Motivation and identification: Comparing participants at two different types of special sport events

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Understanding the concepts of motivation and identification is of great significance to sport managers and event organizers, as it assists them to better tailor events and supplementary activities (Dwyer & Fredline, 2008b), and thus make events more attractive and successful in the future. By researching athletes' participation motives, sport events can be structured to fulfil needs and thereby maximize performance and ensure continuation (Fung, 1992). In addition, identification can have a considerable effect on consumption choices and preferences (Snelgrove et al., 2008), and it is proven to be a useful concept to effectively market sport events (Green, 2001).

Different types of events attract different types of participants. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to examine motives and identity of athletes at two different types of special sport events, both hosted in the same medium sized Canadian city. One event is a regular sport event (i.e., the Pan American Junior Athletics Championships); the other is a cause-related sport event (i.e., the Canadian Transplant Games). Both events can be defined as 'special sport events', i.e. "events that are held annually or irregularly (as opposed to events that comprise school or league competitions)" (Dwyer & Fredline, 2008a, p. 385).

In line with Stebbins (1992), athletes at the regular sport event can be considered serious leisure participants, since they are sport amateurs pursuing a career while acquiring and expressing special skills, knowledge, and experience. Athletes at the cause-related sport event can be considered casual leisure participants, as they partake in the event more for enjoyment and sociable purposes. They do not necessarily need special training to enjoy it (Stebbins, 1997). It is expected that serious leisure participants will value their social identity higher and more central to their self-identity than their casual leisure counterparts (Green & Jones, 2005). Further, it is anticipated that serious leisure participants will rate the competency-mastery motives as most significant (Hastings et al., 1995), as opposed to the social motives for the casual leisure participants (Filo et al., 2008). Lastly, it is expected that the social impact motives will be the driving force for participation in the cause-related sport event (Cornwell & Smith, 2001; Scott & Solomon, 2003).

Quantitative data was collected through a written questionnaire from participants at the two special sport events. The regular sport event attracted 443 participants (labelled RSP hereafter), of whom 147 returned the questionnaire (response rate = 33%); 119 questionnaires were usable for further analyses (M age = 18.30, SD = 1.50; 55% male and 45% female). The cause-related sport event attracted 124 participants (labelled CRSP hereafter), of whom 106 were eligible to be in this study (i.e., 14 years of age and older). Overall, 75 returned the questionnaire (response rate = 71%) of which 74 were usable for further analyses (M age = 45, SD = 15; 43% male and 57% female).

A modified version of Beard and Ragheb's (1983) Leisure Motivation Scale was used to measure four dimensions of leisure motivation, i.e.: intellectual, social, competency-mastery and stimulus-avoidance dimension (see also Snelgrove et al., 2008). The social impact dimension was self developed, based on four items (e.g., to remove barriers about organ donation). Shamir's (1992) Leisure Identity Scale was used to measure self- and social identity. The response range for all items was a six-point Likert scale from: strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). Subscale item scores were averaged to form an aggregated measure of the intended motives and identification dimensions.

Alpha coefficients are calculated to confirm internal consistencies of all subscales in each participant group. Factor analyses are used to test the dimensionality of identification and social impact. Differences in motivation between RSP and CRSP are measured using independent sample t-tests. Differences in motivation dimensions within the CRSP are measured using one-sample t-tests. Preliminary results indicate that internal consistencies are acceptable for both groups with regard to the intellectual (α RSP = .83; α CRSP = .78) and social (α RSP = .82; α CRSP = .85) dimensions. Internal consistency of the stimulus-avoidance dimension is acceptable for the CRSP (α = .81), but not for the RSP (α = .48). The opposite holds true for the competency-mastery dimension, which is internally consistent for the RSP (α = .77), but not for the CRSP (α = .49). Therefore, the stimulus-avoidance and competency-mastery dimensions are left out for further analyses at this stage. The RSP score significantly higher on the intellectual dimension (M = 4.74, SD = 1.12) than the CRSP (M = 3.46, SD = 1.24), $t(191) = -7.42$, $p < .001$. The RSP are more eager to learn about athletics. As expected, the CRSP score significantly higher on the social dimension (M = 5.41, SD = 0.67) than the RSP (M = 4.85, SD = 1.02), $t(191) = 4.20$, $p < .001$. The CRSP are more into the

event for social reasons. The self-developed social impact dimension is internally consistent ($\alpha = 0.72$). Principle components analysis indicates only one eigenvalue exceeding unity (> 1), with the first principle component capturing 61% of the variance in the four items. As expected, the social impact dimension is the most significant motive for CRSP ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 0.62$), and it is significantly higher than the social dimension ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 0.67$), $t(73) = 69.68$, $p < .001$, the stimulus-avoidance dimension ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.96$), $t(73) = 34.33$, $p < .001$, and the intellectual dimension ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.24$), $t(73) = 23.96$, $p < .001$. Athletic identity is two-dimensional for the RSP. Principle components analysis indicates two eigenvalues exceeding unity (> 1), with the first principle component capturing 35% (self-identity) and the second capturing 24% (social identity) of the variance in the six items. On the contrary, athletic identity is single dimensional for the CRSP. Principle components analysis indicates one eigenvalue exceeding unity (> 1), with the first principle component capturing 62% of the variance in the six items.

These preliminary results are in line with previous findings in the literature (e.g., Cornwell & Smith 2001; Filo et al., 2008; Green & Jones, 2005; Scott & Solomon, 2003; Stebbins, 1992).The following steps in the analysis need to determine the structure of the relations among demographics, motivation, identification and types of participants, using regression analyses and tests of linear restrictions. The final results will help event organizers to better cater their events towards the different participant groups.