

**The Relationship between Runners' Environmental Paradigm and Their Motives to Participate in an Urban or Rural Marathon**

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The popularity of road races skyrocketed with the number of running event finishers increasing from 8.62 million in 2000 to 17.11 million in 2015 (Running USA, 2016). Consistent with the increase in the number of runners, opportunities to compete in organized events are up 8% from 2014 with growth in each of the various types of events. Running festivals (i.e., events with more than one race distance) is reaching a level in which differentiation is paramount to sustainability as the marketplace is becoming more saturated. The destination may provide a potential differentiating factor, and has previously been argued as a potential motivator of participation (Aicher & Brenner, 2015).

The landscape and setting has always been of interest when examining tourists' motivations, but this interest in the destination has more recently been examined within the sport event tourism literature as well (Hungenberg, 2015; Kulczycki & Halpenny, 2015). Beyond the role that the destination has on motives to visit, a more recent concern has been the relationship that a person's care and concern for the environment plays on the types of tourist activities they choose to pursue. Environmental sustainability (ES) has been a topic of growing concern for the sport event and tourism industries, particularly at the mega event level (Thibault, 2009). In a content analysis of ES research, Mallen, Stevens, and Adams (2011) pointed out that while a great deal of attention has been given to understanding sustainable practices by the national and international sport practitioners, there have been limited academic studies analyzing sport sustainability.

Krugell and Saayman (2013) explained that more tourism providers are aware and attempting to provide a greener experience. This sustainable focus often requires higher capital and operating costs, so Krugell and Saayman (2013) measured runners' willingness to pay to offset these sustainability costs, and found that runners expressed a willingness to pay an additional fee to offset sustainability efforts. Differences were present among runners across age and occupation, but called for future research to examine the runners' knowledge and concern about the environment and climate change to get a fuller picture of how tourism providers should operate.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between a half-marathon runners' environmental paradigm (how environmentally conscientious they are) with their various motives for participating in a half marathon race. Furthermore, this study aims to compare the results between runners who chose to participate in an urban race versus those who chose to participate in a rural race location.

Partnering with two different running festivals (one urban and one rural), participants from each race destination will be asked to complete an online survey upon completion of the event. The survey instrument is comprised of four sections: the 15 item revised New Environmental Paradigm (NEP; Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, & Jones, 2000), and the 36 item Sport Tourism Motivation Scale (STMS; Hungenberg, 2015), behavior dimensions, and travel-related and demographics questions. Together, these items are designed to understand the relationship between a person's perspective on the environment, and how that relates to their motives for attending a specific event.

Data analysis will first include calculating the descriptive statistics to compare the demographic variables of race participants. Descriptive statistics will then be calculated for all other variables including the NEP and motivational profile. To examine the relationship between NEP and half-marathon runners' motives to participate in an urban vs. national park series race, a logistic regression will be used to try to classify runners into the urban or rural races. This will enable researchers to understand which motives (e.g., travel exploration, social needs, competition) are more

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predictive of selecting one of two race formats (i.e., urban vs. national park series).

Data collection for this research is currently in progress, thus no results can be articulated at this time. Based on the literature review, we expect the following two results to emerge from this research. First, it is expected that runners participating in rural races, which are located in regions with scenic landscapes, and may exhibit a closer connection with nature, will have a different orientation toward the environment from runners who chose an urban race. Secondly, it is expected that there will be predictable differences in the motives for which the runners choose to participate in a rural vs. urban race settings.

The addition of the environmental paradigm component stands to extend current sport event tourism literature both theoretically and practically. Analyzing race participants' perceptions of the environment alongside other event tourism motives stands to extend a lacking area of sport research. If the results support our prediction, this research will further demonstrate rural athletes' intimate relationship with their competitive settings (Williams, Hamilton, & Kachmer, 2001), illustrating a distinctive characteristic between athletes competing in natural, versus artificially manufactured environments. Practically, the results from this investigation may support race and other event organizers by further specifying the event components that best attract runners to urban vs. rural races. These practical findings may offer specific insight on whether the costs involved in making races greener or emphasizing sustainable practices, are worth the investments (Krugell & Saayman, 2013), and worth highlighting in marketing efforts.