Relationship Between Social Media Use, Athletic Identity, and Perceived Competence Among Marathoners

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ABSTRACT: *The main purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between social media use, athletic identity, and perceived competence among marathoners in UiTM Seremban. 315 respondents were involved in this study. To serve the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was developed through Kelleher & Romero (2013) to test the relationship of social media use, athletic identity, and perceived competence among the marathoners. In descriptive analysis, the social media use showed a very high domain of mean score 4.21 (SD=0.68) compared to athletic identity and perceived competence. Pearson's Correlation relationship between social media use and athletic identity indicated a r value p<0.256 which has shown a positive but weak connection. On the other hand, the correlation between social media use and perceived competence showed a significant and positive relationship but also weak with r value p<0.356. Furthermore, this study showed that the social media use influences marathoner's athletic identity and perceived competence. The findings of the study will provide a theory and understanding in sport marketing and motivation. Moreover, other universities and sport organizations can use this information to help them in managing events and students may develop their motivation intrinsic as athletic identity and perceived competence.*
KEYWORDS: *Marathon, Social Media Use, Athletic Identity, Perceive Competence, Sport Involvement*

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, there are many factors that encourage people to participate in marathons across the world. Marathon event is a recreational activity which has experienced an exceptional development over the past years, as many individuals consider this as an appropriate option for recreationally based physical activity (Psiloutsikou & Leivaditi, 2016). According to Achen (2017), involvement in marathon event is part of individuals' future participation and behaviour through social media presence; people can interact online and observe for more upcoming marathon races or events. In measuring social media use, it is important to understand how social media marketing strategy can tie people's participation and sport organizations and how the goals of social media marketing drive are measured (Achen, 2017). On social networking platform, users primarily connect with people who they have some sort of connection with. This prompt commonly expanded trust among the users on the platform and of shared content by others (Nufer, 2016).

Besides, the use of social media attracts more runners and spectators who are interested in the marathon event. Those who participated in long distance running have better fitness level and healthy lifestyle compared to passive ones. However, it is important to engage in marathon at young age. Participants aged 18–30 years old are more motivated and engaged in competing in the marathon as they can grow the interest with their age of group especially students to promote active lifestyles (Waśkiewicz et al., 2019). The students who participated in marathon had higher interest and enjoyment and have better physical condition and mental healthiness (Malchrowicz-Mośko et al., 2018). In spite of the fact that there is a little research done on students' participation in marathon and the impact of social media platform towards marathon interest likewise should be explored. Therefore, it needs a better comprehension on how individuals first find out about the races and sources that have been utilized to gain information about the forthcoming race (Murphey et. al., 2016). Social media can create awareness to people in which it improves publicity through the Internet that makes it easier to get the access to the online world for any upcoming marathon events (Huang, 2017). Therefore, many interesting and attractive marathon events can be developed to make every event special and unique following its environment.

The popularity of athletes and their influence on sports have been issued by the researchers and marketing experts, in which its consumption faces theoretical and practical challenges. However, many studies in sport management fields have looked at consumer behaviours driven by team identity and how the athletes managed impressions on social media. (Yiran Su, 2019). The previous issue was used to understand where runners originally found out about marathon and the preferred channel used in gathering information about the

marathon (Murphey MS, 2016). The variance of information can incorporate anything from marketing of the event and event fulfilment to social media or word of mouth influence (Gensler, S. 2017). University students have more access to social media (Malchrowicz-Mośko et al., 2018) but they may be overwhelmed by the diverse options for entertainment, extracurricular, and social activities on a college campus or they may simply be unaware of the recreation department offerings the news about any sports event (Bayne & Cianfrone, 2013). This led to questions on how the athletes' identity and perceived competence are related to social media. Some researchers have investigated the motives of students attending marathon event however, it has been allotted to the thought of diversion inclusion with running for their athletic identification. This can influence a person's future interest and conduct which suggest the significance of amusement action as a major aspect of a person's understanding about life in perceived competence.

1.1 Social Media Use with Athletic Identity

In marathon running and other sport programs, most factors that are related to intrinsic motivation help every individual in the success of completion and continuance of the event. According to Horton and Mack (2000), they found that marathon runners with higher athletic identity have a better athletic performance and commitment in running. While constructing individual self, social media influences more people to make announcements in public and be observed by many people. These are opportunities where a person can identify himself or herself as marathon runners to others (Kelleher & Romero, 2013). The athletic body has come to reflect the development of an aspiring self. A fit body is aligned with symbolic capital and represents professionalism and achievement, according to a study done on middle-class males (Baas, 2016). This shows that the process of athletic identity into one's self-concept has indicated the dedication towards physical fitness. Therefore, extrinsic motivations are also at play. An individual who has announced plans to run may feel additional pressure to do so in order to avoid adverse effects that he or she may perceive as a result of failing to achieve the objective.

1.2 Social Media Use with Perceived Competence

Via social media, perceived competence for marathon running may be increased. The possibility of behaviour adoption and its relation to the perceived competence of a person have been examined by many researchers, using terms such as sophistication, perceived self-efficacy and feasibility (Kelleher & Romero, 2013). Besides, the environments promote competence that facilitates the intrinsic motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), people determine their stage of adoption on the basis of perceptions to carry their abilities out for specific behaviour. Individuals may receive information regarding competence in the form of direct feedback from social media. Postings on social media demonstrate to individuals that marathon is an attainable behaviour by showing their peers, people who have experienced success as well as providing through competence –promoting feedback (Tunc-Aksan & Akbay, 2019). Previous research has discovered personal achievement, competition, health and fitness, social influence, stress relief, and self-improvement to be primary motivations and inspirations for participation in marathon (Murphey, 2016) as the main factors that influence students' attendance in marathon event. The students' participation has their own factors but the main question is the source of information to attend the marathon event. This issue emerged in marathon races and among Social Network Services (SNS) users, which leads to the question, whether is there any difference in the relationship between social media use, athletic identity, and perceived competence among marathoners in UiTM Seremban. This study has several research objectives which are:

RO 1: To determine the social media use, level of athletic identity, and perceived competence among marathoners in UiTM Seremban.

RO 2: To identify the relationship between social media use and athletic identity among marathoners in UiTM Seremban.

RO 3: To identify the relationship between social media use and perceived competence among marathoners in UiTM Seremban.

In this study, students will understand how influential social media use towards university students' engagement, how they get the information of the event and their intention to participate in marathon event. The athletic identity of the students and their perceived competence will attract peers to attend in marathon or any sports event.

II.   METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research to generate numerical data that transformed into statistical analysis. The quantitative method used was an online questionnaire. An estimated number of total population of students from Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR), UiTM Seremban Campus, Negeri Sembilan is 786 students (Academic Registrar, April 2020). According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the estimated sample needs to be taken from the total number of populations which is 260 and 20% of the sample needs to be added in to avoid from unreturned rate or drop out. Thus, the total sample taken is 312. The sampling technique used was

simple random sampling in which the selected group of subjects is marathoners. Each respondent was chosen entirely by chance and each member of population has an equal chance of being part of the survey. The chosen sample size is marathoners in UiTM Seremban because they are major in sports programme and have more experience in sports event marketing.

The questionnaire was developed (Romero, & Kelleher, 2013) with the dimension of the questionnaire consists of 9 items with 4 sections; Section A is demographic data, Section B is social media use, Section C is athletic identity and Section D is perceived competence. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1 = strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation were used for data analysis. Descriptive statistic is used to show the measurement and calculation of central tendency that includes the calculation of mode, mean and median and the variability which are calculation of range, variance, and standard deviation. It can be measured based on the first research objective (RO1). Next, Pearson's correlation coefficient will be used for the second (RO2) and third (RO3) research objectives to measure the relationship between social media use and athletic identity and the relationship between social media use and perceived competence among marathoners in UiTM Seremban.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic profile

Data showed a total of 315 respondents who have completed the survey. The respondents were primarily male 55.6% (N=175) and female 44.4% (N=140). The age of respondents is 18 to 21 years old 39.7% (N=125), 22 to 25 years old 56.5% (N=178) and 26 to 29 years old 3.8% (N=12). As for education, 56.5% (N=178) were Diploma students, followed by Degree students with 43.5% (N=137). For the past 2 years, students who have experiences in marathons were 77.8% (N=245) and those with no engagement in marathon were 22.2% (N=70). Most of them were involved in sport for leisure with 68.3% (N=215) and those with competitive participation was 31.7% (N=100).

There were 315 respondents who took part and the result for male respondents was greater than the females. It shows that most of the males were likely to join marathon event. Based on the findings from Deaner et.al (2015), females also love to participate in marathon, but in pace and average speed males took the lead. The range of age that highly involved were between 22 to 25. This is because the higher the age of an individual, the higher experience that they gain. According to Malchrowicz-Mośko et. al (2020), younger runners are more motivated by personal goal achievement while older runners are more motivated by life meaning, health and weight orientation. Furthermore, most of the respondents have higher percentage of experience in marathon for the past two years. It shows that FSR's students in UiTM Seremban were actively participating in sports as sports is their major field. As for the sports involvement, most of the marathoners participated in leisure events compared to competitive events. It is because most of the marathon events were fun run which are5-kilometre (km) and 10-kilometre (km) and most competitive events required the runners to run long distance marathons which are half marathon, 21-kilometre (km) and full marathon, 42-kilometre (km).

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Items		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	175	55.6
	Female	140	44.4
Age	18-21	125	39.7
	22-25	178	56.5
	26-29	12	3.8
Education	Diploma	178	56.5
	Degree	137	43.5
Experience in Marathons (within 2 years)	Yes	245	77.8
	No	70	22.2
Sport Involvement	Leisure	215	68.3
	Competitive	100	31.7

3.2 Social media use, level of athletic identity, and perceived competence among marathoners.

According to Moidunny (2009), the highest domain is social media use which indicates 4.21 (SD=0.68) followed by perceived competence with 3.77 (SD=0.91) and athletic identity that indicates 3.28 (SD=1.05) as shown in Table 2.

In descriptive analysis shown in Table 2, the result of social media use is considered as very high domains compared to athletic identity and perceived competence. The study is consistent and similar with previous study done by Booker et. al (2015) as part of their daily activities, students spend more hours on social media. This is also supported by Kelleher & Romero (2013) that social media impacts the development of

additional knowledge of the athletic identity and perceived competence. From social media, students will observe more in marathon event and influence peers through their athletic identity and perceived competence.

Table 2: Social media usage, athletic identity and perceive competence

Sub-domain	Mean	Std. Deviation	No. of items
Social Media Usage	4.21	0.68	3
Athletic Identity	3.28	1.05	3
Perceived Competence	3.77	0.91	3

3.3 Relationship between social media use and athletic identity among marathoners.

Preferences for social media use and athletic identity were positively correlated with Pearson's, r (315) = 0.256 and p<0.00. According to Guilford's rule of thumb, the Pearson correlation is 0.256. Thus, we can conclude that there was a weak relationship or low correlation between the two subjects.

Based on the findings, it is indicated that social media use was related to athletic identity among marathoners in UiTM Seremban, which shows a positive correlation but weak relationship between the two subjects. As the r value was p<0.256, it is significant and related. The study is in line with previous study by Yiran Su (2019) which has found that social media is an important source in constructing athletic identity by enterprising self as an outcome towards his or her audience. However, the relationship is weak because of social media use and athletic identity were affected through the observability from the athletes who were identified with any of these roles that make a social statement about who they are and gain acceptance for those roles from family, peers, and the wider social background. These were supported by Heidi et.al (2019) as athletes are more likely to turn to social media to support fitness habits and choices that are aligned with their significant self-identities. From the researcher's opinion, the development of social media makes many of those announcements public and available to more individuals who can recognize themselves as a marathon runner.

Table 3: Relationship between social media usage and athletic identity

		Athletic Identity
Social media usage	Pearson's correlation	0.256**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	315

** Correlation is significant at p<0.05

3.4 Relationship between social media usage and perceive competence among marathoners.

Preferences for social media use and perceived competence were positively correlated with Pearson's, r (315) = 0.356 and p<0.00. According to Guilford's rule of thumb, Pearson correlation is 0.356, thus, we can conclude that there was a weak relationship or low correlation between social media use and perceived competence.

Based on the result, it indicated that social media use was related to perceived competence among marathoners UiTM Seremban. The result shows a positive correlation, but it shows a weak relationship or low correlation between social media use and perceived competence as the r value reported was p<0.356. The study is consistent with previous study by Ozer, et al. (2016) which stated that students evaluate their own experiences in the form of cognitive skills and social skills through social media. This was supported by Kelleher & Romero (2013) in social comparison where perceived competence is also enhanced, through which a person gathers information on how to enhance one's own skills. Postings via social media may demonstrate to individuals that marathon running is an attainable behaviour by showing an individual's peers or near peers who have experienced success in the behaviour.

Table 4: Relationship between social media usage and perceived competence

		Perceived Competence
Social media usage	Pearson's correlation	0.356**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	315

** Correlation is significant at p<0.05

IV. CONCLUSION

To put all the outcomes and discussion of this report in a nutshell, the purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between social media use, athletic identity, and perceived competence. The results of this study showed that social media use influences the athletic identity and perceived competence among marathoners in UiTM Seremban. This study has achieved all its objectives and found that social media use was

related to athletic identity and perceived competence. Besides, the findings of this study will provide theory and understanding in motivation intrinsic, self-efficacy, and social media field. The results of this study combined with latest research area may help students to improve and motivate others such as peers, family and public to participate in marathon events. Lastly, the sport organizer may be able to manage and customize any marathon events that can develop many spectators, not just the students, but also workers in any sectors to keep healthy and fit.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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