Participants’ Evaluation of Satisfaction with a Charity Event in its Inaugural Year: Cyclebetes--A Cycling Relay across Canada

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Introduction

There is an extremely large number of non-profit charity events held every year. These events are not just limited to Canada, but occur worldwide (Liao, Foreman, & Sargeant, 2001). Charity sporting events in particular have become an increasingly popular way for charitable organizations to gain awareness and raise money for their cause (Scott & Solomon, 2003). With the large number of events being organized, it can be difficult for a charity event to stand out amongst the rest, especially if the charity is new and operating in its first year. Studies have shown that it can cost an organization a considerable amount to try to attract new participants to a charity event, whereas it would cost much less if they were to have the same participants stay involved and donate year after year (Bennett, 2006). Considering non-profit events usually run on a tight budget, keeping the same participant base is very important to an event’s success. Therefore, it is prudent to create a connection between the participant and the event. Filo, Funk, and O’Brien (2009) determined that a participant becomes connected to an event via four different stages: awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance. A participant must have some sort of pleasant experience or feel some sort of satisfaction after participating in the event before becoming attached and loyal to it.

Studies on volunteers have explored why people become attached or connected to events and continue to volunteer. Farrell, Johnston, and Twynam (1998) have expressed their thoughts of volunteer satisfaction being fundamental to the success of the initial event as well as the success of future events. Similarly, if people are satisfied with the volunteering experience as a whole, then people will continue to volunteer (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991). The importance that satisfaction has on volunteers, which influences their decisions to return and volunteer again, may also provide insight regarding participants’ intentions to continue to participate in an event.

The purpose of this study was to examine participants’ satisfaction with Cyclebetes, a cycling charity event in its inaugural year, and to determine whether there is a relationship between satisfaction and intention to participate in the future. It was hypothesized that those who are more satisfied with the event will admit to a greater likelihood of participating in the event in the future.

Method

A three-part written survey was administered to 136 adult participants out of a possible 186 registered adult participants at all four of the different Cyclebetes cycling events. The main event was the provincial relay across the country with stops for community cycling charity rides in Mississauga, ON, Vancouver, BC, and Victoria, BC. Part A included questions pertaining to the participant’s satisfaction with the way the event was organized and operated. It included 54 items in nine categories: pre-event registration, pre-event and event communication, fundraising and the cause, the event area and set-up, safety, the bike routes, entertainment, food and drink, and volunteers. Participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a seven-point Likert scale. Part B contained questions regarding the participant’s cycling experience and whether he/she was satisfied enough with the Cyclebetes event to participate again and/or invite others to participate in the future. Part C contained three demographic questions specific to age, sex, and completed education.

Results

Data analysis is in progress as the event has just been completed. Cronbach’s alpha and exploratory factor analysis will be conducted to examine the strength and validity of the satisfaction items. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and histograms, will be used to determine any patterns or trends. Analyses of variance and t-tests will be run to determine any significant differences between location, gender, and age. Regression analyses will...
be conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between satisfaction and intention to participate in the future.

Discussion

Initial examination of the data appears to suggest that greater satisfaction will lead to a greater likelihood of participating in the event in the future. The different cycling events (i.e., provincial relay versus community rides) may provide different results regarding satisfaction, as none of the events were identical. It is anticipated that the provincial relay participants may be an exception to the initial hypothesis. That is, their satisfaction with the categories may not directly affect their intention to participate again; this is due to the fact that these participants experienced a very unique event, making close personal connections with a small group of participants while taking on the challenging task of riding across the country. Therefore, their overall satisfaction may reflect their overall experience rather than their satisfaction with the individual categories alone.

References


