

Trail races in Catalonia. First approach to management forms and organization characteristics

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Aim of the abstract

In recent years, there has been a global increase in the practice of running in Spain (Llopis & Vilanova, 2015). This increase has been even more exponential in trail races, demonstrated by the fact that more than 450 races are annually organised in Catalonia (Ropits Social Running, 2016). This growth is producing important negative effects on the natural conditions of the environment. Consequently, a better knowledge of the characteristics of these races is needed in order to regulate and improve their management. In lights of this, this research deals with the following question: which are the management forms and organization characteristics of trail races in Catalonia?

Theoretical background

On the one hand, in order to have a global vision we have used Theory of Organization Ecology, this helps us to understand the event as a part of a population and is normally affected by the factors of the environment or by other events (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). In this way, only few studies have studied several population of events (Getz, 2012), such as the work of Jaeger & Mykletun (2009), with the aim of creating a festival map of festivals in Finnmark, Norway; On the other hand, we have used the dimensions of analysis of a planned event identified by Getz (2012), that allow us to define the characteristics and forms of planning and managing events, these dimensions are the following: Design; Leadership; Organizational and inter-organizational behaviour; Operations and logistics; Marketing and communications; Resources and financial management; Risk, health and safety; Research, evaluation and information systems.

Methodology

Two main aspects were considered in order to create the design of the research: firstly, the described problem, focused on the lack of information around the management of trail races in Catalonia, and secondly, the research question from which the study theme has developed. Because of that, it is necessary the description of the phenomenon, and thus, to search the knowledge of study object from different views or dimensions, through different variables that allow us to understand and identify the characteristics and management of trail races. It is a transversal study because the information will be taken only one time in a single moment.

This research is based on a sample of trail races in Catalonia, we used a probabilistic sampling and stratified by Catalan provinces. We have selected 338 trail races being more than 73% of the total population of existing trail races, with a 2,7% margin of error and 95% level of confidence. Moreover, each of the 4 geographical stratum has 5% margin of error and 95% level of confidence.

Based on the extraction of 83 variables, from the previously dimensions, a questionnaire focused on trail races events was designed to analyse the management of the population of catalan trail races. Formed by 83 variables related on the previous dimensions. It consists on 57 questions; open and closed questions are combined with unencoded and coded responses.

The obtained data will be analysed, helping to get a description of the population of trail races, grouping trail races by means of cluster analysis and, finally, comparing trail races according to defined clusters and catalan provinces.

Results, discussion and implications

In the pre-test phase, the questionnaire was administered to 30 trail races managers, the first analysis of this results will be shown, offering a initial view of the situation. In practical terms, this tool will allow us to analyse the management of the population of catalan trail races, and thus, to categorize catalan trail races by clusters. This research will permit us to understand the current situation in Catalonia, and so, from the point of view of the whole population, it will give us the opportunity to improve management strategies of trail races.

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