

Factors influencing safety perceptions and cycling frequency of people who grew up in different mobility cultures

Gülin Göksu Başaran, Daniel Sejer Kristoffersen and Sonja Haustein

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Denmark is one of the world's leading cycling countries. For most international students and knowledge workers coming to Denmark, the Danish cycling culture contrasts with the mobility culture of their country of origin.

Based on an online survey including students and knowledge workers who grew up in Denmark (n=106) and abroad (n=148), this study examined safety perception and cycling frequency of these two groups based on factors of travel socialization, cycling norms, attitudes, and the experience of road anger. We found a significant increase of foreigner's self-reported safety perceptions and cycling frequencies after moving to Denmark. In regression analyses, we found that age of learning to cycle, experiencing anger from car drivers, stress and being unaware of cycling rules had an effect on safety perception. Stress and driving anger were significant factors for the sub-sample of newcomers, but not for Danes. Attitude towards cycling and cycling norm in the country of origin (measured based on a new 6-item cycling norm index, CNI) were significant factors of cycling frequency. Unlike our expectations, a low CNI increased cycling frequency in Denmark. This indicates that people who originate from a country with less supportive cycling conditions get extra motivated to cycle under better cycling conditions. However, it has to be noted that non-cyclists were not included in the sample, which most likely contributed to this result. Newcomers' cycling frequency was additionally influenced by the age of learning to cycle. Based on the results, it seems advisable to help newcomers to cycling countries to get familiar with formal and informal cycling rules to reduce their stress and make them feel safer when cycling. While this will probably reduce conflicts with car drivers, efforts to reduce car drivers' anger expression against cyclists also need to be increased.