

The motivation to run in a marathon

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Abstract. The trend of marathon running is becoming popular in a modern day. This is, perhaps, because of the tourism policy promoted by the government as well as the behavioral changes toward health concerning among people. The outdoor running event has been organized by many countries around the world. The running events brink a number of tourists to a country and, consequently, increase the revenue. This study, therefore, focus on this interesting topic in order to exploit how runners have been motivated to participate in the marathon event. The researcher applied multistage sampling method to select the respondents. There were three locations selected with 15 runners given an in-depth interview for those locations. The semi-structure interview questions have been used to get information about motivation to run of those respondents. The result showed that there are four main themes of motivation. The first element was mental motivation where the desire to fulfill the mental needs is the key. The second element, physical motivation, referred to how people maintain their physical health condition. This included the exercising level, gaining the energy as well as losing weight. The third motivation was societal motivation. It deals with how the runners perceived social norms. Lastly, environmental motivation accounts how standardized the event is and the quality of service of the organizers. Surprisingly, the result states that the environmental motivation does not have high motivation level to runners. This was, perhaps, the runners tend to focus on their physical motivation rather than the marathon event itself.

1 Introduction

The first approach marathon in the world has employed by Frank Shorter, a winner in the 1972 Olympic Marathon. Later it has expand to, what has been called, a mass-participation marathon races where many people can participate in the competition at once. This type of marathon race started in 1979, the New York Marathon and followed by the London Marathon in 1981 [1]. The marathon trend is expanding around the world. Today, running marathons can give you a chance to see more of the places that you may not visit before. This is how tourism comes across a sport field. Sport tourism is defined as travel experiences derived from engaging in or viewing sport-related activities. This trend of tourism has emerged since 1996 when the Olympic games that held in Atlanta had been

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promoted as a tourist attraction. In 2010, revenues generating from sport tourism had reached \$6 billion. Among this trend, hosting a sport mega-event such as the FIFA World Cup would generate country's revenues as well as stimulate economic growth [2]. These sport tourisms can be generally divided into two types: sport event tourism and active sport tourism. Sport event tourists refer to tourists who participate in hallmark events such as the Olympic game and the World Cup soccer (football) championships. This includes professional sport teams and college football tournaments. For active sport tourists, on the other hands, their characteristics are likely to be male with college educated level. This group of sport tourists tends to travel in long distances to participate in their favorite sports and likely to return and become a loyalty toward a destination[3]. Individuals who either participated or attended sport events – so called ‘active sport event consumers’ – can be professional or amateur athletes who compete in sport events, as well as leisure participants who take part in sport events.

This outdoor running event has been growing significantly in a past few years. There were at least 80 major international marathons and thousands of smaller marathons had been organized in 2013 [4, 5]. Due to a unique aspect of this active sport event, there are many factors influencing marathoners' decision to participant in the event. Currently, sport consumption researches mostly focus on the effects of economic factors to local attractions, studies of relation between socio-demographic factors and sport consumer activities, satisfaction of spectators on sports event, or impact of sport tourism event image on destination image [6, 7]. Thus, the field of sport consumption behavior is worth to study. For this study, the researcher will focus on the runners who are intending to participate in a marathon events organized in Thailand. This research will, therefore, intend to identify motivation of runnersto participate in marathon events in Thailand. The research contributes, in terms of academic use, an indicator to determine runners' motivation. Moreover, it also concentrates on event related motivations that can be use as a guideline to improve the quality of running event for organizers in the future.

2 Objectives

This research aims to explode runners' motivation to participate in marathon eventsin order to categorize the types of motivation to run.

3 Literature review

3.1 Sport related motivation

There are several theories of motivation that are relevant to analyze sport participant behaviors. This research studied sport motivation concept from motivational typologies developed by [8]. The motivational typology of sport participant has been divided into three categories: mental well-being needs, sport-based needs, and social needs. Each construct has been explained using motivational theories as follow.

Mental well-being needs associate with self-actualization, self-esteem, and aesthetics. Self-actualization has been referred to a desire for fulfilling themselves to become actualized in their potentials. Thus, sport can fulfill self-actualization by providing chances to exceed personal expectations or to express oneself. Motivation can occur when athletes seeks challenging from long-term exercise [9]. Self-esteem explains that participating in physical activities leads to positive attitudes about one's self [10]. The aesthetics refers to artistic characteristics of sport, such as the freedom of experience and creative expression [11].

Sport based needs relates with competition, risk-taking, and achievement. Competition refers to the act of competing with rivalry [12]. Risk-taking refers to the desire to engage in activities that may not be possible in everyday life. It also allows individuals to feel better about themselves. Sport is an achievement-oriented activity. In other words, an athlete strives to achieve a goal and can easily evaluate in terms of success and failure [13].

Social needs refer to social facilitation, affiliation, and skill mastery. Social facilitation is defined as the social gratification of being with others who enjoy the same activity. Affiliation refers to the need of oneself to interact, socialize with others and belong. Sport participants are often motivated by a desire to confirm their sense of identity [14]. Skill mastery refers to the need of sport participants to achieve mastery through perfecting their skill. This motive is critical since athletes tend to evaluate their skill performance against others [15].

3.2 Event related motivations

For this study, the researcher examines all five aspects of event related motivation that can affect runners' motivation to run marathon event.

3.2.1 Organizational motivation

Each event differs from one to another in terms of organizational aspects. Normally, motivations to participate in the events vary with how well the event has been prepared, the uniqueness and quality of the event, as well as the event's reputation on marketplace. These factors influence runners to participate in the running events.

3.2.2 Environmental motivation

This motivation refers to environment surround the host community of the event. This may include scenery, culture, and places that directly related with host destination [16].

3.2.3 Social motivation

This motivation provides a sense of belongingness or membership of a social group. This social identity can influence motivation in the sense that it allows people to feel that they are 'part of a group'. In terms of running events, the runners have higher motivation to participate with the go with friends. Some researchers found that social belonging plays a critical role for the successful of sport events [17].

3.2.4 Competition motivation

The desire to compete with rivalry is determined as competition motive. It also refers to individuals' ability to challenge themselves through the participation in the event [18]. This might occur when an individual selects an event according to its competition level offered by the event. The main reason for this is that individuals want to compete against other athletes as well as increase their level of fitness [19].

3.2.5 Emotional motivation

Emotional motivation consists of excitement, enjoyment, and self-fulfillment that a person feels when participating in the event. The level of emotion can be evaluated by the joy and mood during and after participating the competition [16].

4 Methodology

This research applied qualitative research method. The sampling group will be obtained using multistage sampling method by, firstly, identified the locations that runners are likely to practice their running. Bangkok is selected in the first stage due to it is the popular city of marathon running in Thailand. Secondly, the researchers selected the locations according to its distance of the track of that location. There are three locations selected in this stage: Benjakitti Park (2 km. track), Lumpini Park (2.5 km. track), and Rot Fai Garden and Chatuchak Park (6 km. track) [20]. Thirdly, the researcher used simple random sampling method to interview 5 runners for each location. In-depth interview will be conducted using semi-structure interview questions in order to get information about motivation of runners. The question topics include number of times that runner participate in marathon, distances that runner is likely to participate, reason to participate in marathon, training program and how often they train themselves. The questions are related to sport motivation as well as marathon event related motivation. These questions adapted from the work of Milne & McDonald and Kaplanidou & Vogt[8, 16]. The descriptive data analysis will be adopted in this research. The result will be interpreted according to the research framework.

5 Result

The result shows that there are male 12 persons and female 3 persons. The average age of runners is 40.8 years old. The frequency of participating in marathon event of those runners consists of five categories: 1) never participate, consists of 1 person; 2) participate less than 5 times, 5 persons; 3) participate 6 to 10 times, 1 person; 4) participate more than 10 times, 3 persons; and 5) countless, 5 persons. There are 11 persons like to participate in 10 km. distance race, while other type of distances: 5 km., 21 km. and 42 km. consists of one person for each type. Furthermore, there is only one person who like to participate in every type of distances. The motivation was evaluated using the reason to participate in marathon event given by runners. The table 1 explainsthe themes of motivation for runners who participated in marathon.

Table 1. Motivation themes of marathon runners.

Theme	Sub-theme	Description
Mental motivation	- Challenge - Competition - Achieve goal - Getting reward	To fulfill a desire, such as challenge themselves, compete with others and getting reward after finishing the race.
Physical motivation	- Stay healthy - Exercise - Self-discipline - Loss weight	To maintain the level of good health condition in terms of physical aspect. It also includes the way people boost their energy and recovery from bad health condition.
Societal motivation	- Friend and family invitation - Charity	To follow friend and family. It also includes interaction with society norm.
Environmental motivation	- Standardization of the event - Famous organizer	To receive a quality service from standardized running event or famous organizer.

The result states that there are four main themes of motivation. The researcher named those themes according to its descriptions. The first theme was mental motivation in which people was looking for their achievement and reward. The second motivation was physical motivation. This motivation referred to level of fitness and health condition. The third

theme was societal motivation which was resulting from friend and family influences. The last motivation was environmental motivation dealing with standardization of the event and the brand name of organizer who are conducting the marathon event. Figure 1 below shows number of answers for four main themes: mental, physical, societal, and environmental motivation

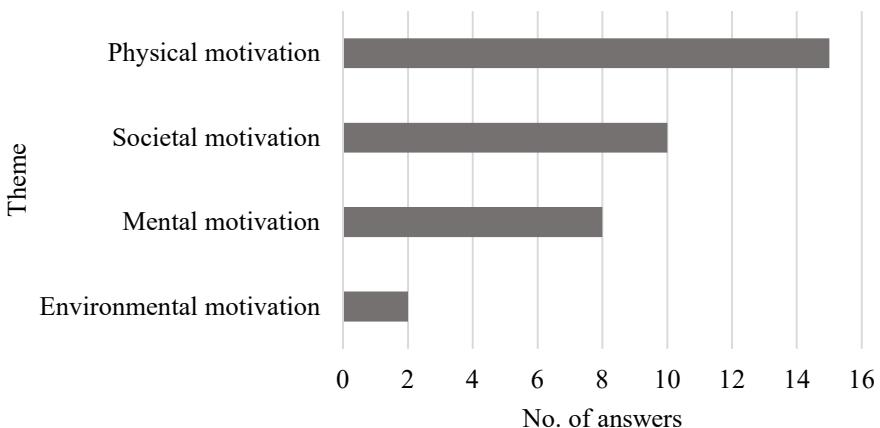


Fig. 1. The number of answers for each motivation theme.

The figure illustrated that first rank of motivation to run at a marathon event was physical motivation. It could be implied that runners' are willing to participate in marathon when they want to exercise, obtain a good health and maintain level of fitness. The second rank was societal motivation. This means that friends and family could influence a runner's decision-making. Mental motivation, the third rank, indicated that runners are motivated to fulfill their desire as well as the will-to-achieve. Lastly, environment was not really influence motivation to run in a marathon. This was; perhaps, due to the different organizers have different standard. Thus, people do not expect that all marathon events will provide the same standard to runners.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, motivation to run at SSRU Run Mini-marathon 2019, which is organized the second time, can be divided into four main themes: mental motivation, physical motivation, societal motivation, and environmental motivation. The themes were named different than the work of Milne & McDonald and Kaplanidou& Vogt [8, 16] due to the nature of each motivation was different. First, mental motivation described the desire to fulfill the mental needs, such as challenging themselves, compete with others and getting the reward. Second, physical motivation related to level of fitness and health condition. It also explained how people boost their energy to recovery from bad health condition. Third, societal motivation referred to the influence of friends and family over a runner decision-making. Last, environmental motivation indicated the quality of service from organizer and the event standardization. Interestingly, in this study, runners paid less attention on a quality of marathon event. This is because runners were more likely to satisfy their physical needs rather than concern about the quality of the event. This aspect was supported by the work of Aicher, T. and Brenner, J.[21] that runners were motivated by competition, emotional, and learning motivation. According to Hallmann, K. [22] the farther the runner is away from home, the lesser they will worry with environmental motivation since they may not

participate again in the same race. There is an evidence that young runners participating in marathon because they want to exercise and keep fit [23], which can support the fact that people are motivated by their physical needs.

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