The Impact of Event Satisfaction and Running Involvement on Quality of Life

Mikihiro Sato, Temple University
Jeremy Jordan (Advisor), Temple University
Daniel Funk (Advisor), Temple University

Marketing Abstract 2013-166

Friday, May 31, 2013 3:10 PM
20-minute oral presentation (including questions) (Room 410)

Improving quality of life (QOL) has been a major lifestyle and policy goal for individuals, communities, and nations (Costanza et al., 2007). As such, academics and practitioners have examined how some people achieve higher levels of QOL compared with others to develop successful government policies and programs that promote QOL (Rodríguez, Látková, & Sun, 2008). Among various activities in our daily life, researchers have identified that physically active leisure (e.g., jogging, walking) has played an integral role in enhancing life quality. Benefits of physically active leisure include better physical and mental health, increased social support, and higher life satisfaction (Leung & Lee, 2005; Lloyd & Auld, 2002).

As a form of physically active leisure, participation in mass participant sport events (MPSE) has increased over the last decade. Despite the slowed economy, the estimated number of U.S. road race finishers in 2011 was a record 13.9 million, representing a 7% increase from 2010 (Running USA, 2012). MPSEs represent a population-based intervention that can increase physical activity (Funk et al., 2011), and thus can potentially serve as a catalyst to improve participants’ QOL; however, an empirical investigation about whether participation in MPSEs contributes to an individuals' QOL has been ignored. More importantly, despite ample evidence of the influence of physically active leisure on QOL, there is limited theoretical understanding of how physically active leisure enhances people's life quality (Iwaski, 2007). A better understanding of the impact of participant sport events on QOL would broaden our knowledge of the role of physically active leisure on people's lives.

The purpose of this study is to examine how running activities (e.g., event participation, training for the event) would influence QOL. To better understand the impact of running activities on people's life, the current study employs the bottom-up spillover theory of subjective well-being (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Diener, 1984). The basic premise of bottom-up spillover is that the affect or attitude with a specific consumption experience influences satisfaction with various life domains, which in turn spills over to overall life satisfaction (Peterson, Ekici, & Hunt, 2010; Sirgy et al., 2011). Overall life satisfaction, the most common subjective indicator of QOL, is viewed as an attitude that arises from a global cognitive evaluation of one’s satisfaction with his or her life (Heller, Watson, & Ilies, 2004). Life domain satisfaction represents satisfaction with key areas in our daily life and is the most proximal determinant of overall life satisfaction (Schimmack & Oishi, 2005). To capture the affect and attitude associated with running activities, this study explores three constructs of event satisfaction, behavioral involvement with running, and psychological involvement with running that may influence our various life domains. Drawing on the bottom-up spillover theory, the current study develops the following hypotheses:

H1: Life domain satisfaction will be positively correlated with overall life satisfaction.
H2: Event satisfaction will be positively correlated with life domain satisfaction.
H3: Behavioral involvement with running will be positively correlated with life domain satisfaction.
H4: Psychological involvement with running will be positively correlated with life domain satisfaction.

This study recruited participants through a survey panel from a running event held in the Northeastern portion of the United States. The panel consisted of 4,175 members who participated in the 2011 event and indicated a willingness to be part of future research studies on running. A total of 1,173 respondents completed the survey for a response rate of 28.1%, and 827 respondents who indicated participation in the 2012 event were included for the further analysis. A summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents revealed that participants were aged between 20 and 76 with a mean age of 38; 47% had an annual household income of $100,000 or more; 66% were female; and 55% were married. No significant differences by key demographics were identified between the original panel members and respondents.
A survey instrument was developed by identifying appropriate measurements from previous literature. Overall life satisfaction among event participants was assessed with the five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Based on Sirgy et al.’s (2011) items, 10 life domains were developed that can be impacted by experience associated with running activities. Event satisfaction was assessed using a three-item measure adapted from Oliver (1980). Running involvement was assessed by three items for each of the involvement facets of pleasure, centrality, and sign (Beaton et al., 2011). Participants were also asked three indicators of behavioral involvement with running (Funk et al., 2011).

The theoretical model was analyzed using partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The validity of all measurement items was satisfactory. After controlling for demographic variables, R-square values of overall life satisfaction were .32, suggesting that the model explains a substantial amount of variance for overall life satisfaction among participants. Life domain satisfaction had a significant and medium effect on overall life satisfaction (β=.50, p<.001, f²=.349), confirming H1. Event satisfaction was a significant predictor of life domain satisfaction (β=.14, p<.001), which supports H2; however, the effect size for this relationship was small (f²=.03). Behavioral involvement with running was insignificant on life domain satisfaction (β=.00, p=.94, f²=.00), indicating that H3 was not supported. Psychological involvement with running had a significant and medium effect on life domain satisfaction (β=.50, p<.001, f²=.31), confirming H4. Collectively, R-square values of life domain satisfaction were .32, indicating that event satisfaction, behavioral involvement with running, and psychological involvement with running explained a substantial proportion of the variation of life domain satisfaction in the model.

The results have several implications. First, using the bottom-up spillover theory, our findings provide a theoretical explanation about how experience associated with running activities could enhance people’s life quality. Also, this study extends the application of the bottom-up spillover theory within the context of mass participant sport events by incorporating event satisfaction and running involvement into the model. Further, our findings suggest that MPSEs can be a possible population-based intervention to enhance participants’ QOL by providing positive experience through running activities. This provides potential non-economic benefits for hosting participant sport events through enhancing participants’ QOL, which could complement economic values of sport events (Diener & Seligman, 2004).

This study also represents initial empirical evidence between psychological involvement with running and QOL. Our findings suggest that psychological involvement with running is a significant predictor of life domain satisfaction, but behavioral involvement with running is not. Because behavioral involvement and psychological involvement had moderate correlations (r =.33), some level of behavioral involvement will be necessary in predicting participants’ life satisfaction. Nevertheless, because measurements of behavioral involvement do not require people’s evaluation of their life, behavioral involvement seems insufficient to explain life quality. Leisure activities can potentially lead to the promotion of life quality through creating meanings in their life (Iwasaki, 2007). The significant and medium effect of psychological involvement on QOL implies that stable psychological connection with running would enhance participants’ life quality through creating meaning of running in their life.