

The Engagement of Values through Charity Sport Event Participation

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Participatory sport events aligned with a charitable cause have emerged as viable fundraising mechanisms for charitable organisations. The popularity of these charity sport events relates to both the significance of sport participation within the cultural fabric, as well as the increase in charitable organizations and charitable giving throughout society. Beyond the success charity sport events have generated in terms of attracting participants and donations, these events have emerged as meaningful experiences for participants (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008). The meaning derived from the event experience corresponds with a pronounced shift in consumer attitude towards ethical and social sensitivity (Ebenkamp & Stark, 1999), whereby need for belonging and self-realisation have emerged as important individual needs (Pringle & Thompson, 1999).

Using the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) (Funk & James, 2001) as the theoretical framework, this research explores the factors that contribute to this meaning through an examination of the motives and values that contribute to participant attachment to the event. The PCM presents a framework advancing processes facilitating the movement among the stages of awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance; which can be applied to active sport participation (Stewart, Smith, & Nicholson, 2003). This research focuses specifically on the attachment process of the PCM framework.

Within the attachment process, core and contextual motives satisfied through sport participation can interact, leading to attachment to the event (Funk & James, 2006). In the charity sport event context, recreation-based factors (e.g., Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979; Zhang & Lam, 1999) may represent core factors, while individual motives for charitable giving (e.g., Amos, 1982; Hibbert & Horne, 1996; Marx, 2000) may represent contextual factors. These core and contextual motives have been found to drive charity sport event participation and their interaction contributes to increased meaning and importance held for the event (Filo et al., 2008). Funk and James (2006) suggest that values serve as inputs within the attachment process. Values have been applied to better understand consumer behavior (Kahle, Beatty, & Homer, 1986), as values impact the meaning held for consumer activities (Kahle & Kennedy, 1989).

In outlining the attachment process, Funk and James (2006) highlight a contribution from the motives satisfied through event participation, along with an individual's values. However, specifics regarding this contribution, and the relative impact of each component to this contribution, are not provided. Filo, Funk, and O'Brien (In Press) conducted 32 one-on-one interviews to explore values in the charity sport event context and uncovered three value dimensions: Camaraderie, Cause, and Competency; that contribute to attachment to the event. The current research extends this work through an examination of the relative contribution of values and motives to attachment to a charity sport event. In making this examination, scales are developed for the dimensions of values, and the following research question and hypotheses are advanced:

Research Question 1: How do values and motives contribute to event attachment in the charity sport event context?

Hypothesis 1a: Values will make a stronger contribution to event attachment than motives in the charity sport event context.

Hypothesis 1b: Collectively, values and motives will make a stronger contribution to event attachment in the charity sport event context than values or motives separately.

The method for this study used a post-event questionnaire to collect responses (N=568) from participants in the 2007 Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) LIVESTRONG Challenge. The 2007 LAF LIVESTRONG Challenge allowed participants to choose among walking, running, and cycling options with all proceeds going towards the LAF's mission to inspire and empower individuals living with cancer.

Participants were administered an online questionnaire that included eight Likert scale items to measure four recreation motives (Beard & Ragheb, 1983); seven Likert scale items to measure four motives for charitable giving (Dawson, 1988; Gladden, Mahony, & Apostolopoulou, 2004); six Likert scale items to measure Event Attachment (Funk & James, 2006); and nine Likert scale items to measure values of Camaraderie, Cause, and Competency. The items employed to assess values were developed using the steps suggested by Churchill (1979), in which definitions guide the development of sample items, which are reviewed by external examiners, and then purified through the assessment of reliability and validity. Confirmatory factor analysis supported a three facet model of values.

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Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship among motives and event attachment, and values (e.g., Lindenberger & Potter, 1998). Results of the hierarchical linear regression analysis revealed three main findings. First, Social ($b = .21$) motive contributed to Event Attachment. Meanwhile, Reciprocity ($b = .21$), Self-Esteem ($b = .10$), Need to Help Others ($b = .21$), and Desire to Improve the Charity ($b = .27$) motives also contribute to Event Attachment, with 46.7% of the variance explained overall $F(8,559) = 63.14$. Next, Values ($b = .77$) contribute to Event Attachment with 58.8% of the variance explained $F(1,566) = 809.06$. Finally, Values ($b = .62$), Social ($b = .08$), Physical ($b = -.15$), Reciprocity ($b = .11$), Need to Help Others ($b = .11$), and Desire to Improve the Charity ($b = .13$) motives also contribute to Event Attachment, with 65.7% of the variance explained overall $F(9,558) = 121.46$. Taken together, these findings reveal that Values account for more variance in Event Attachment than the eight motives, while Values and motives account for more variance than Values on their own. Findings revealed that values and motives contribute to event attachment.

This contribution was revealed through a significant β weight for Values, as well as select motives, within regression analysis. These findings suggest that the more likely the participant agreed the event tied to Values and satisfied Social, Reciprocity, Self-Esteem, Need to Help Others, and Desire to Improve the Charity motives, the more emotional, symbolic and functional meaning a participant ascribed to the 2007 LAF LIVESTRONG Challenge. The values engaged through the event contribute to attachment to the event on their own, but also collectively contribute with core and contextual motives, to the emotional, symbolic and functional meaning ascribed to the event (event attachment).

The interaction among values and motives supports the notion that values and motives contribute jointly to the formation of attachment (Funk & James, 2006). By contributing to attachment to the charity sport event, the interaction among values and motives represents a process whereby a variety of inputs lead to a stronger psychological connection to the event that serves as an expression of the individual (Hoyer & MacInnis, 1997). With participant attachment to the event in place, event managers can foster loyalty to the event through further engagement of values via customization and structural bonding. Year-round social events and personalized training programs for events represent customized means by which event managers could leverage values towards allegiance.