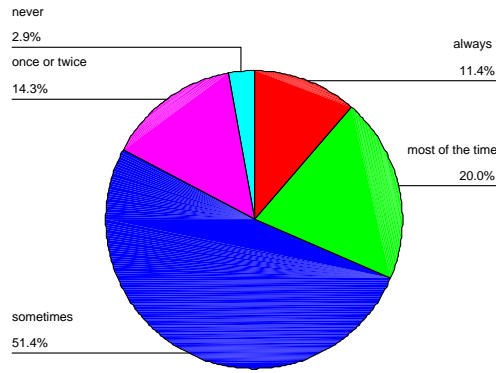
This graph demonstrates that even though not in the mountain bike environment, 54% of the respondents were aware of their surroundings 'most of the time', and only 3% 'never' thought about their surroundings.

Qu.12.6 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Home



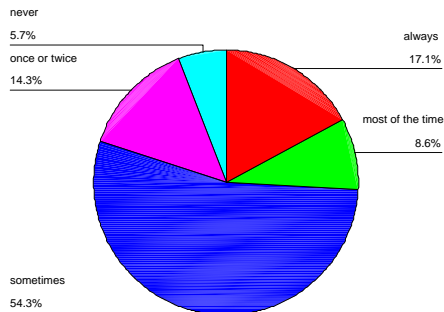
Here, the graph above demonstrates that generally, 42% of the respondents thought about home 'sometimes' and 40% thought about home 'most of the time'. None of the respondents 'never' thought about home.

Qu.12.7 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Weather



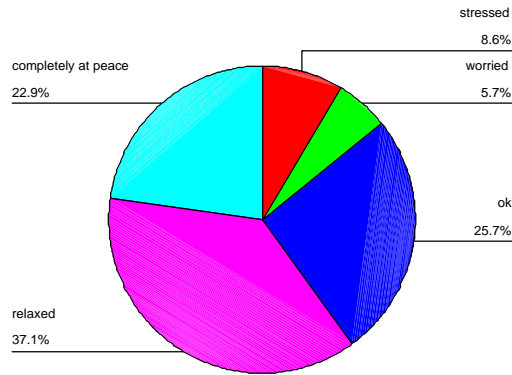
This graph shows that over half (51.4%) of the respondents only thought about the weather 'sometimes' during the day. Only 2.9% 'never' thought about it, and 11.4% of the respondents 'always' thought about it.

Qu.12.8 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Money



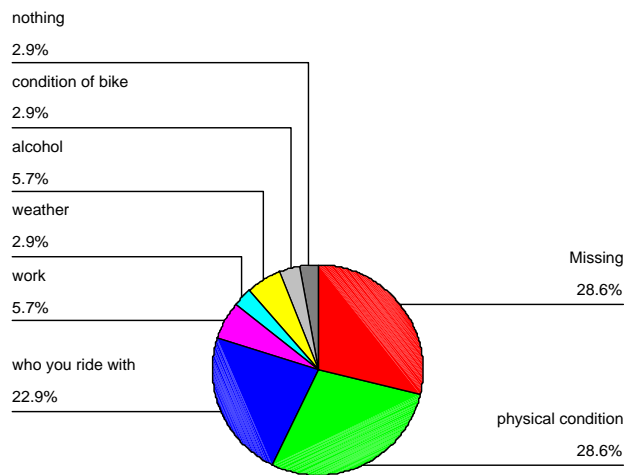
The graph above shows us that out of all the respondents, 54% of them only thought about money 'sometimes'. 17% of the respondents stated that they 'always' think about money.

Qu.13 How would you say you mentally felt *before* this ride?



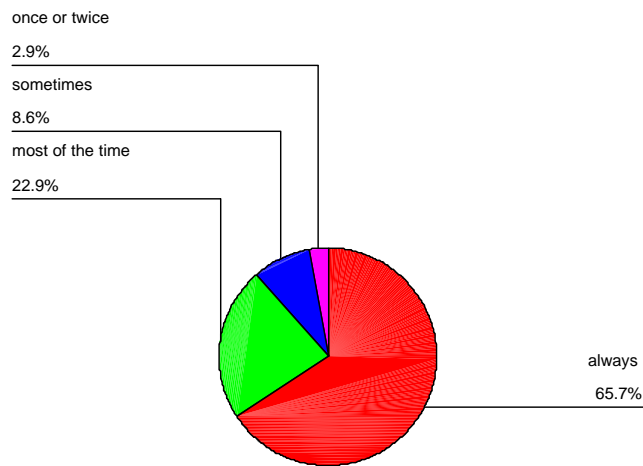
This graph shows that of all the respondents, 37% would describe their mental state before the ride as ‘relaxed’. Interestingly, there were more respondents who stated that they were ‘stressed’ (8.6%) than ‘worried’ (5.7%).

Qu.15 What else do you think could influence this feeling?



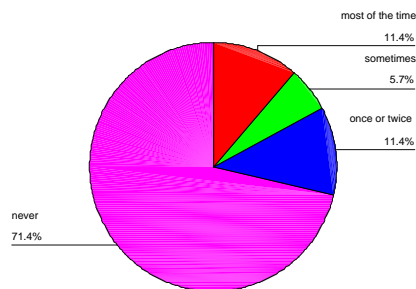
This graph indicates that of all the factors that could affect the rider’s mental state, their ‘physical condition’ received the most votes with 28.6%. This was closely followed with ‘who you ride with’ with 22.9%. However, a large percentage of respondents (28.6%) gave no answer at all. The remaining effecting factors were fairly evenly split, with ‘nothing’, ‘bike condition’ and ‘weather’ each receiving 2.9%; and ‘work’ and ‘alcohol’ receiving 5.7%.

Qu.16.1 During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Route Ahead



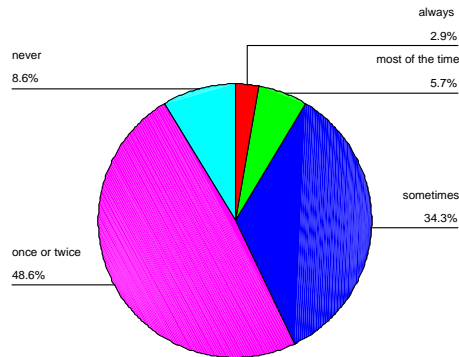
Here the graph shows that during the ride, over 66% of the respondents stated 'always' in answer to the question. Almost 23% of the respondents quoted 'most of the time', and no one stated 'never'.

Qu.16.2 During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Work



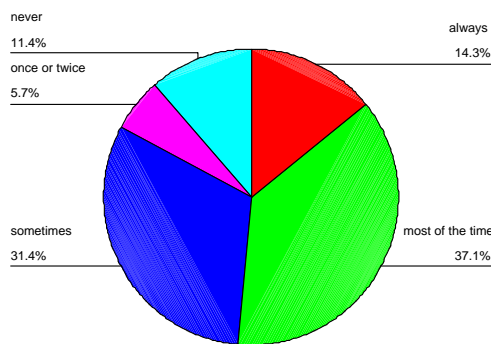
This graph shows that during the ride, almost 72% of the respondents 'never' thought about work during the whole ride. No one answered 'always'.

Qu.16.4 During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Falling Off



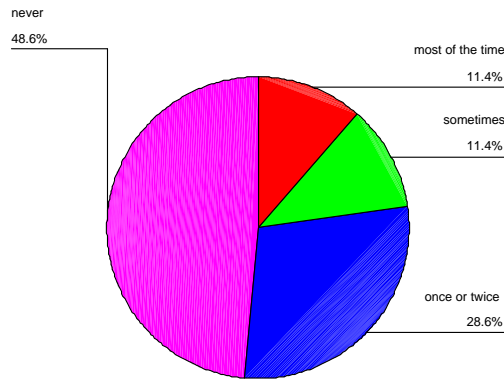
This graph demonstrates that whereas danger is a big part of the sport, 48.6% of the respondents thought about falling off only 'once or twice', shortly followed by 34.3% saying 'sometimes'. Interestingly, more people (8.6%) stated 'never', whereas only 5.7% stated 'always'.

Qu.16.5 During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Surroundings



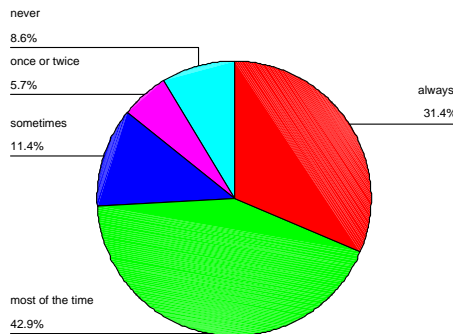
Here, the graph above shows that the majority of respondents (37.1%) were aware of their surroundings 'most of the time' throughout the ride. This is closely followed by 31.4% listing 'sometimes' in answer to this question. The most noticeable figure states that 11.4% of the respondents 'never' thought about their surroundings.

Qu.16.6 During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Home



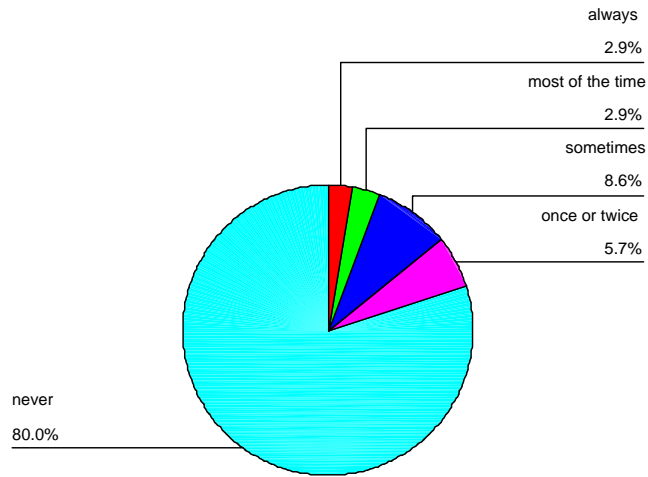
Not surprisingly, during the ride 48.6% of the respondents said they 'never' thought about home during the ride. This was closely followed by 28.6% stating 'once or twice'. No one stated that they 'always' thought about home.

Qu.16.7 During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Weather



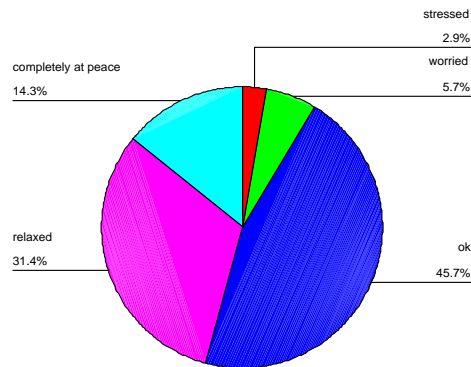
In this graph it is clear that the topic of the weather is a major issue to mountain bikers. 31.4% of the respondents stated that they 'always' thought about the weather, with the majority (42.9%) stating that they thought about the weather 'most of the time'.

Qu.16.8 During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Money



This graph states that out of all the respondents, 80% 'never' thought about money during the entire ride. The nearest to follow this was 'sometimes' with only 8.6%.

Qu.17 How would you say you mentally felt *during* the ride?



The graph above shows that during the ride, almost half (45.7%) of the respondents stated that they felt mentally 'ok' during the ride. This was followed by 31.4% stating that they felt 'relaxed'. Only 2.9% said they felt 'stressed throughout the ride'.

Qu.19 How would you say you mentally feel *after* the ride?



Here the graph above shows us that after the ride, over half (51.4%) of the respondents said they felt 'relaxed', followed by 34.3% stating that they felt 'completely at peace'.

Only 2.9% said they felt 'stressed'.

5. RESULTS ANALYSIS

5.1 Results Validity

The results that have been obtained from the questionnaires have produced some interesting information as to the actual mental benefits of mountain biking. Most of the information gathered was completed accurately and honestly, however there were some answers that were given that were slightly confusing. This may have been deliberate by the respondents, as some mountain bikers tend to have a light hearted approach to reading and writing due purely to the nature of their character.

5.2 Information analysis and comparison

As stated in the earlier chapter, question one identifies that the respondents to the questionnaire were of varying experience. This is especially important to clarify as it shows that the results are not affected by the experience of the respondent. However, the study of whether experience affects the mental benefits of a mountain biker may prove to be a good follow up research project to this paper.

The validity of the information obtained is again reinforced by the results of question two, showing that 40% of the respondents go mountain biking at least twice a week. Because of this, it means that the respondents are serious about the sport, and have given fairly accurate and up to date information.

Question three (see appendix 7.1) showed that 34.3% of the respondents rode mainly in the North East of England, followed by 22.9% riding in Yorkshire. This result is mainly due to the places where the research took place, and a different result may appear if the research was done elsewhere. However, the research does show that the respondents were from all round the country including Wales, the Cotswolds and the Peak District. Question four (see appendix 7.2) highlights that not only were the respondents from all over Britain, but that they were keen to stay in this country for their riding. 48% of the respondents said that they would like to or do mainly visit other places in Britain for their biking, followed by 22.9% stating the Alps as their chosen destination. This is not surprising, as Britain has a great variety of terrain to ride, and the Alps provides some easily accessible foreign riding. Unlike other sports, mountain biking can be difficult to partake in abroad due to the cumbersome nature of moving bikes safely in transport.

Question five highlights the fact that most riders (57.1%) partake in the sport in a social group, or occasionally solo (28.6%). Of those who ride in a group, 82.9% do not work

with this group, indicating a separation in their socialising, and hence an escape to a different social interaction.

Questions 7.1 and 7.2 asked the respondents to select two words that describe mountain biking best to them. The first most chosen word was 'work-out' suggesting that the mountain biking environment is a physical escape to something not found elsewhere in their lives, and this is backed up by the fact that the second first chosen word was 'escape' with 20%.

The second part of this question shows that the 'challenge' is the most popular second choice word with 45.7%. This is followed by 'social' and 'therapeutic', all of which suggesting that the respondents get something out of the sport that is not usual to their lifestyle.

Overall, the 'challenge' was the most popular word with 28%, and this also fits in with the answers from question eight that states that the most appealing thing about mountain biking compared to other sports is the excitement, with 40% of the votes.

Following this result, the respondents listed quite a lot of different appealing factors such as 'freedom', 'way of life' and 'mud'. This suggests that each of the respondents has different reasons for participating in the sport, although all of them are positive and more about the feelings generated than the physical actions.

Questions nine (see appendix 7.3) and ten (see appendix 7.4) examined how the respondents would describe their work and home environments, respectively with question eleven asking how the mountain biking environment is different from these. Question nine found that the most popular word choice was 'boring' with 17.1% and 'hard' with 14.3%. These suggest that the respondents have something to escape from, especially if their work does not provide the excitement and danger element that biking does.

Question ten shows that again, when in a usual environment such as at home, 34.3% of the respondents chose to describe this environment as 'homely' i.e. warm, safe and cosy. Also, 25.7% said their home environment was 'busy'. For either reason, a change in both environments will provide both the social and excitement needs that question seven has identified. This is reinforced by the findings of question eleven that shows that the main difference to the respondents in the mountain bike environment is the 'escape' that is experienced with 25.7%, followed by 14.3% identifying the difference as the 'fun'.

Question twelve was set out as a table in the questionnaire, but for analysis purposes it proved more beneficial to see the data in graph form. Because of this, each section was divided, to be compared with the information obtained from asking the same questions during the ride in section sixteen.

Question 12.1 shows that 34.3% of the respondents 'always' thought about the day ahead, with 28.6% thinking about it 'most of the time'. However, when compared to the respondents thought during the ride 65.7% indicated that they 'always' thought about the route ahead – a rise of 31.4%. This shows that when mountain biking, the participants have to concentrate more on the future and their direction for the day.

Question 12.2 shows us that in a general day, 40% of the respondents think about 'work' most of the day or more. However, when out riding, 71.4% 'never' think about work at all. This shows how the riders are able to shut off from their regular train of thought, again showing an escape out of the usual routine, and supports the findings of question nine that the sport is an escape where there is no need to think about the usual routine.

Question 12.3 (see appendix 7.5) might explain why so many of the riders don't think about work too often. 17.1% of the respondents indicated that 'always' think about their bike, with the majority 34.3% thinking about it 'most of the time'. However, for all the thinking about their bikes usually, the percentage that 'always' thought about their bikes increased only slightly by 5.8% to 22.9% when out on a ride (Qu.16.3 – see appendix 7.8). This shows that the respondents spend more time thinking of the escape until they are actually there.

Question 12.4 demonstrates that usually, 40% of the respondents think about danger only 'once or twice a day', yet when they are actually on their bikes this only rises by 8.6% (Qu.16.4). Therefore, it is the reason that they escape to mountain biking is not due to danger or falling off.

What is apparent from the next question however, is that the respondents were quite aware of their surroundings both generally and when out on their bikes. Question 12.5 states that generally, 54.3% thought about their surroundings 'most of the time', although this dropped to 37.1% whilst out on the ride (Qu.16.5). 20% generally 'always' thought about their surroundings, but this also dropped slightly to 14.3%.

This drop in awareness of the surroundings may have been due to the intense excitation of the situation, allowing the participants to focus their attention to the task at hand.

Question 12.6 the findings of question ten, in that normally, 42.9% of the respondents thought about home 'sometimes', followed by 40% who thought about home 'most of the time'. However, as question 16.6 indicates when out on the bike 48.6% stated that they 'never' thought about home, again supporting the fact that the sport is an escape both physically and mentally from regular life.

The results from question 12.7 and 16.7 support the earlier findings that although mountain bikers are aware of their environment and weather; this awareness is not as enhanced as would be expected.

For example, question 12.7 identifies that 51.4% generally think about the weather 'sometimes', whereas when on the bike the majority 42.9% only think about the weather 'most of the time'. Again, once out on the ride this supports the fact that the riders are engrossed into the escape and the activity, hence why there is not a significant rise in the identification of the changing environment around them.

Questions 12.8 and 16.8 again identify the shift from regular life. 54.3% of the respondents stated that they thought about money 'sometimes', with 17.1% stating 'always'. However, once out on a ride, this great motivating factor for which everyone works becomes insignificant, with 80% stating that during a ride, they 'never' thought about money. The nearest percentage to this was 'sometimes' with 8.6%.

Question 12.9 (see appendix 7.6) shows us that generally, the respondents were quite keen on maintaining their physical condition, with 54.3% thinking about it 'most of the time'. However, once out on the ride, question 16.9 (see appendix 7.9) shows us that this drops to 25.7%. Again, once on the activity the variation in thought from usual is quite significant due to the intensity of the situation.

Before the ride, question thirteen shows us that a 37.1% majority felt 'relaxed', and of the respondents that answered, 71.4% said this was a common feeling before any ride as illustrated in question fourteen (see appendix 7.7). During the ride however, this percentage drops slightly to 31.4% with the majority of people feeling 'ok'.

In question fifteen, the respondents were asked to give reasons behind these feelings before the ride with 28.6% listing 'physical condition' and 22.9% listing 'who you ride with.' However, when asked a similar question following the ride, these topics were not listed. When asked why the change in answers in question 18 (see appendix 7.10), the majority of 54.3% were unsure as to the reason and left the answer blank, but a remaining 25.7% stated that the weather may have been a factor. It is notable that the weather was particularly bad at one research site in Yorkshire.

Once the ride was over however, it is notable that the majority of people (51.4%) again felt relaxed, with 34.3% feeling 'completely at peace'. This is due to the not only the rejuvenating properties of the sport, but also the release of tension afterwards.

When asked to comment in their own words as to how they felt after the ride in question twenty, nearly all of the comments were positive.

Some of the comments include:

‘Better than I felt before it’

‘Super chilled’

‘Buzzing/on a high’

‘Relaxed, contented, tired, elated’

‘Confident’

‘Relaxed, fulfilled, satisfied’

‘Alive’

It is obvious from these comments that the experience certainly has a positive effect on the participants, and that the escape to this situation has a good effect on their lives.

This is highlighted in question 21 (see appendix 7.11), where the majority of the percentage (25.7%) went to those who stated that ‘mountain biking is my life’, shortly followed by ‘social’ (14.3%) as to how it effects their lives. It is this underlying devotion and motivation to the sport that puts the emphasis on the quality of the experience that these people are encountering and searching for.

6) CONCLUSIONS

One of the most important and yet often overlooked learning experiences is not in the activity itself, but in the review and the reflection on the event afterwards.

And, with that in mind, it is now possible to complete this journey of investigation and bring the findings to a clear end.

The aim of this study was to lead an investigation into the sport of mountain biking and the benefits it brings in terms of escapism and mental freedom via the use of both primary and secondary research.

The beginning of this paper highlighted the fact that even just the physical act of being in the outdoor environment can have a profound effect upon a subject. This escape itself to the natural environment removes that subject both physically and mentally from the everyday life that they are used to, clearing their mind and increasing mental wellbeing. Here, the person is 're-created' as suggested by Wesson, Wiggins et al, (2000).

However, when this feeling is coupled with the sport of mountain biking, the end results can be quite outstanding.

As the main body of research has shown, the act of venturing out on the mountain bike puts a person in an amazing position – they are in complete control of their actions, speed and direction. They are often in the 'adventure' or 'frontier adventure' stage of the experience as described by Mortlock (1984)

This is very empowering, but also weighs a lot of responsibility on the shoulders of that person and as such can create quite an intense situation. Because of this, the subject is affected by the attention focus, as stated by Cox (1985). This is evident in the primary research that showed that the thoughts of regular life such as work, money and home virtually vanish when out on the dirt.

What the mountain bike experience also allows, and indeed what people seek according to the research is the social interaction found when riding in a group. These social groups not only offer escape from the usual social environments of work and home, but they allow a group to form to share the experience.

Interestingly, whereas the research has shown that mountain bikers do enjoy the therapeutic, challenging and escapism parts of the sport, there is little mention of the desire to seek technical excellence in terms of skill acquisition, which is unexpected due to the technical requirements of the sport.

Also, whereas the danger element of the sport was not as prevailing in the research as one might expect; the use of the word 'excitement' was used on many occasions. Therefore, it is not the escape to the danger that the mountain bikers seek, but the combined feeling of pressure, freedom and the carefree feeling that engulfs each rider as they swing their leg over the saddle.

From these conclusions, it is now possible to confirm that mountain biking does indeed promote escapism – but what exactly are they escaping from, or to?

The answer to this lies in each individual who puts their foot to the pedal. What this piece of research has done has highlighted quite clearly that there are many motivating factors for a person to blaze a trail off into the sunset. It could be the boring job, the hectic life at home or the lack of social interaction; the need to experience excitement, the personal challenge or the sense of achievement.

These feelings that have been described above are those that the respondents listed in the primary research. Interestingly, these are the same feelings as identified by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and hence it is possible to say that mountain biking supports and fits this theory.

Whatever feeling it is that the rider is seeking; they know they are sure to find it somewhere in the sport. They are able to escape to an environment where they are the master of their physical, mental and emotional states, which is becoming rarer and rarer in a socialised, materialistic world.

The mountain bike is definitely a physical vehicle, but more than that, it is a metaphorical vehicle for the participants to move to a place where they can experience and hence learn more about themselves, thus filtering this into the rest of their lives.

The escape, as always is the search for the ride where the sun shines and the trails are baked hard. You laugh, you cry, and you live every monumental second for that feeling of freedom as you flow in unison with your bike to wherever you want to be.

Keep searching, and ride free.

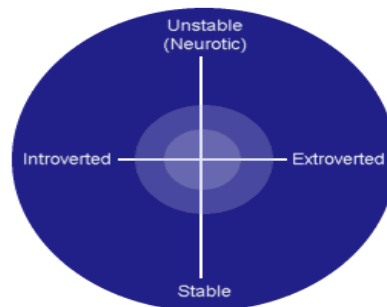
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8. APPENDICIES

Appendix One



Hans Eysenck's Structure of Personality

(<http://www.allpsych.com/personalitysynopsis/eysenck.html>)

Appendix Two



Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

(<http://www.lifeworktransitions.com/exercises/part1/mazlow.html>)

Appendix Three

MOUNTAIN BIKING FEATURES (the top three features)	TOTAL %	Beginners (combined)	Moderately experienced	Have much experience	Expert/very experienced
Speed/excitement/risk	43	17	43	46	51
Exercise/fitness workout	42	59	48	44	23
Appreciating views/scenery/nature	38	47	37	39	31
Exploring new areas	33	34	42	33	23

[Gordan Cessford](#), Department of Conservation, New Zealand. 1995

(<http://www.mountainbike.co.nz/politics/doc/profile/index.htm>)

Appendix Four Mountain Biking Questionnaire

- 1) How long have you been mountain biking for?
- 2) How often do you go mountain biking?
- 3) Where do you usually go mountain biking?
- 4) Are there any other areas you have/would like to visit?
- 5) Do you normally ride solo or in a group?
- 6) Do you work with this group/why ride solo?
- 7) Choose two words from below which best describes mountain biking to you:

Work-out Social Escape Laugh Identity Competitive Challenge
Therapeutic Serious Hard Skilful Gentle Tiring Boring

- 8) What appeals to you most about mountain biking compared to other sports?
- 9) How would you describe your work environment?
- 10) How would you describe your home environment?
- 11) How is the mountain bike environment different from these?

12) Generally, indicate how often you think about the following:

	1	2	3	4	5
	Always	Most Of	Sometimes	Once or	Never
	The Time		Twice		
<i>Day Ahead</i>					
<i>Work</i>					
<i>Your bike</i>					
<i>Danger</i>					
<i>Surroundings</i>					
<i>Home</i>					
<i>Weather</i>					
<i>Money</i>					
<i>Physical Condition</i>					

13) Using the scale below, how would you say you felt mentally *before* this ride?

1	2	3	4	5
Stressed	Worried	O.K	Fairly Relaxed	Completely At Peace

14) Is this a common feeling before a ride?

15) What else do you think could influence this feeling?

16) During the past ride, indicate how often you think about the following:

	1	2	3	4	5
	Always	Most Of	Sometimes	Once or	Never
	The Time		Twice		
<i>Route Ahead</i>					
<i>Work</i>					
<i>Your bike</i>					
<i>Falling Off</i>					
<i>Surroundings</i>					
<i>Home</i>					
<i>Weather</i>					
<i>Money</i>					
<i>Physical Condition</i>					

17) Using the scale below, how would you say you generally felt mentally *during* this ride?

1	2	3	4	5
Stressed	Worried	O.K	Relaxed	Completely At Peace

18) If the above answer is different from your answer in question 13, why do you think this is?

19) Using the scale below, how would you say you now feel mentally *after* this ride?

1	2	3	4	5
Stressed	Worried	O.K	Relaxed	Completely At Peace

20) Looking back on this ride (and previous rides), how would you describe how you generally feel mentally after a ride, in your own words?

21) How do you think mountain biking affects your regular life?

- 1) How long have you been mountain biking for?
- 2) How often do you go mountain biking?
- 3) Where do you usually go mountain biking?
- 4) Are there any other areas you have/would like to visit? – Why?
- 5) Do you ride solo or in a group?
- 6) Do you work with this group/why ride solo?
- 7) Choose a word from below which best describes mountain biking to you:
Work-out Social Escape Laugh Identity Competitive
- 8) What appeals to you most about mountain biking compared to other sports?
- 9) How would you describe your work environment?
- 10) How would you describe your home environment?
- 11) How is the mountain bike environment different from these?
- 12) Is this a good change? Give reasons for your answer.
- 13) Using the scale below, how would you say you felt mentally *before* this ride?

1	2	3	4	5
Stressed	Worried	O.K	Fairly Relaxed	Completely At Peace

- 14) Is this a common feeling before a ride?
- 15) During the past ride, indicate how often you think about the following:

1	2	3	4	5
Always	Most Of The Time	Sometimes	Once or Twice	Never

Day Ahead
Work
Your bike
Danger
Surroundings
Home
Weather
Money
Physical Condition

16) Using the scale below, how would you say you generally felt mentally *during* this ride?

1	2	3	4	5
Stressed	Worried	O.K	Relaxed	Completely At Peace

17) If the above answer is different from your answer in question 13, why do you think this is?

18) Using the scale below, how would you say you now feel mentally *after* this ride?

1	2	3	4	5
Stressed	Worried	O.K	Relaxed	Completely At Peace

19) Looking back on this ride (and previous rides), how would you describe how you generally feel mentally after a ride, in your own words?

20) How do you think mountain biking affects your regular life?

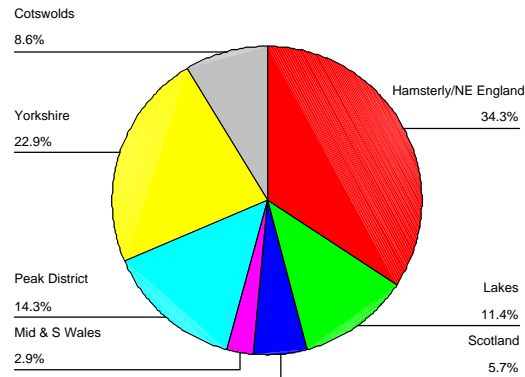
Appendix Six**RISK ASSESSMENT FORM**Date: 20th November 2004 Assessor: Glen Probert

Activity: Dissertation Research

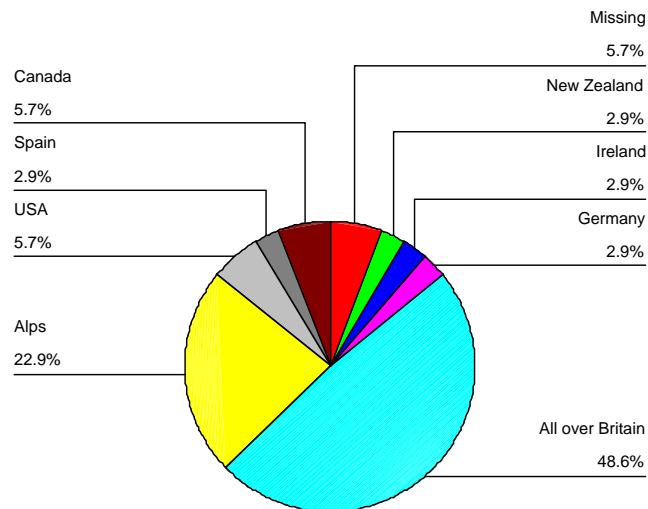
Hazards	People Affected	Control Measures	Risk	Deadline Date
Injury through travelling on rough terrain	Researcher	Always have an accompanying second party when doing research	Low	Ongoing
Transportation difficulties	Researcher	Always have an accompanying second party when doing research. Inform dissertation tutor when research will take place and where.	Low	Ongoing
Bad weather causes difficult travelling conditions	Researcher	Check weather two days before the research. Inform dissertation tutor when research will take place and where.	Low	Two days before any research
Danger of approaching unknown people	Researcher	Wear comfortable clothes. Approach everyone in a friendly manner. Assess the risk as the situation develops	Low	During the research

Review Date:**Signature:**

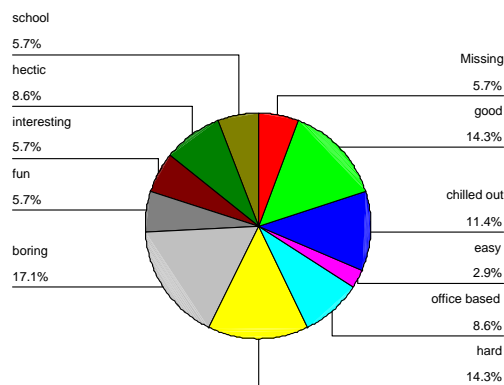
Appendix 7.1 Qu.3 Where do you usually go mountain biking?



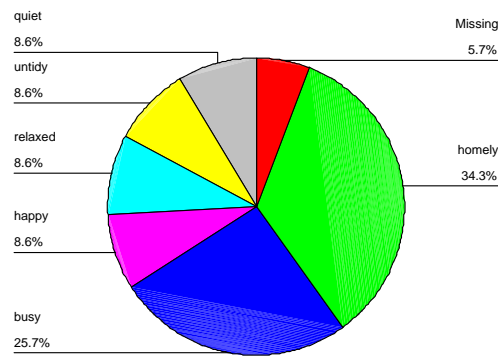
Appendix 7.2 Qu.4 Are there any other areas you usually like to visit?



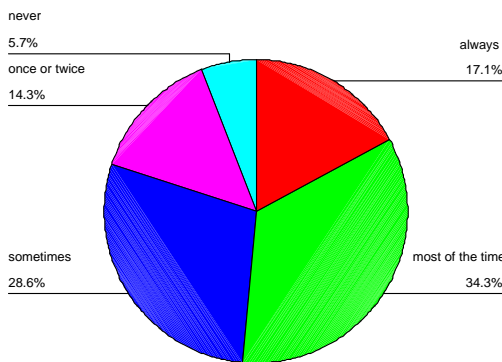
Appendix 7.3 Qu.9 How would you describe your work environment?



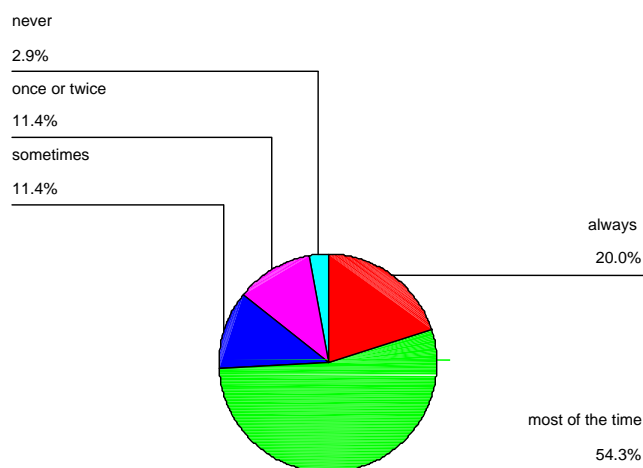
Appendix 7.4 Qu.10 How would you describe your home environment?



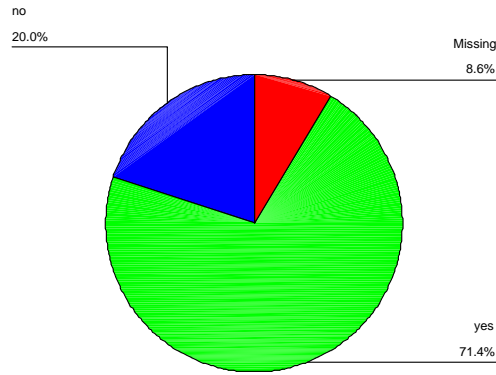
Appendix 7.5 Qu.12.3 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Your Bike



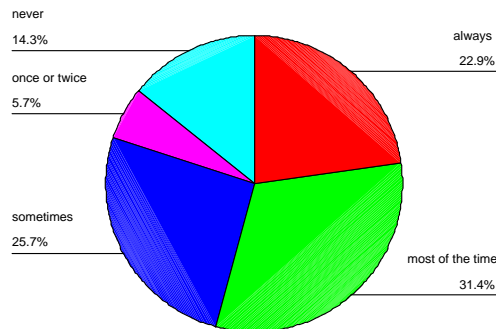
Appendix 7.6 Qu.12.9 Generally, indicate how often you think about the following: Your physical condition



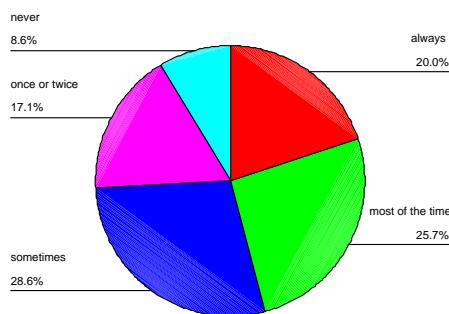
Appendix 7.7 Qu.14 Is this a common feeling before a ride?



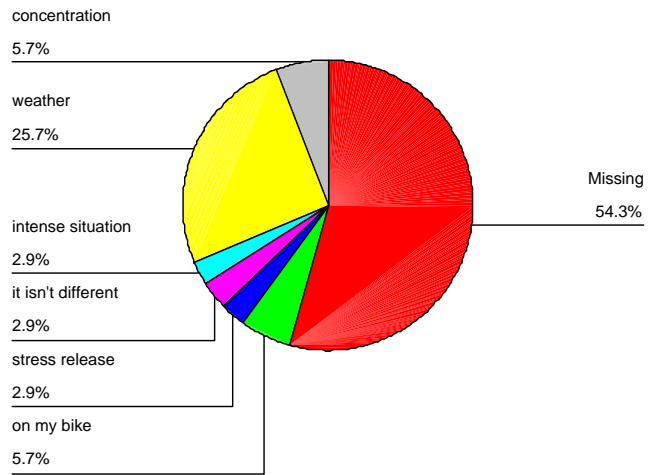
Appendix 7.8 Qu.16.3 During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Your Bike



Appendix 7.9 Qu.16.9) During the past ride, indicate how often you thought about the following: Your physical condition



Appendix 7.10 Qu.18. If your above answer is different from question 13, why do you think this is?



Appendix 7.11 Qu.21 How would you say mountain biking affects your regular life?

