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The independence running events in Poland in 2018 – motives of participation. The case study of 8th Edition of the independence run in Luboń

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Key words: running, sports event, non-elite sport, motives of sports participation

Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine the motivations to participate in a not high class running event and evaluate the socio-demographic profile of a participant. The sample comprised 100 runners that participated in the 8th edition of the Independence Run in Luboń, which took place on November 11, 2018, on the hundredth anniversary of Poland regaining its

independence. To evaluate the motivation to participate in the event, a self-constructed questionnaire was used. The results might be useful for sport managers to analyze consumer behavior and utilize the results in their everyday practice, especially in the strategic planning, marketing and implementation of massive sport events which take place outside the limits of a big city.

Introduction

In the last few years, the ideology of healthism has been developing in Poland. This trend is particularly visible in mass running events, in which Poles participate eagerly. The scale of this social phenomenon is surely an unusual occurrence on many levels, as a number of interdisciplinary factors should be taken into account. The popularization of active participation in running events is multifaceted. Its most significant components concern health care, and physical and mental health and well-being. The sense of gaining a high quality of life and the sense of joy resulting from active lifestyle are conditioned not only by the course of motivational processes, but also by the level of satisfaction of psychological needs which are a prerequisite for achieving satisfaction from one's own physical activity. People want to become amateur athletes and take on the challenges of a sporty lifestyle. The research was conducted to assess reasons for attempting in a not high class running event which take place outside the limits of a big city.

Natural landscapes are subject to increasing levels of recreation, sport and tourist pressure. People are increasingly eager to engage in physical activity away from urban agglomerations, not only because of beautiful landscapes, but also by air purity. Street racing organized in polluted cities is not as attractive and as events in the natural terrain. Runners are afraid to take part in races organized in polluted cities because they think that it could lead to decrease in lung performance (Marr & Ely 2010). They also feel confused about the impact of a running event on their health and, above all, training in large polluting cities. It pays all that they are looking for new natural places for training. Traffic-related air pollution may contribute to cardiovascular morbidity. In urban areas, exposures during physical activity are of interest owing to increased breathing rates and close proximity to vehicle emissions. Exposure to traffic pollution may contribute to acute changes in blood pressure, autonomic and micro-vascular function in women. Regional air pollution concentrations may modify the impact of these exposures on

autonomic function (Weichenthal et al. 2014). Poznan and Cracow are Polish cities where every year one of the largest and most important running events is organized, also in the autumn and winter season. Poznan and Cracow are also cities that have been occupying high places in the infamous leading edge of the most polluted European cities for several years. The problem is especially smog in the autumn and winter season. That's why runners in anti-smog masks are increasingly seen on the streets of Polish cities. Some of them also decide to train outside the city limits. Running events organized in natural areas are sometimes also more intimate – not all runners like massive and prestigious big street runs. In addition, running on the street – hard ground can be injured. Some runners prefer to run on soft ground. Therefore, the number of running events organized in natural and suburban areas is increasing.

The organizers of such runs believe that running close to nature is the best and the healthiest. Similar statements can be found in scientific papers. Running outside the urban agglomeration gives the possibility of contact with nature, which favors the regeneration of psychophysical forces and stress reduction. According to Bodin & Hartig – researchers dealing with the influence of the type of external environment on the psychological benefits of physical exercise consider that runners prefer running in parks and forests away from the urban environment because they perceive them as more conducive to mental regeneration (Bodin, Hartig 2003). Brymer & Gray add that athletes often create an intimate and mutual relationship with the natural world (Brymer, Gray a,b).

Motives of sports participation – theoretical background

Motivation is a crucial factor in maintaining physical activity (Molanorouzi, Khoo & Morris, 2015). Several theories are prominent in research on motivation related to leisure-time physical activity, including self-efficacy theory (SET; Bandura 1977, 2000), discussed human motivation primarily in terms of outcome expectations. Bandura labeled this individual difference self-efficacy and sought to measure it using task-specific scales. Although self-efficacy and outcome expectations were both hypothesized to affect motivation, he suggested that self-efficacy would play a larger role because “the types of outcomes people anticipate depend largely on their judgments of how well they will be able to perform in given situations” (Bandura 1986, p. 392). Bandura (1977a, 1997) formally defined perceived self-efficacy as personal

judgments of one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to attain designated goals, and he sought to assess its level, generality, and strength across contexts & activities. The level of self-efficacy refers to its dependence on the difficulty of a particular task. Strength of perceived efficacy is measured by the amount of one's certainty about performing a given task. These properties of self-efficacy judgments are measured using questionnaire items that are task specific, vary in difficulty, and capture degrees of confidence (e.g., from 0 to 100%). The transtheoretical model of behavior change (TTM; Prochaska & DiClemente 1983) is an integrative, biopsychosocial model to conceptualize the process of intentional behavior change. Whereas other models of behavior change focus exclusively on certain dimensions of change (e.g. theories focusing mainly on social or biological influences), the TTM seeks to include and integrate main constructs from other theories into a comprehensive theory of change that can be applied to a variety of behaviors, populations, and settings. Studies of change have found that people move through a series of stages when modifying behavior. While the time a person can stay in each stage is variable, the tasks required to move to the next stage are not. Certain principles and processes of change work best at each stage to reduce resistance, facilitate progress, and prevent relapse. Those principles include decisional balance, self-efficacy, and processes of change. Only a minority of a population at risk is prepared to take action at any given time. Guidance based on the TTM results in increased participation in the change process because it appeals to the whole population rather than the minority ready to take action. The stage construct represents a temporal dimension. Change implies phenomena occurring over time. Traditionally, behavior change was often construed as an event, such as quitting smoking, drinking, or overeating. TTM recognizes change as a process that unfolds over time, involving progress through a series of stages. While progression through the Stages of Change can occur in a linear fashion, a nonlinear progression is common. Often, individuals recycle through the stages or regress to earlier stages from later ones. Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan 1985) – motivation to engage in Physical Activity and Sport can include intrinsic and/or extrinsic aspects. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for the pleasure (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Intrinsically motivated individuals experience choice in their behavioral dispositions and an optimum level of challenge, thereby fulfilling their needs for competence and autonomy. Extrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for instrumental

reasons, such as reward and external pressures. Individuals who are motivated extrinsically-experience less optimal challenge or autonomy. Extrinsic motives are critical during the early steps of PA adoption, whereas intrinsic motives are crucial for the maintenance of PA (Deci & Ryan 1991). Limited research has specifically examined whether motivation differs for various types of physical activity. It is plausible that there is a relationship between motives for participation in PA and the types of PA that individuals choose. Studies that have reported the correspondence of participation motives with specific types of PA suggest systematic differences (Ryan, Frederick, Lepes, Rubio & Sheldon 1997). Those who participated in individual sports had higher interest/enjoyment and competence motivation, whereas those who participated in fitness or exercise activities had higher body-related motivation (Frederick & Ryan 1993). Different types of activity were discriminated by scores on social or affiliation, competition/ego, physical health, and mastery motives. Recently, Molanorouzi, Khoo, and Morris (2015) confirmed these trends in a large sample involved in diverse types of PA. Below we present the results of research on the motives of participation in a running event, which took place outside the limits of a big city and is still characterized by still quite low sports rank, so probably the highest class runners did not take part in this run.

Results of empirical research

In the eighth edition of the Independence Run in Luboń, which took place on November 11, 2018, on the hundredth anniversary of Poland regaining its independence, 1341 participants took part. Before the race, everyone sang the Polish national anthem. Despite the initial fears about runners' participation, which resulted from the organization of a similar run in Poznań, the organizers managed to reach a good limit. This shows that the Independence Run in Luboń, it already has a good reputation among runners. This was also influenced by the curiosity of the new route, the desire to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Independence and the fact that some runners preferred to participate in a more intimate event. The organizers also enjoyed a record number of sports fans gathered at the start and finish of the race, which was really impressive this year. Research on the motivation of participation in the run was carried out by means of a diagnostic survey using a standardized interview. 100 runners took part in the study. Table 1. presents the socio-demographic characteristics of surveyed participants.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of surveyed participants

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	
	N=100
<u>Sex</u>	%
Men	57
Women	43
<u>Age</u>	%
18–25	25
26–35	20
36–50	33
51 and more	22
<u>Education level</u>	%
Primary education	16
Vocational education	13
Secondary education	42
Incomplete higher education	8
Completed higher education	21
<u>Employment status</u>	%
School pupil	25
Student	10
Professionally active	53
Unemployed	7
Retired	5
<u>Place of residence (inhabitants)</u>	%

Village	17
City<10.000	14
City 10.000-100.000	27
City 100.000-500.000	17
City more than 500.000	25

Source: Own work on the basis of test results.

Mostly the men took part in the study (57%), most often aged 36-50 (33%), with secondary education (42%), and those who were professionally active (53%). Respondents most often came from cities 10,000-100,000 of inhabitants (27%) and from big cities (more than 500,000 of inhabitants) – 25%. Below are respondents' answers about the main motives of participation in a sports event. Respondents could choose more than one answer. The desire to celebrate independence was obvious to all runners. Respondents were also asked about the opinion about the event and its impact.

Table 2. Motives of participation in 8th edition of the Independence Run in Luboń

Groups of motives	N = 100
Group A – Motives within the scope of social orientation	%
Willingness to spend time with friends, keep in touch with them	37

The need to make new friends	27
The need to stand out from the crowd	25
Willingness to belong to the sports subculture of runners	23
<hr/>	
Group B –	
Motives within the scope of emotional orientation	%
Willingness to have fun and relax	35
When I run, I feel happy	33
The will to feel strong emotions related to the start	26
Willing to do something interesting, detachment from the monotony of everyday life	24

Because this activity is stimulating for me 11

Group C – Motives within the sports rivalry and competences	%
The will to check yourself	47
Desire to achieve your goal	41
Willingness to develop my passion for running and my sporting skills	32
Willingness to participate in the sports competition	17
	14

Desire to win
Group D –

Motives within the scope of health, physical condition and good look	%
Willingness to maintain good physical condition	43
Willingness to maintain good mental condition, well-being	39
I want to look good	34
I want to be healthy	27

Source: Own work on the basis of test results.

To what extent does participation in the 8th edition of Independence Run in Luboń encourage you to lead an active lifestyle? (According to WHO - the World Health Organization, an active lifestyle is understood as exercising for at least 150 minutes per week (moderate intensity effort) or at least 75 minutes per week (high intensity exercise).

(very low)

(very high)

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1%	2%	6%	12%	19%	22%	37%

Do you plan to participate in the next edition of the event Independence Run in Luboń in the future?

For sure	Very likely	Possible	Rather no	No
39%	40%	16%	4%	1%

Among the most important and most frequently reported motives of participation in the running event were: the will to check yourself (47%), willingness to maintain good physical condition (43%), desire to achieve your goal (41%), willingness to maintain good mental condition (39%) and willingness to spend time with friends (37%).

The research results are optimistic from the point of view of promoting health and physical activity. Respondents recognized that this type of event strongly encouraged them to lead an active lifestyle, in addition they intend to take part again in its next editions in the future.

Summary

According to test results mostly the men took part in the running event, most often aged 36-50, with secondary education, and those who were professionally active, Respondents most often came from cities 10,000-100,000 of inhabitants and from big cities (more than 500,000 of inhabitants). Among the most important and most frequently reported motives of participation in the running event were: the will to check yourself, willingness to maintain good physical condition, desire to achieve your goal, willingness to maintain good mood and mental condition and willingness to spend time with friends and relatives. Respondents recognized that this type of event strongly encouraged them to lead an active lifestyle, in addition they intend to take part again in its next editions in the future as well.

The article assumes that contemporary forms of sports and recreational activity contain mutually permeating elements of unwinding and relaxation connected with social orientation and rivalry orientation, as well as elements of sensation-seeking and excitement. An example of such an interference is recreational running, which is today one of the most popular recreational sports in Poland, and participation in organized running events such as marathons or half marathons is the result of searching for many specific sensations, including: a desire to challenge yourself and above all to compete.

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