

Cause-Related versus Non-Cause-Related Sport Events: Differentiating Endurance Events Through a Comparison of Athletes' Motives

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Abstract

In the crowded sport event market, differentiation strategy is key to the survival of event organizers. One way to differentiate an event is by adding a charity component. To understand how events attract athletes, this study compared the motives of athletes to participate in cause-related or non-cause-related sport events. Using the Motivations of Marathoners Scales (MOMS), participants rated motivations to attend either cause-related sport events or non-cause-related sport events. The five motivations important for all participants were General Health Orientation, Personal Goal Achievement, Weight Concern, Self-Esteem, and Affiliation motivations. Association with cause-related sport events attracted participants more for Self-Esteem, Recognition/Approval, Personal Goal Achievement, and Competition reasons. Non-cause-related events attracted participants more motivated by the Weight Concern motive. Overall, the psychographic differences for participating in either cause-related or non-cause-related events supported the view that adding a charity component to an event can add to the differentiation strategy of the organization.

Introduction

There are more than 5,300 sanctioned running events and almost 3,500 sanctioned multisport events in the United States (USA Triathlon, 2011; USA Track and Field, 2011). Additionally, countless unsanctioned events are held each week across the nation resulting in a saturated sport event marketplace inundating the consumer with choices. In order to survive in this market, differentiation becomes a key strategy for each sport event. Price, sport, and distance, among other event features, can be manipulated in an attempt to differentiate one event from another. Yet the quest for differentiation in this regard is limited, as participants have come to expect certain levels of standardization associated with the race itself at each event, thus event

organizers must search for strategies within the ancillary qualities of the event that are distinct.

Endurance athletes select events for many different reasons, including race attributes such as: the sport, the distance, pre- and post-race activities, race size, race location, race reputation, and the challenge of the course (Moore, 2012; Stein, 2011). Many people also participate in cause-related races to help raise money for a non-profit organization. Cause can be an effective tool to attach more meaning to an event, and thus attract participants (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2009). Sport event organizers can use this information to align with a cause and perhaps capitalize on the importance of social purposes to consumers. By aligning a sport event and charity, organizers can leverage the

relationship with a charitable foundation to elevate the event, create awareness for the cause, and attract those that support the cause by donating a portion of an event's proceeds to the non-profit organization (Filo et al., 2009).

Athletes are motivated to participate in various events for different reasons, including those for leisure purposes, such as a desire to pursue a healthy lifestyle, and for altruistic purposes (Bennett, Mousely, Kitchin, & Ali-Choudhury, 2007). Fulfilling both leisure (i.e., intellect, social interaction, and competency) and charitable motives (i.e., reciprocity, self-esteem, need to help others, and desire to improve the charity), can be attractive to event attendees (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008).

Despite extensive research, a direct comparison between cause and non-cause-related events has yet to be made. In regards to cause-related events, athletes have been found to participate for leisure and giving motivations (see Bennett et al., 2007; Filo et al., 2008; Taylor & Shanka, 2008; Won, Park, & Turner, 2010), but it is unclear whether cause-related events fulfill different leisure needs than non-cause-related events. Without exploring how these two types of events relate to each other, it is impossible to understand how aligning with a cause affects the attractiveness of the event to participants. The purpose of this study, then, was to compare the important motivations to participate in cause-related and non-cause-related sport events to better understand how charity relations can differentiate an endurance event from their competitors.

Literature Review

Motivations to Participate in Leisure

Motivation is the internal drive that guides a person's behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1982; Roberts, 1992), and has been examined in many contexts—including leisure. Human behavior is often driven by the fulfillment of basic, psychological, and self-fulfillment-type needs (Maslow, 1954). Crompton and McKay (1997) claimed we need to distinguish between our internal and external needs. Internal needs originate within ourselves and push towards behavior, while others are externally driven, pulling toward an attraction. The push-pull framework (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Dann, 1981) seems particularly relevant when examining events, as event elements can pull people in to compete and internal motivations can push people to fulfill specific needs through event participation.

Early work on motivations in leisure research centered around four distinct motivations: intellectual (to learn and explore), social (need for friendship) competence-mastery (to achieve and master something),

and stimulus avoidance (to escape over-stimulating situations) (Beard & Ragheb, 1980, 1983; Iso-Ahola, 1982). While the importance of the motives varied by activity and person, they were applicable to all leisure activities, including sports and other athletic endeavors (e.g., Filo et al., 2008; Kim & Chalip, 2004; Snelgrove & Wood, 2010). For example, learning about the destination and socialization are attractive reasons for traveling to event participants (Kim & Chalip, 2004). For cause-related sport events, social and physical activity motives were important (Snelgrove & Wood, 2010), while Filo et al. (2008) found intellectual, social, and competency motives to be important reasons to participate.

Motivations to Participate in Endurance Events

Many of the motivations to participate in leisure activities extend to endurance events (e.g., Carmack & Martens, 1979; Gill & Overdorf, 1994; Sonstroem & Morgan, 1989; Weinberg & Gould, 2007). However, Masters, Ogles, and Jolton (1993) suggested a need for a specific measure for the motivations of athletes training for and competing in an endurance event such as the marathon. Based on previous research (Carmack & Martens, 1979; Curtis & McTeer, 1981; Johnsgard, 1985a, 1985b; Masters & Lambert, 1989), they proposed four categories of motives for running: Psychological (to give one's life meaning, improve self-esteem, and for psychological coping), Achievement (to achieve personal goals and to compete), Social (to receive the recognition/approval of others and to affiliate with others), and Physical (to avoid health and weight concerns). All four motives have received substantial support in the literature (Filo et al., 2008; Kim & Chalip, 2004; Masters et al., 1993; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Snelgrove & Wood, 2010).

There are both similarities and differences between different groups of endurance athletes, whether they are runners, cyclists or triathletes. The similarities include the centrality of the sport to the participant, the effect of training on schedules and finances, and preparation beyond the basic health benefits of a normal exercise program (Lovett, 2011). The differences may affect the presence and variety of certain motivations between marathoners and other endurance athletes including distinct types of equipment, general 'ideal' body types, sociality, competitiveness of events, and overall culture (Brown et al., 2009). Despite these differences, it has been argued that all endurance athletes have a similar set of motivations, and the difference is how they rank their motivations. As a consequence, many of these researchers have used similar scales (i.e., LaChausse, 2006; Lovett, 2011).

Motivations to Participate in Cause-Related Events

The addition of a cause adds value to events—such as meaning, attachment, and camaraderie for participants—which can enhance motivation to participate. Exploring both a leisure and cause-related cycling event, Filo et al. (2008) found that the four motivations related to donation—reciprocity, self-esteem, need to help others, and desire to improve the charity—were important to participants and that intellectual, social, and competency motives contributed to the attraction of the event. Other studies that examined motives found that involvement with the cause, the desire to pursue a healthy lifestyle, previous involvement, desire for social interaction, achievement, involvement, status, and family needs motives were all important drivers to attend the event and varied among age groups, event participation frequency, and gender (cf. Bennett et al., 2007; Taylor & Shanka, 2008; Won et al., 2010).

In order to determine what elements are necessary to attract the unique individual and differentiate the event, organizers must understand what push and pull elements drive participation in sport events. Because the motivation to give is important to participants (Filo et al., 2008; Bennett et al., 2007), one pull element to consider is the partnership with a charity through various promotional methods (i.e., announcing the donation of event proceeds to the charity, promoting the charity before and at the event, theming around the charity). However, whether this marketing

tactic pulls more participants into the event is unknown as there is a paucity of literature comparing leisure motivations in cause-related and non-cause-related events. Research thus far has looked at motivations to participate in either non-cause-related events (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Masters et al., 1993) or in cause-related events (Bennett et al., 2007; Filo et al., 2008; Snelgrove & Wood, 2010; Taylor & Shanka, 2008; Won et al., 2010). Comparing the two types of events will enhance our understanding of how the addition of a cause to an event affects leisure motivations to participate.

Method

Procedures

Surveys were distributed at four participatory sport events and one training group's practice session in early summer in a mid-sized city in the Southwestern US. Of the four events selected for their similarities and convenience, two were cause-related and two were non-cause-related. Two of the four events were aqua runs (a swim and run event) and the other two events were bike rides. As Table 1 shows, each category of event (cause-related and non-cause-related) consisted of one aqua run and one bike ride. At each of the events, participants were solicited by a researcher to complete a paper survey either before or after the event (such as during registration/check-in or while waiting for an awards ceremony). The participants self-completed the paper survey and returned it to one of the

Table 1
Description of Events

	Cause-Related Events		Non-Cause-Related Events	
	Aqua Run	Bike Ride	Aqua Run	Bike Ride
Distance and Sport	750 meter swim 3 kilometer run	7 distances 14 miles to 105 miles	500 meter swim 5 kilometer run	3 distances 16 to 64 miles
Charity Benefit	American Youthworks Big Brothers, Big Sisters	Local Cancer Center	No Charity	No Charity
Percent Given to Charity	Donated a portion of proceeds	100% of proceeds donated; Promotion of cause prevalent before and during event		
Awards and Timing	Awards Timing	No Awards No Timing	Awards Timing	No Awards No Timing
Number of Participants	55 participants	Over 2,000 participants	221 participants	Approximately 300 participants

researchers. Incentives to complete the survey were not provided.

The training group was a local triathlon training group that has 13 coached practices a week. Members did not attend all workouts, but were encouraged to attend several each week. The members often trained for specific races and participated in several events a year—both charity and non-charity events. Following a weekday training session, participants were asked to complete a paper survey and return it to one of the researchers.

To create the two participant groups of charity event and non-charity event, respondents were asked about the last event they competed in. For participants approached at an event, this was the race they had just completed or were about to compete in; they were assigned to the appropriate category based on this event. For the training group respondents, this was generally an event they participated in during the months leading up to the data collection.

Instrumentation

Survey participants were asked about their training habits (e.g., typical number days per week, number of hours per day and week, training with others or self), their perceived level of ability or skill (i.e., novice, intermediate, advanced, or elite athletes), their previous event participation (i.e., number of events within the last year and the number of events that benefitted a charity) and likelihood to participate in future endurance events, and whether they were participating with anyone (i.e., family, friend, fellow club members). Participants who completed the survey at their training group practice instead of an event were also asked to list the name and type of the last endurance event they participated in, whether or not it benefitted a charity and the name of that charity, and how long it had been since the event had occurred. Lastly, the demographic section gathered information on gender, race, education, age, and income.

After completing the above sections of the survey, participants completed the Motivations of Marathoners Scales (MOMS), which has been shown to be internally consistent and possesses factorial validity (Masters et al., 1993). The MOMS survey includes 56 items designed to examine nine motivations: Life Meaning (7 items), Self-Esteem (8 items), Psychological Coping (9 items), Personal Goal Achievement (6 items), Competition (4 items), Recognition/Approval of others (6 items), Affiliation with others (6 items), General Health Concerns (6 items), and Weight Concern (4 items). All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1=Not a Reason to 7=A Very Important Reason) for participating in the

event. The survey was modified slightly so that instead of asking participants about their possible reasons for running, they were asked about their possible reasons for participating in “this event.” The word “running” was removed from specific motives and those items were altered to be generic for event participation (i.e., “to improve my running speed” became “to improve my speed” and “to socialize with other runners” became “to socialize with other athletes”). The MOMS scale has been tested in other endurance events, such as cycling (LaChausse, 2006) and sprint-triathlons (Lovett, 2011), and has been cited extensively in studies on endurance events (c.f., Brown, O’Connor, & Barkatsas, 2009; Krouse, Ransdell, Lucas, & Pritchard, 2011; Smith, 2010). The survey took approximately five to ten minutes to complete.

Participants

The surveys were distributed to 400 adult multi-sport athletes (i.e., triathletes) and cyclists who had competed in an endurance event. A total of 182 surveys were returned, of which 170 were deemed useable (response rate = 42.5%). Ninety-two males and 75 females participated (three participants did not respond to this question). Respondents ranged in age from 20 to 75 years with a mean age of 42.2 years ($SD=11.63$). Consistent with previous work on this athlete demographic, participants overwhelmingly listed their ethnicity as Caucasian (85.3%). Most had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher (85.3%), and over half had an individual income of \$75,000 or more (56.7%). Most spent a significant amount of time training for events and planned to participate in another endurance event in the next three months. Complete details of the participants profile can be found in Table 2.

Of the surveys gathered, 70 participants indicated that they were participating in a cause-related event and 100 athletes indicated that they were participating in a non-cause-related event. The cause-related event participants were predominately female (56.5%), and the average age was 37.16 ($SD=8.20$), with no participants over 60 years of age. Most cause-related event participants had at least a bachelor’s degree (89.5%), earned at least \$50,000 in individual income (67.2%), considered their ability as intermediate athletes (63.2%), and trained 4-7 days a week (93.6%). Non-cause-related event athletes were more predominantly male than female (63.3%), and their average age was 45.01 ($SD=12.48$). The majority of non-cause-related event participants also had at least a bachelor’s degree (86.8%), an individual income of at least \$75,000 (61.8%), considered their ability level as intermediate athletes (56.1%) and trained 4-7 days per week (78.9%).

Table 2
Comparison of Cause-Related and Non-Cause-Related Event Participants, continued on page 22

	Cause-Related		Non-Cause-Related		Sample Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age						
18-30 yrs	10	22.2%	12	16.9%	22	12.9%
31-40 yrs	22	48.9%	12	16.9%	34	20.0%
41-50 yrs	10	22.2%	23	32.4%	33	19.4%
51-60 yrs	3	6.7%	17	23.9%	20	11.8%
61+ yrs	0	0%	7	9.8%	7	4.1%
Missing					54	31.8%
Total	45		71		170	
Education						
High School	1	1.5%	1	1.0%	2	1.2%
Some College	6	9.0%	12	12.2%	18	10.6%
Bachelor's Degree	35	52.2%	47	48.0%	82	48.2%
Graduate Degree	25	37.3%	38	38.8%	63	37.1%
Missing					5	2.9%
Total	67		98		170	
Income						
\$0-24,999	4	6.0%	0	0.0%	4	2.4%
\$25,000-49,999	11	16.4%	6	6.2%	17	10.0%
\$50,000-74,999	12	17.9%	12	12.4%	24	14.1%
\$75,000-99,999	6	9.0%	21	21.6%	27	15.9%
\$100,000-\$124,999	12	17.9%	11	11.3%	23	13.5%
\$125,000-\$149,999	6	9.0%	6	6.2%	12	6.7%
\$150,000+	9	13.4%	22	22.7%	31	18.2%
Prefer not to Answer	7	10.4%	19	19.6%	26	15.3%
Missing					6	3.5%
Total	67		97		170	
Athlete Level						
Novice	9	13.2%	17	17.3%	26	15.3%
Intermediate	43	63.2%	55	56.1%	98	57.6%
Advanced/Elite	16	23.5%	26	26.5%	42	24.7%
Missing					4	2.4%
Total	68		98		170	
Ethnicity						
Caucasian	61	88.4%	84	87.5%	145	85.3%
African-American	0	0.0%	4	4.2%	4	2.4%
Asian American	2	2.9%	4	4.2%	6	3.5%
Hispanic	6	8.7%	3	3.1%	9	5.3%
Other	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	1	0.6%
Missing					5	2.9%
Total	69		96		170	

Analysis

All completed questionnaires were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0 for analysis. First, descriptive statistics (frequencies and

means) were calculated for each of the demographic variables and the individual items on the MOMS. Some of the demographic variables were grouped into categories for simpler analysis (i.e., age, training habits,

Table 2
Comparison of Cause-Related and Non-Cause-Related Event Participants, continued from page 21

	Cause-Related		Non-Cause-Related		Sample Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Training Habits						
0-1 day per week	1	1.6%	4	4.2%	5	2.9%
2-3 days per week	3	4.8%	16	16.8%	19	11.2%
4-5 days per week	28	44.4%	57	60.0%	85	50.0%
6-7 days per week	31	49.2%	18	18.9%	49	28.8%
Missing					12	7.1%
Total	63		95		170	
Gender						
Male	30	43.5%	62	63.3%	92	55.1%
Female	39	56.5%	36	36.7%	75	44.9%
Missing					3	1.8%
Total	69		98		170	
Attended Race With						
Friends	12	24.5%	38	46.9%	50	29.4%
Sport Clubs	7	14.3%	3	3.7%	10	5.9%
Work Colleagues	0	0.0%	1	1.2%	1	0.6%
Family	6	12.2%	23	28.4%	29	17.1%
By Myself	24	49.0%	16	19.8%	40	23.5%
Missing					40	23.5%
Total	49	100%	81	100%	170	
# of Events						
0-2 Events	10	16.9%	26	28.0%	36	21.2%
3-5 Events	23	39.0%	42	45.2%	65	38.2%
6-8 Events	14	23.7%	7	7.5%	21	12.4%
9-11 Events	5	8.5%	8	8.6%	13	7.6%
12-14 Events	3	5.1%	4	4.3%	7	4.1%
15+ Events	4	6.8%	6	6.5%	10	5.9%
Missing					18	10.6%
Total	59		93		170	

event participation). Next, reliability measures and Cronbach's alpha, the inter-item correlations, and the corrected item-total correlation were calculated for nine subscale variables: Life Meaning, Self-Esteem, Psychological Coping, Personal Goal Achievement, Competition, Recognition/Approval of others, Affiliation with others, General Health Orientation, and Weight Concern.

The nine subscales were created by averaging the appropriate items for each subscale (i.e., the four items on the Competition subscale were averaged to create a single variable for the Competition subscale). To compare the group differences of Cause-Related Events and Non-Cause-Related Events on the motive subscales, a Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was

run, controlling for the sport (bike or aqua run) and the ability level of the athletes (novice, intermediate, and advanced/elite).

Results

Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis was performed for each of the subscales in order to determine internal consistency for each of the constructs within this particular setting. Scales with a score higher than .8 are believed to possess internal consistency (Lance, Butts, & Michels, 2006) if the items have inter-item correlations between .3 to .8 and the corrected item-total correlation is above .5 (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989). Originally, the

Table 3
Motivational Subscale MANOVA Results: Cause-Related vs. Non-Cause-Related Events

	Cause-Related Event Mean Score	Non-Cause- Related Event Mean Score	F	Sig
Affiliation Subscale	4.38	4.07	1.499	.138
Competition Subscale	4.01	3.03	4.059	.000*
General Health Orientation Subscale	5.09	5.44	0.885	.557
Life Meaning Subscale	3.58	3.33	1.476	.147
Personal Goal Achievement Subscale	5.55	4.69	3.714	.000*
Psychological Coping Subscale	3.62	3.56	1.539	.124
Recognition/Approval Subscale	3.21	2.69	2.909	.002*
Self Esteem Subscale	4.66	4.25	1.755	.068**
Weight Concern Subscale	4.41	4.77	1.784	.062**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .10$

coefficients ranged from .811 to .905 in value. However, upon analysis of the inter-item correlations and corrected item-total correlation, several items did not score within the required range and were deleted. This resulted in the deletion of one item from the Life Meaning subscale (*To make my life more complete*) and two items from the Psychological Coping subscale (*To become less anxious* and *To blow off steam*).

The two subscales were then reassessed for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients still ranged from .811 to .905 in value, and all items fit the recommended item-to-total correlations and range of inter-item correlations.

Differences in Motives between Cause-Related and Non-Cause-Related Events

The MANCOVA indicated there were significant differences between several of the motives for participating in a cause-related event and a non-cause-related event after the effect of sport and athlete ability level were controlled for. There was no interaction effect for sport and endurance athlete ability level, yet the endurance athlete ability level did have a main effect ($p < .05$) on the motives to participate. Wilks' Lambda was significant ($p < .01$) for the main effect of cause-related or non-cause-related events.

Cause-related event participants rated Personal Goal Achievement motives ($M=5.55$, $SE=0.14$) and General Health Orientation motives ($M=5.09$, $SE=0.14$) as the most important reasons to participate. Other important reasons to participate included Self-Esteem motives ($M=4.66$, $SE=0.15$), Weight Concern motives ($M=4.41$, $SE=0.19$), and Affiliation motives ($M=4.38$, $SE=0.16$). They scored lowest on Recognition/Approval motives ($M=3.21$, $SE=0.17$), Life Meaning motives ($M=3.58$, $SE=0.17$),

Psychological Coping motives ($M=3.62$, $SE=0.17$), and Competition motives ($M=4.01$, $SE=0.21$).

Non-cause-related event participants also rated General Health Orientation motives ($M=5.44$, $SE=0.12$) and Personal Goal Achievement motives ($M=4.69$, $SE=0.12$) as the most important reasons to participate. Other important motives included Weight Concern motives ($M=4.77$, $SE=0.16$), Self-Esteem motives ($M=4.25$, $SE=0.12$) and Affiliation motives ($M=4.07$, $SE=0.14$). The least important reasons to participate for non-cause-related event athletes were Recognition/Approval motives ($M=2.69$, $SE=0.14$), Competition motives ($M=3.03$, $SE=0.17$), Life Meaning motives ($M=3.33$, $SE=0.15$), and Psychological Coping motives ($M=3.56$, $SE=0.14$).

Significant differences between cause-related and non-cause-related events were found for several of the subscales (see Table 3). Participants of cause-related events were significantly more motivated by Self-Esteem motives ($p=.068$), Personal Goal Achievement motives ($p<.001$), Competition motives ($p<.001$), and Recognition/Approval of others motives ($p=.002$) than participants of non-cause-related events. Participants in non-cause-related events were significantly more motivated by Weight Concern motives ($p=.062$) than participants of cause-related events. There were no significant differences found between the two groups for Life Meaning motives ($p=.147$), Psychological Coping motives ($p=.124$), Affiliation motives ($p=.138$), or General Health Orientation motives ($p=.557$).

Discussion

The findings indicated clear differences in the motivations to participate in cause-related and non-cause-related events. Self-Esteem, Personal Goal Achievement, Competition, and Recognition/Approval

were all significantly higher rated motives for participants in cause-related events. The charitable element of the cause-related events could have influenced the reasons for selecting to participate in a cause-related event. Being able to do something for others and being able to tell others about that event is important for many participants, and thereby affects the motivations to attend (Filo et al., 2009).

This opportunity to help others appears to have had a positive impact on the individual by improving one's sense of personal self worth. Self-Esteem rated higher for those athletes that participated in a cause-related event. That is consistent with Filo et al. (2008), who suggested that Self-Esteem motives helped drive participation in cause-related events and develop attraction to the events. While Self-Esteem was important to both groups of participants, it was higher among cause-related event participants. Perhaps the cause-related part of the event attracted participants with a greater need to fulfill self-esteem motives. Self-Esteem motives have also been found to be important reasons for donating to a cause (Guy & Patton, 1988), further suggesting that the addition of a cause to an event can add meaning that allows participants to fulfill their needs to improve their self-esteem through altruistic means.

The importance of self-esteem is evident through the comparison of the recognition and approval motives. The charitable component increased the opportunity for participants to gain recognition and approval and helped them through the event if it was deemed to be physically challenging. Aside from a personal accomplishment (Personal Goal Achievement), they contributed to something bigger than themselves, and they perceived that by doing so they gained the respect of others, made loved ones proud, and received compliments for not only completing the event but also because they had contributed to a cause.

Yet, the added psychological meaning of the charity did not come at the expense of personal motivations. Participants were still very motivated by their own performance, and participants of cause-related events scored higher on both Personal Goal Achievement and Competition. This confirms an earlier study conducted by Taylor and Shanka (2008), who found that achievement motives are important to participants of cause-related events, which is similar to this study's findings. Competitive motives, surprisingly, were more important to participants of cause-related events than to participants of non-cause-related events. This contradicts previous literature, which found competition to not be a strong incentive to participate in cause-related events (Bennett et al., 2007; Won et al., 2010). This could be related to the different demographic makeup of the two events, but it is also important to note that com-

petition was not a high priority for participating in either event. While intuitively a cause-related event might give the whole event a feel-good atmosphere in which everyone pursues a similar goal (supporting the charity), the athletes are still as competitive as with any other event.

Non-cause-related events may have attracted participants more motivated by Weight Concern motives. For participants in cause-related events, this motive is significantly less important. This might suggest that weight regulation alone may not be enough of a motivation to participate in cause-related endurance events for some participants. The participants in cause-related events may have additional incentives beyond weight loss and health improvement to participate in an endurance event, such as a loved one affected by the cause (Filo et al., 2009). However, many cause-related events are not associated with health; for these events, the addition of the cause may provide the additional incentive for participants (such as inspiration or making a difference) to lose weight and improve their health (Filo et al., 2009). For non-cause-related event participants, however, they might not need the extra incentives to participate, as training and participating to stay healthy might be sufficient motivation.

The differences in motivation for participation in these events might have been related to the slightly different demographics that the two different types of events attract. As stated in the demographics, the cause-related events draw more females and a slightly younger consumer base. Yet, we would argue that the differences in demographics in itself is not a limitation, as the different demographic is part of the differentiation strategy that the cause-related events use. Because of the charity they are able to attract younger participants and more females to their events, and because of the differences in events (distance and awards, or lack thereof) the charity events perhaps were able to attract participants who were looking for more challenges. What might be considered a limitation to this study is the small sample size of four events, as these events are not necessarily representative of all endurance events. The sample size also prevented us from performing a more rigid Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA), as our demographic groups became too small and fragmented for a correct analysis.

Conclusion

It appeared that the cause provided added meaning to the participants, allowing them to fulfill a wider range of motivations. Event organizers can use this information to differentiate their event and attract new participants, especially by including elements to pull people in. By promoting the cause through the event, the mes-

sage can be crafted to attract those participants driven by affiliation, esteem, health and personal goals motives, which were found to be more important among this group, as well as the altruistic motives that were not examined in this study. Event organizers could include both elements that fulfill pushing and pulling motivations by offering varied distances or sports that will require some training and effort to help participants achieve their goals and maintain their health, promoting the cause in all pre-event marketing efforts to drive esteem motives, and providing opportunities for participants to socialize with other participants. Through these elements—and others such as the race size, the distance, and any pre- and post-race activities—organizers can pull athletes into the event. Some events currently use strategies such as partnering with local training groups (or creating their own) to help potential participants be able to find others to affiliate with and to achieve their health and personal goals. For cause-related event organizers, fundraisers leading up to the event can allow athletes to build their esteem in a way unrelated to the physical activity. Focusing on what motivates the potential participants of the event is important for organizers to consider when creating a unique environment that sets the experience apart from others. It is recommended that event marketers develop an understanding of their potential market and consider their needs when designing the event so that it pulls athletes in.

Future studies should aim to include larger samples from a wider variety of events. This would allow researchers to confirm whether the four events used in this study were representative and it would allow for a more rigid comparison through a MANCOVA analysis. Future research should also address the impact of various cause-related promotions on motivations to participate in the event. The authors noted that at one of the cause-related events in this study the event organizers did very little to promote the cause. The charities were mentioned on the website and during pre- and post-race announcements; however, signage or other promotional materials about the cause were underutilized. This was in stark contrast to the other event where the charity was fully integrated, and it was clear that the event was organized with the cause in mind. The event logo included the cause, participants were encouraged to raise funds for the cause, representatives for the cause spoke during pre-race announcements, and there were booths at the pre- and post-race festivities where cause representatives could interact with the participants. As a study conducted by Woolf, Heere, and Walker (2013) demonstrated, if a charity event is unable to communicate its cause to the participants during race day, the connection to the charity often

goes unnoticed. Future research should address how the level of inclusion of the cause might affect participant motives. Lastly, a follow-up study should be conducted to verify and extend the results of this current study.

This study does provide an initial understanding of why people participate in various types of endurance events. There are differences between cause-related and non-cause-related events in terms of participant motivations, and the events cannot be marketed or treated as though they are the same. Event elements, such as cause, must be considered as they can fulfill different motives, and the elements included can affect who will choose to participate. Event organizers and marketers should try to emphasize how the events can fulfill the motives of likely attendees through inclusion of images and wording in advertisements about specific motives (e.g., including pictures of the awards or a statement about how fast the course is). Also, when cause is included in the event, marketing should emphasize how participating in the event and helping the cause to help potential participants realize how the event can fulfill more than just their sport-related motives (such as self-esteem motives or the need to help others). Including a variety of elements at the event can help fulfill different motives and therefore attract a wider range of participants who all have different motives.

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