

Exercising Participation: Exploring The Role Of Constraints On Activity Involvement And Loyalty

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Aim of the research

Numerous researches have reported that the majority of individuals in western societies are knowledgeable about the various physiological, psychological and social benefits obtained through exercising and have higher eagerness to exercise. Nonetheless, perceived constraints to leisure-based exercising have largely been ignored, with more than half of individuals worldwide to be incapable to negotiate these constraints and develop the recommended exercising involvement (Alexandris, Kouthouris, Funk, & Chatzigianni, 2008). This confidence or trust in an individual's capacity to overwhelm any constraints is characterized as negotiation-efficacy (Ridinger, Funk, Jordan, & Kaplanidou, 2012). A comparatively new concept, negotiation-efficacy would obviously be a decisive factor associated with participation, involvement and loyalty in a plurality of leisure exercising activities. The aim of this study is to broaden our knowledge concerning the effect of anticipated constraints on exercising involvement and loyalty, as well as the relationship among them.

Theoretical background

The notion of negotiation-efficacy emanates from previous studies on leisure constraints. According to earlier researches, a leisure constraint can be defined as any impediment which hinders taking part in leisure activities. Constraints affect not only participation versus non-participation, but have also a direct impact on other behavioral aspects, such as exercising involvement and loyalty. Furthermore, as supported by previous researches, loyalty also represents one of the main outcomes of leisure involvement (Iwasaki and Havitz, 2004). These impacts are regulated by individuals' constraint negotiation capability and their willingness to overwhelm any constraints. The negotiation-efficacy procedure moved the point of interest beyond mere recognition of factors hindering participation in exercising activities, towards an understanding and synthesis of behavioral models in which constraint factors serve as individual and societal antecedents of exercising involvement and loyalty (Iwasaki and Havitz, 2004). This implies that constraints faced by individuals obstruct them from developing involvement and loyalty to exercising activities.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of constraints on exercising involvement and exercising loyalty. An online quantitative questionnaire based on previous studies (Alexandris et al., 2008) was developed to collect the empirical data from the exercising participants. A total of 1,230 questionnaires were successfully completed and analyzed by means of SPSS.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

The majority of the respondents (63.4%) were male, with mean age 37.8 years ($SD = 10.25$) and currently employed (79.4%). They trained 3.5 times per week ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.6$) and their first participation in a running event occurred at the age of 32 ($M = 32.21$, $SD = 10.66$).

The exploratory factor analysis of the constraints' scale revealed the seven factors explaining 77.67% of the variance after eliminating two items due to cross-loading ($KMO = 0.92$, Barlett's test $p < 0.001$). Following previous studies (Alexandris et al., 2008; Alexandris, Tsorbatzoudis, & Grouios, 2002), these factors were labeled as "psychological", "lack of time", "lack of knowledge", "facilities/services", "accessibility/finance", "lack of partners" and "lack of interest". Constraint factors as well as loyalty and the three facets of involvement (attraction, centrality and self-expression) were tested for their reliability, with Cronbach's alpha scores to vary from $\alpha = 0.79$ to $\alpha = 0.91$. Descriptive statistics showed centrality and attraction to have the highest mean scores; 3.79 and 3.27 respectively, while the lack of time ($M = 2.9$) and lack of facilities/services ($M = 2.4$) were the most important constraints.

Regression analysis revealed a significant effect of involvement dimensions on loyalty, predicting 44.6% of its variance ($F = 331.2$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, the bivariate analysis showed a significant correlation between loyalty and two constraints; "psychological" and "lack of interest" ($p < 0.001$). Finally, a significant correlation was noticed between centrality and all constraints ($p < 0.001$) as well as among the rest involvement facets (attraction and self-expression) and most of the constraint dimensions.

The above results support the fact that all the facets of involvement explain almost half of the variance in the participant's loyalty, being in line with previous research (Koronios, Psiloutsikou, & Kriemadis, 2016). In turn, involvement dimensions are influenced negatively by the constraints that runners face. Therefore, several strategies could be developed by event and resort managers based on these dimensions and recognize individuals' constraints in order to enhance their involvement and loyalty.

References

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