

Ultra-endurance sport event participation: implications from a cycling event

Authors: Konstantinos Koronios, Ph.D. Candidate., M.B.A., M.Sc. (1), Psiloutsikou Marina, Ph.D., M.Sc. B.Sc. (2), Athanasios Kriemadis, Ph.D., M.B.A., M.A. (1)

Institutions:

1. Department of Sport Management, University of Peloponnese, Greece, Valiotti & Plataion, 23100 Sparti, Greece
2. School of Business, Athens University of Economics and Business, 76 Patission Street, Athens, Greece

E-mail: konskoron@hotmail.com

Aim of abstract - research question

Research into ultra-endurance sport events participation remains underdeveloped. Ultra-endurance events can be defined as the events which require at least six hours of exercise. The popularity of ultra-endurance events has led researchers to examine more extensively individuals' motives for participation in ultra-triathlon, ultra-running and ultra-swimming. Nevertheless, ultra-cycling has not received the same attention (Zingg et al., 2013). Ultra-cycling events are largely segregated by harsh trail circumstances and the amount of effort needed to participate in them is certainly a long way off the training required to obtain elemental health benefits. The aim of this research was to comprehend the intricacy of motivation underlying individuals' decision-making to participate in ultra-cycling events. Following research data from other ultra-endurance sports, we proposed that motivation is likely to arise from attractiveness of the event, recreation involvement with cycling and satisfaction from the event (Alexandris et al., 2011; Funk et al., 2011).

Theoretical background

Attractiveness of an ultra cycling event refers to the anticipated significance the specific event poses for an individual, as well as to the amusement, satisfaction and delight that is received from taking part to this (Alexandris et al., 2011). Previous research on sports provides evidence that event attractiveness has the capacity to strengthen the advancement of positive stances toward cycling commitment and future participation intentions (Kulczycki & Halpenny, 2014). Satisfaction from a sport event personates a cognitive assessment of the degree to which this event accomplishes a participant's subjective expectations. Hence, the perceived satisfaction from the sport event has the ability to enhance the formulation of favorable stances regarding event commitment and future participation intentions (Funk et al., 2011). Recreational involvement with cycling refers to the extent to which a person shows preference for this activity and the extent to which the latter affects their future participation and behavior (Koronios et al., 2015).

Methodology, research design and data analysis

The purpose of the research was to test the relationships among attractiveness, satisfaction and involvement to continue participation in ultra-cycling events. A quantitative method was used for the purposes of the study and the questionnaire developed was based on previous research of similar subjects and populations and items were assessed on interval scales (Alexandris et al., 2011; Kulczycki & Halpenny, 2014). Data were collected from cyclists during an ultra-cycling event in Northern Greece (257km). The questionnaires were distributed,

before the award ceremony, and were completed in the presence of the surveyors. A total of 146 questionnaires were successfully completed and analyzed by means of SPSS.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

The great majority of the respondents (95.2%) were men, middle aged (M=42.84, SD=9.29), currently employed (89.6%) half of them (46.2%) earned between €1,000 and €2,000 monthly and had higher education (59.5%) They trained outdoors (90.4%) 4.5 times per week (M=4.5, SD=1.34) for a total of 12 hours (M=12.61, SD=7.57) and their first participation in a cycling event had been at the age of 35 (M = 34.15, SD=10.42). Due to the unavailability of national statistics pertinent to the profile of Greek cyclists, it was not attainable to classify the extent to which this sample can be regarded as representative.

The intention to participate in future cycling events was high (80.7%). Multiple regression analysis supported the proposed hypotheses; the attractiveness of the event (ATR), the participants' involvement with cycling (INV) and their satisfaction from the current event (SAT) were discovered to have a significant effect on the intention to participate again [R²=0.483, F(3, 137) = 42.739]. The respective equation was: IP=1.677+0.539*ATR+0.010*INV+0.109*SAT. All coefficients were significant at p<0.001, except for the coefficient for satisfaction, which was significant at p<0.1.

The findings provide evidence that the attractiveness of a cycling event as well as the degree of involvement that the participants show with cycling explain almost half of the variance in their intention for repeated participation. Collectively, findings support a three-dimensional view of motivation with determinants related to the attractiveness of the event, the recreation involvement with cycling and the satisfaction from the event. Therefore, these determinants will empower ultra-endurance event's managers to optimize marketing communication, embellish the event experience and recognize key elements of the participants' decision-making process, in their intention to cultivate cyclists' behavioral and attitudinal loyalty.

References

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