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Participation in Youth Running Events: The Role of Parental Involvement and Satisfaction

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THE ROLE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH RUNNING EVENTS: THE ROLE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SATISFACTION

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An increasing number of running events are being targeted to youth and are adding to the growing road racing industry. Offering running events for children along with a lineup of races ranging from 5K runs to marathons for adults is a way for race organizers to expand their businesses, increase economic impact in their communities and meet the needs of the entire family. In addition to economic benefits, there are other benefits associated with running events for youth. Community running events provide one potential intervention to counter rising childhood obesity rates by increasing the levels of physical activity for youth.

Parents are seen as important agents in the socialization processes that shape and influence youth physical activity decisions. Most sport participation decisions for youth are ultimately made by parents and because parents play a crucial role in the consumer decisions and activity choices of their children, this study focused on an investigation of parental factors influencing participation of children in youth running events. The purpose of this study was to examine parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions associated with a youth running event. Specifically, this study sought to determine if the level of parental involvement and satisfaction with a youth running event predicted behavioral intentions for their child's future participation in running events. Additionally, the effects of parent gender and parent running status were explored.

A sample of 366 parents of children who participated in a prominent children's community running event was used to investigate the influence of parental involvement and satisfaction on behavioral intentions for their child to participate in future running events. The measurement scale for involvement included both an affective and a cognitive subscale. Using multiple linear regression to analyze the data, the overall model was found to be significant ($F(3, 326) = 41.733$, $p < .001$), explaining 28% of the variance in behavioral intentions. Results indicated positive relationships between all independent variables (i.e., affective involvement, cognitive involvement and satisfaction) and the dependent variable of behavioral intentions. When comparing the model by gender, parental involvement and satisfaction were significant for female respondents whereas only satisfaction was significant for male respondents. When comparing the model by runner status, parental involvement and satisfaction were significant for parents who were runners; however, satisfaction was the only variable significant for parents who were non-runners. In all of the models, satisfaction was the strongest predictor of behavioral intentions. Based on these results, it is recommended that road race organizers market youth events to parents, particularly mothers. Marketing efforts should focus on ensuring parental satisfaction and include elements to make the event seem relevant and exciting to increase parental involvement and subsequent participation of children in future running events.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. My mother, Doris, you have never failed in providing me with unconditional love, guidance and support. This dissertation is completed because you sacrificed your time so that I could pursue my dreams. Thank you does not seem quite enough! This dissertation is also dedicated to my two children. Andru, you show me every day what it is like to have a brand new day. I wanted to show you that if you work hard, nothing is impossible. Alexa, your sheer determination to live and show this world what you are made of is another reason this dissertation was completed. I wanted to show you to never give up on your dreams in spite of your obstacles. I love you both to pieces!!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The positive effects of physical activity are well documented (see World Health Organization, 2016). One form of physical activity seeing tremendous growth over the past several decades is running. In the United States, the number of road race finishers increased from 25,000 in 1976 to 18.75 million in 2014 (Wahba, 2015). Road racing is an activity having evolved through a series of growth spurts or "booms." The first boom in the mid-1970's was propelled primarily by men running for health and fitness, while the second boom in the late 1990's was fueled by an influx of female runners (Allison, 2010). A third running boom may feature children as an increasing number of running events are being targeted to youth (Higdon, 2016). Organized road racing is a growing industry estimated to be valued at 1.4 billion dollars (Wahba, 2015). Offering running events for children along with a lineup of races ranging from 5K runs to marathons for adults is a way for race organizers to expand their businesses, increase economic impact in their communities and meet the needs of the entire family.

In addition to the economic benefits of adding shorter-distance events for children, there are other benefits associated with running events for youth. Studies indicate children who display high levels of physical fitness have a decreased risk of developing cardiovascular disease and other chronic illnesses (McMurray & Anderson, 2010), are less likely to suffer from anxiety and depression (Parfitt, Pavey & Rowlands, 2009), and are more likely to perform better academically (Grissom, 2005). Childhood obesity rates in the United States have doubled in the past 30 years as children have become more sedentary (CDC, 2017). Community running events provide one potential intervention to increase the levels of physical activity for youth (Bauman, Murphy & Lane, 2009).

Much of the literature regarding participatory running events has focused on adults and their reasons to participate in running events (Du, Jordan & Funk, 2015; Filo, Funk & O'Brien, 2011; Funk, Jordan, Ridinger & Kaplanidou, 2011; Ridinger, Funk, Jordan & Kaplanidou, 2012). Few studies have examined factors related to children's participation in community based running events. In comparison to other youth activities, such as basketball or soccer, youth running programs are relatively easy to implement and can promote a more inclusive environment (Liew, Xiang, Johnson & Kwok, 2011). Running is the type of sport where individuals at any activity level can begin and continue. Getting children involved with running programs and events is a way to combat childhood obesity and promote lifelong fitness and wellness. Encouraging children to remain engaged in physical activity is important for their lifelong development (Bryan & Solmon, 2012), and community based running events have emerged as opportunities for children to become more physically active (Xiang, Bruene & McBride, 2004). Therefore, it is important to understand factors associated with youth participation in community running events. This information would be of interest to race directors and parents alike.

Parents play a key role in their children's participation in community running programs and events. Without the approval of a parent or guardian, a child would not be able to register for an event. Also, parental involvement and satisfaction with the event may influence future participation of the child in other running activities and events. Parents are seen as important agents in the socialization processes that shape and influence children's purchase decisions (Ironico, 2012; Kim, Yang & Lee, 2015; Mau, Schramm-Klien & Reisch, 2014; Neulinger & Zoster, 2014) and their activity choices (Brustad, 1993; Dempsey, Kimiecik & Horn, 1993; Trost et al., 2003) Parents appear to have the power to influence their children to make positive

purchasing decisions by reinforcing values and familial practices (Kim et al., 2015). Research has also shown that youth physical activity can be influenced by adult role models such as parents (Brustad, 1993; Dempsey et al., 1993; Trost et al., 2003).

Mothers, in particular, play an instrumental role in shaping the organized recreation participation patterns of their children (Howard & Madrigal, 1990). However, little is known about differences between mothers and fathers in terms of factors influencing decisions regarding activity choices for their children. Also, research is scant on a parent's consumer involvement and satisfaction with a product or activity for their child (e.g. youth running event) and the relationship this may have for future participation of their child in similar activities or events. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume that parents who are runners themselves would be more satisfied with the decision to have their child participate in a youth running event and they may be more likely to register their child for the same or similar events in the future. Satisfaction has been linked with behavioral intentions and repeat purchase decisions (Caro & Garcia, 2007; Du et al., 2015); however, no studies were found that examined the satisfaction of parents with a youth running event and its impact on the child's participation in future road races.

Statement of the Problem

While it is clear there are positive benefits associated with physical activity for children (Bryan & Solmon, 2012), and community based running events have emerged as opportunities for children to become more physically active (Xiang et al., 2004), little is known about factors associated with participation in youth running events. Most sport participation decisions for youth are ultimately made by parents (Howard & Madrigal, 1990). Because parents play a crucial role in the consumer decisions (Ironico, 2012; Kim et al., 2015; Mau et al., 2014;

Neulinger & Zoster, 2014) and activity choices of their children (Brustad, 1993; Dempsey et al., 1993; Trost et al., 2003), this study focused on an investigation of parental factors influencing participation of children in youth running events. Knowing the factors that can contribute to youth participation in running events can give guidance to increasing participation in these events as a whole. A better understanding of factors that impact parents' decisions regarding the participation of their children in running events could help race organizers to improve marketing strategies and enhance the opportunities for youth to enjoy the benefits of running. Race directors can incorporate families into their events, therefore increasing the economic impact of the event. Also, understanding the factors behind youth participation can lead to understanding how to keep these runners as repeat consumers.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions associated with a youth running event. Specifically, this study sought to determine if the level of parental involvement and satisfaction with a youth running event influenced behavioral intentions for their child's future participation in running events. Additionally, the effects of parent gender and parent running status on the relationships among the variables under investigation were explored.

Significance of the Study

As more race organizers add youth components to established racing events for adults, parental involvement and satisfaction with youth running events may be salient factors to increase the number of children who participate. If youth running events are perceived as relevant and valued by parents, they may be more likely to encourage their children to participate and become more physically active on a regular basis. This, in turn, may promote lifelong

engagement in physical activity**.** The results of this study may assist race directors in creating more salient marketing plans for youth events that are targeted to parents.

Research Questions

This study will examine the following research questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event?

Research Question 2: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event by gender?

Research Question 3: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event by parent runner status?

Delimitations

This study was designed to explore the influence of parental involvement and satisfaction on behavioral intentions for future event participation. This study focused on one popular community youth running event, the Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile in Virginia Beach, Virginia. This event will be referred to simply as the Final Mile throughout the remainder of this study. This particular youth event was chosen because of the high number of participants. With 4,885 registered children participating in the 2016 Final Mile, it was the largest youth community running event in the region. This study focused on parents because they have considerable influence with their children and their activity choices (Moore et. al., 1991). Thus, this study was delimited to examining several potential factors associated with parents and the likelihood of their children participating in future running event. Other potential factors leading to increased participation in youth running events were not explored.

Limitations

Because this study focused on one youth running event, it may not be generalizable to other youth community running events. However, information gleaned from this study may provide insight to other race directors on strategies to market youth focused events through parents. A second limitation of this study extends from the measure used to assess level of involvement of parents whose children participated in a specific youth community running event. Scores from this measurement are based on self-reported attitudes, feelings and values. According to Donaldson and Grant-Vallone (2002) self-report bias is seen when research participants respond to surveys in such a manner that will make themselves look as positive as possible. This leads respondents to be likely to respond in socially desirable manners. Self-report bias has the potential to affect the reliability of a study. A third limitation of this study is the focus of this study on factors associated with parents. No other factors that could potentially contribute to participation in the event were considered. This study did not explore the motive of the youth participants, the influence of teachers conducting school-based running programs associated with the event, or specific elements of the event that may have influenced participation. The results of this study are limited to specific, psycho-social variables relevant to parents that could impact future participation of their children in youth running events.

Another limitation of the study was the response rate. Out of a total 4,885 children that registered for the 2016 Final Mile, only 366 of their parents responded to the survey. This limits the generalizability of the data. The response rate of 7.5% was low; however, this was an exploratory study and the results can provide direction for future research.

Definition of Terms

Parental Involvement - a parent's perceived relevance of an object (in this case, the Final Mile) based on inherent needs, values and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985).

Cognitive Involvement – the degree of personal relevance of an object based on functional performance and utilitarian motives (Park & Young, 1986).

Affective Involvement – the degree of personal relevance of an object based on emotional appeals and value-expressive motives (Park & Young, 1986).

Satisfaction – the gratification one receives toward a good, service or reward (Oliver, 1997). For purposes of this study, satisfaction is considered the gratification a parent gets from registering their child in a running event.

Behavioral Intentions – behavioral consequences related to positive word-of-mouth promotion of the event to others and future intentions for participation in the same and similar events (Yoshida & James, 2010).

Overview of the Chapters

Chapter One provided an introduction to the study. Within the introduction was the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study and the research questions. Chapter One also included delimitations, limitations and a definition of terms unique to the study. Chapter Two, the literature review, serves as a guide to examine previous related studies and their research findings. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology used for the study, which includes a description of the research design, operational definitions, sample selection, and procedures for collecting and analyzing data. Chapter Four reports the results of the study while a discussion of the results and implications are included in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of Chapter Two is to present a review of the existing literature relevant to the study and related to the research questions outlined in Chapter One. Chapter Two begins with an overview of literature on mass participatory running events. Next, an introduction to the involvement construct and its application to the sport and leisure domains is provided. This review then focuses on studies pertinent to consumer socialization and parental influences on purchasing decisions and activity choices of their children. Finally, literature on the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions is reviewed.

Running Events

Community or mass participatory road races have grown in popularity over the past few decades in terms of the sheer number of people who are registering and actively participating (Running USA, 2017). Mass participatory events have been categorized as events for non-elite participants who pay a fee to participate (Coleman & Ramchandani, 2010). These road races which began initially as a way for elite runners to compete with each other have now turned into events for anyone of any running or fitness level to participate (Running USA, 2017).

There is a growing body of literature on large scale running events focused on community participation. Academic researchers have begun to investigate many facets of mass participatory events including reasons to participate (Filo, Funk & O'Brien, 2008; Decloe, Kaczynski & Havitz, 2009), as an avenue to stay physically fit (Crofts, Schofield & Dickson, 2012; Funk et al., 2011; Murphy & Bauman, 2007), charitable motives (Jeffery & Butryn, 2012; Filo et al., 2011); sponsorship opportunities (Eagleman & Krohn, 2012; Lough, Pharr & Owen,

2014) and the economic impact of sport tourism and intention to revisit (Kaplanidou, Jordan, Funk & Ridinger, 2012; Koo, Byon & Baker, 2014; Wicker, Hallman & Zhang, 2012).

Funk et al., (2011) examined participants of a large scale running event to discover if participation in such events could predict future physical activity commitment. Results showed participation in large scale running events can be an agent of change for increasing physical activity levels. Specifically, participants who ran longer distance events, competed in other events and who were physically active prior to the event showed a higher commitment to running. However, in examining future exercise behavior, these same participants were less likely to engage in future physical activity because of this event. Funk and colleagues suggested this was because these individuals were already at a high physical activity level. In contrast, participants who participated in fewer events and were not very physically active before the event indicated they were very likely to engage in future physical activity because of the event. Therefore, the researchers attribute the running event as being a catalyst for a change in physical activity levels.

Despite an increasing academic interest in mass participatory running events, no studies were found that examined youth participation in these types of running events or parental involvement with running events for children. Two studies were found using a running event to examine the construct of involvement (McGehee, Yoon & Cardenas, 2003; Mueller, 2012), both of these studies focused on the involvement of the adult participant and their connection with the event. This current study focuses on the involvement of parents with a running event for their child. The next section of this literature review will provide information on the involvement construct, how it is defined, measured and applied to sport and leisure products and services.

Involvement

The involvement construct has deep roots in the field of social psychology (Rothschild, 1984). A motivational construct that has been seen as a way to understand and predict consumer behavior (Assael, 1992), involvement has many plausible definitions. Rothschild (1984) defined involvement as a state of motivation, arousal or interest toward an activity or product. Leisure researchers Havitz, Dimanche and Bogel (1994) described involvement as an "unobservable state of motivation, arousal, or interest that is evoked by a particular stimulus or situation" (p. 39). Mitchell (1979) identified involvement as an internal state reflecting arousal, interest or drive. Zaichkowsky (1985) defined involvement as, "A person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (p. 342). Zaichkowsky's definition suggests the object or product has some value or importance to the individual. The idea of perceived relevance or interest (as other researchers have identified) is a commonality throughout the literature related to the involvement construct. Zaichkowsky's definition focuses on the personal value or significance of the product to the person. She contends the more personally relevant or valuable the product is to a person, the more likely the person will be involved with the product and thus, want to make initial and repeat purchases of the product.

The involvement construct has been widely used in the advertising, marketing and consumer behavior literature to assess purchasing behaviors (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1985; 1986; 1994). However, researchers have also found applicability of involvement with services (Bienstock & Stafford, 2006; Celuch & Taylor, 1999; Stafford & Day, 1995), recreation and leisure (Havitz, Dimanche & Howard, 1993; Havitz, Green & McCarville, 1993; McGehee et al., 2003), spectator sports (Shank & Beasley, 1998; Stevens & Rosenberger, 2012) and more recently with fantasy sports (Dwyer, 2011a; Goldsmith & Walker, 2014).

Consumer behavior involvement is often viewed in terms of a continuum of low involvement to high involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Zaichkowsky (1986) indicated when people are highly involved they give more attention and importance or significance to the product and therefore are more likely to purchase the product. Whereas, people with lower levels of involvement are less likely to purchase the product because they assign less importance or value to the product. In conceptualizing involvement, Zaichkowsky (1985) developed the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII). The original PII was a 20-item unidimensional semantic differential scale measuring the motivational state of involvement. Zaichkowsky (1994) contends the PII measures the state of involvement rather than involvement as a stable variable because personal values and other factors may cause the level of involvement to change. The original 20-item PII was shown to measure a person's involvement with product categories, advertisements and purchases.

The 20-item PII did not come without its criticisms or limitations. Zaichkowsky (1994) revised the Personal Involvement Inventory to reduce redundancy and the number of items from 20 to 10 and to capture the affective and cognitive dimensions of involvement. The 10-item PII has been shown to be able to effectively report both the cognitive and affective dimensions of involvement with products and services (Celuch & Taylor, 1999; Stafford & Day, 1995; Zaichkowsky, 1994). Cognitive involvement is the degree of personal relevance of an object based on functional performance and utilitarian motives (Park & Young, 1986). For the revised 10-item PII, cognitive involvement is comprised of five items: Needed/Not Needed, Important/Unimportant, Relevant/Irrelevant, Means a lot/Means Nothing and Valuable/Worthless. Affective involvement, on the other hand, is the degree of personal relevance based on emotional appeals and value-expressive motives (Park & Young, 1986).

Affective involvement for the revised PII is also made up of five items: Interesting/Boring, Appealing/Unappealing, Fascinating/Mundane, Exciting/Unexciting and Involving/Uninvolving. Shapiro and Ridinger (2011) summarized cognitive involvement as a person's information processing about the usefulness of an object, whereas affective involvement was described as a person's feeling about the object. Stafford and Day (1995) surmised that a person is more cognitively involved if the product provides utilitarian (functional motives) benefits whereas a person is more affectively involved if the product serves value-expressive (emotional) benefits. This is important when examining intangible products, such as services.

Service Involvement. With the improvement and revision of the 10-item PII to include the affective and cognitive dimensions, researchers began using it to measure and determine its applicability in other fields, such as service industries. Unlike with tangible products, services are primarily intangible and purchase decisions can be influenced from the intangible qualities associated with service received. Stafford and Day (1995) tested both the original 20-item PII (Zaichkowsky, 1985) and the revised PII (Zaichkowsky, 1994) to explore the applicability of these measures to service industries. Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), they found the 20-item unidemensional PII had an extremely poor fit and was not suitable to measure involvement with hotel and bank services. Next, CFA was conducted with the revised PII and results revealed that a 9-item, two dimensional scale including both cognitive and affective involvement was most suitable for measuring service involvement. Stafford and Day's (1995) exploration of the PII within service contexts provided evidence that a reduced multidimensional scale could effectively measure involvement within service industries.

Extending this work, Celuch and Taylor (1999) also applied the original 20-item PII and the revised 10-item PII to determine if the scales could measure involvement within the service

industry. Additionally, the researchers tried to replicate Stafford and Day's exploration of the further reduced 9-item PII. The authors suggested intangible items such as customer experiences and satisfaction in the service industry may also determine consumer behavior and therefore, they tested the validity of the scales in the service industry. Similar to the findings of Stafford and Day (1995), Celuch and Taylor (1999) found the original 20-item PII failed to fit the data and they concluded the original 20-item PII was not appropriate for measuring involvement with services. Next, Celuch and Taylor performed an exploratory factor analysis on the 10-item revised PII (Zaichkowsky, 1994) and Stafford and Day's reduced 9-item scale. Results from these analyses showed consistent separation of the cognitive and affective factors. However, the 'Interesting' item appeared to provide inconsistent results, a finding also noted by Stafford and Day. Celuch and Taylor suggested there is no clear evidence for 'Interesting' to be either purely a cognitive item or an affective item. Therefore, Celuch and Taylor further reduced the PII into an 8-item scale and removed the 'Interesting' item. Celuch and Taylor found support for their 8-item multidimensional PII in measuring services. Specifically examining recreational services, the 8-item PII showed high reliability scores of .88 (affective involvement) and .93 (cognitive involvement).

The more parsimonious 8-item PII (Celuch & Taylor, 1999) has been used by other researchers (Shank & Beasley, 1998; Shapiro & Ridinger, 2011;) to capture the affective and cognitive dimensions within sport service sectors. Identifying level of customer involvement is essential for a service provider in providing quality service and this in turn can affect consumer purchase decisions (Bienstock & Stafford, 2006). A comparison of the original 20-item PII, revised 10-item PII, 9-item PII and the 8-item PII is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Personal Involvement Inventory Scales

Original 20-item PII (Zaichkowsky, 1985)	Revised 10-item PII (Zaichkowsky, 1994)	9-item PII (Stafford & Day, 1995)	8-item PII (Celuch & Taylor, 1999)
Important/Unimportant	**Important/Unimportant**	**Important/Unimportant**	**Important/Unimportant**
Of no concern/Of concern to me	Boring/Interesting	**Boring/Interesting**	**Relevant/Irrelevant**
Irrelevant/Relevant	**Relevant/Irrelevant**	**Relevant/Irrelevant**	Exciting/Unexciting
Means a lot/Means nothing	Exciting/Unexciting	Exciting/Unexciting	**Means nothing/Means a lot**
Useless/Useful	**Means nothing/Means a lot**	**Means nothing/Means a lot**	Appealing/Unappealing
Valuable/Worthless	Appealing/Unappealing	Appealing/Unappealing	Fascinating/Mundane
Trivial/Fundamental	Fascinating/Mundane	Fascinating/Mundane	**Worthless/Valuable**
Beneficial/Not beneficial	**Worthless/Valuable**	**Worthless/Valuable**	**Not needed/Needed**
Matters to me/Doesn't matter	Involving/Uninvolving	**Not needed/Needed**	
Uninterested/Interested	**Not needed/Needed**		
Significant/Insignificant			
Vital/Superfluous			
Boring/Interesting			
Appealing/Unappealing			
Mundane/Fascinating			
Essential/Nonessential			
Undesirable/Desirable			
Wanted/Unwanted			
Not needed/Needed			

*Note. Items in **Bold** are on the cognitive dimension for the 10, 9, and 8-item PII scales*

Sport and Leisure Involvement. While initial studies examining the involvement construct were focused on mainstream businesses, the PII has also been applied to the study of sport, recreation and leisure. Mueller (2012) investigated the level of involvement of ultramarathon participants in predicting intention to participate, behavioral participation and perceived skill level. Ultramarathon events are unique events requiring training beyond what runners will do for traditional running events. Ultramarathon events are characterized as 100-mile endurance running events (Mueller, 2012). The 10-item PII scale was used in this analysis and was significant in predicting behavioral participation and perceived skill level of ultramarathon runners. Running behavior in this study was characterized as the average number of miles run per day. The author felt this behavior represented the participant's commitment to their training. While the results from this study showed the cognitive and affective dimensions of the 10-item PII were significant in predicting the ultramarathon runner's overall commitment to run, the PII could not significantly predict intention to participate in future ultramarathon events. Although the results from this study did not support predictability of intention to participate, Mueller suggests other factors could contribute to the ultramarathon runner's intention to participate in future events. The researcher felt the attraction to ultramarathons is an emotional choice and the perceived skill set of overcoming the extreme distances are "the ultimate cognitive challenge" (p. 21, Mueller, 2012). However, continuing in the sport seems to be more of a cognitive choice. Mueller's study provided support for using the 10-item PII as a multidimensional scale to investigate involvement in the leisure field.

McGehee et al., (2003) used a 9-item PII to investigate the level of involvement of recreational sport tourists. With a focus on economic impact of the event, these researchers wanted to discover if involvement played a role in people participating in events requiring

overnight travel. McGehee et al. argued for the use of a unidimensional 9-item PII scale because they felt it could better address the unique aspect of sport tourism. They reported a Cronbach alpha of .90. These researchers were interested in involvement in terms of low, medium and high groups. Results indicated that runners with medium involvement were more likely to travel more often than those runners considered to be highly involved. McGehee et al. also discovered that highly involved runners actually were more likely to spend more money on ancillary items connected with the event than their medium involved counterparts.

In addition to involvement in participatory sport, a segment of the involvement research conducted in the sport management field has been in the area of spectator sports. Much like consumer behaviorists in mainstream business sectors, the business of sports aims to increase their share of the market and increase attendance and consumer expenditures. Using the original 20-item PII to investigate sport involvement and spectator behavior in regards to sport sponsors, Lascu, Giese, Toolan, Guehring and Mercer (1995) found highly involved fans were more likely to recognize and correctly identify event sponsors over their lower involved counterparts. Sponsorship of athletic events is considered a form of advertising. Aligning with sporting events has long been an avenue to influence purchasing decisions. These results provide an indication that highly involved fans may also be influenced to purchase products from sponsors of sporting events they attend. Highly involved fans have greater personal value with the event and this combined with the stimulus factor of how they are receiving information (through the sporting event) can increase consumer behavior associated with the sponsored products (Lascu et al., 1995). The sporting event has become the medium in which the spectator is learning about the product. Although this study used the original 20-item PII and was not able to differentiate

among cognitive and affective dimensions, it is important because it showed support for using the involvement construct in sport settings.

Also focusing on spectator sport involvement, Shank and Beasley (1998) explored the sports fan emotional attachment to sport. Using an 8-item PII and applying it to the behavior of sports fans, Shank and Beasley showed highly involved sports fans were more likely to consume sports (i.e. watch televised sports, sport news/magazine readership, sport event attendance) at higher rates than those individuals who were considered to have low involvement with sport. The authors also showed support for the cognitive and affective involvement subscales. While Shank and Beasley focused on the sports fan and their involvement with sport consumption this has potential impacts for how people choose what sports to be involved with.

More recently, Dwyer (2011a; 2011b) used the involvement construct to examine the popular ancillary sports product of fantasy football. Dwyer was interested in the relationship between fantasy football involvement and traditional NFL fan loyalty. Fantasy sport participation is seen as an activity enhancing the overall sport experience of fans. Dwyer used the 8-item PII as modified by Celuch and Taylor (1999). While Dwyer did not differentiate between cognitive and affective involvement, results did support the use of the 8-item PII because there were distinct characteristics of high and low involved fans. Specifically, Dwyer (2011b) found a positive relationship with fantasy football fans and behavioral intentions. Higher involved fantasy football fans showed an increased intention to follow football games. The author noted, these results indicate involvement with fantasy football can act as a moderator of intention to follow football games. These results further extend the use of the 8-item involvement scale within the sport context.

Shapiro and Ridinger (2011) also used the 8-item PII (Celuch & Taylor, 1999) to examine involvement and charitable contributions to university athletic programs. The purpose of their study was to look at gender differences among college athletic donors. Their results indicated that women had stronger affective involvement than men. Shapiro and Ridinger suggested the gender difference of the affective involvement dimension indicated that women may have a stronger sense of involvement because of the high emotional nature of charitable giving. The use of the 8-item PII in this study demonstrated its application to another context related to sport consumer behavior.

There have been no studies using the PII to examine youth involvement with sport. Children represent a unique sector of the sport consumer market. Values, behaviors and interests toward products are developed during childhood (Cross, 2010). Becoming consumers of sport and leisure activity is similar to becoming consumers of toys, movies or video games. There is evidence to suggest parents' beliefs represent the leading method in introducing children to a variety of physical activities (Dempsey et al., 1993; Kimiecik & Horn, 1998). There are many ways children are socialized into becoming consumers. Younger children tend to be socialized into becoming consumers through familial traditions and practices (Ironico, 2012).

Consumer Socialization

Children learn about the marketplace in a variety of ways. Marketers are realizing children are becoming consumers at increasingly young ages (Coughlin & Wong, 2002). Children are influenced and socialized as consumers since the beginning stages of life. Parents begin socializing their children with different products at very early ages (John, 2008). Research on consumer socialization of children is emerging in the advertising, marketing and consumer behavior fields (Dotson & Hyatt, 2005; Te'eni-Harari & Hornik, 2010). Coughlin and Wong

(2002) suggest children represent a growing sector of the market, complete with their own purchasing power. Since children are learning to become consumers at such young ages, it is important to understand the potential influences and how children are socialized into making purchasing decisions.

John (2008) defined consumer socialization as "focusing on the acquisition of skills, knowledge and values by children and adolescents as they prepare to take their role as consumers" (p. 221). John also suggested children go through three stages of consumer socialization, which include the perceptual stage, analytical stage and reflective stage. The perceptual stage typically occurs for children between the ages of three and seven. Here, children place great emphasis on their immediate surroundings and things that are readily observable. Items with concrete details that have single dimensions or attributes are seen by children at this stage of their consumer development. Children at this stage are egocentric decision makers where their decisions will revolve around themselves and generally they do not think of others. The analytical stage of consumer socialization development is seen among children between the ages of seven to eleven. Here, children move beyond the single dimensionality of decision making and move toward accepting influences from multiple dimensions or sources. Children in the analytical stage typically exhibit more critical thinking in their consumer decisions because they tend to have more sophisticated understanding of products. The final stage proposed by John in the development of children as consumers is the reflective stage. Adolescent to adulthood represents an advanced level of thinking where people see beyond themselves and understand the larger implications of products and consumption.

As children grow and move through the different developmental stages of consumer socialization, children also are influenced by a variety of sources. Parents play the most integral

role of influencing children in their decisions (Dotson & Hyatt, 2005; Kim et al., 2015). In examining children as consumers, Dotson and Hyatt (2005) surveyed children to discover the different factors of influence on children and their purchase decisions. The results of the study indicated children generally have more spending money available to them, which makes children more susceptible to several influential factors. Results also showed parents remain as a factor that can influence children's purchase decisions. Interestingly, results indicated children attending an after-school program are influenced more by their parents although more time is spent with peers. Dotson and Hyatt suggested this was due to the controlled educational type of environment. They also recommend since children are mainly influenced by their parents at younger ages, marketers may want to focus on family centered products, programming and events.

Parents have clearly been shown in the literature to influence purchase decisions of their children (Ironico, 2012; Mau et al., 2014; Neulinger & Zsoter, 2014). In a related study, Kim et al. (2015) examined parenting style on consumer socialization of adolescents. The study investigated potential components of the consumer socialization process, how parenting style can influence how the child learns about purchasing decisions and specific products. The researchers suggest parenting style influences specific parental practices which in turn influence how the child is socialized as a consumer. Results indicated the responsiveness of parents was found to have a connection to parenting practices. Responsiveness is characterized by the amount of support a parent gives to their children. Results of the study also indicated that maternal responsiveness had a greater influence on the socialization process of their children. Kim et al. suggested that perhaps mothers' parenting style can have a greater influence on consumer socialization and purchase decisions. The maternal influence was echoed by Neulinger and

Zsoter (2014). These researchers found the family has an overall influence on youth purchase decisions, specifically the mother-child relationship was found to have a significant impact on children's purchasing decisions.

There is growing scholarly interest with the use of the involvement construct and children's consumer behavior (Muratore, 2003; Te'eni-Harari, Lehman-Wilzig & Lampert, 2009). Muratore (2003) describes children's involvement with products as either a direct or indirect socialization process. Direct socialization refers to parents overtly teaching their children about products and different market terminology. Indirect socialization refers to children learning about the marketplace from implicit teaching such as watching and listening while the parent is shopping. The importance here as Muratore suggests, the child is primarily taught about the marketplace and products by the involvement of the parent.

Activity Choice Influence

In terms of influencing children to either become active or continue to be active, parents play an enormous role in motivating their children (Brustad, 1993; Carr & Weigand, 2002; Dempsey et al., 1993; Golan et al., 1998; Moore et al., 1991; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008). Brustad (1993) examined the relationship between parent's physical activity orientations and children's perceived competence and attraction to physical activity. Brustad hypothesized parents who enjoyed being physically active would also encourage their children to become physically active. This encouragement would in turn lead to higher levels of the child feeling competent engaging in and being attracted to physical activity. Results showed high levels of encouragement from parents led to higher perceived competence for children. Children whose parents regularly encouraged them to be physically active more often felt they were competent in the activity. Results also indicated children who have higher perceived competence also were attracted to

physical activity. The results of Brustad's study were supportive of the notion that a child's attraction to physical activity may stem from parental importance conveyed toward physical activity.

In a related study, Dempsey et al. (1993) also examined parental influence on children's moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) participation. The researchers felt parents' own MVPA behavior would translate into influencing their children to also participate in MVPA. Results indicated there was not a significant relationship between parent's MVPA and children's MVPA. Although the results did not show a significant relationship, the researchers suggested that perhaps there is another factor that could better predict MVPA participation of children. Dempsey and colleagues suggest the effort level and perceived competence of the child are significant predictors of a child's MVPA participation. This indicates children who have a higher competency in their own task activity are more likely to participate in MVPA. Additionally, there was evidence to support parents' perceptions of their children's MVPA could translate into increased participation.

Also investigating parental influence on youth physical activity, Trost et al. (2003) examined parental physical activity behaviors, parental enjoyment of physical activity, parental beliefs regarding physical activity, and how supportive parents are toward their children's physical activity. These researchers hypothesized the relationship between children's physical activity behaviors and parental physical activity behaviors would be dependent on level of parental support and the child's self-efficacy perceptions. Results showed parental physical activity behavior, parental enjoyment of physical activity and perceived importance were all positively related to parental support. Parental support was shown to have a positive relationship with child physical activity dependent on the child's perceptions of self-efficacy. This means

parental influence of a child's activity choice is dependent on if the child believes he or she is capable of performing the activity.

Specifically examining elementary school running programs, Xiang, McBride and Bruene (2003) studied the relationship between parents' beliefs and their children's motivation. These researchers felt parental stereotyped gendered and general running beliefs contributed to their child's participation in physical activity. Xiang et al. found support for parents' beliefs in achievement goals, competence/value beliefs and their children's performance on a mile run test. Children were more likely to perform well on the mile run if their parents had higher perceptions of competence in their children's running and also felt running was important and useful. Running performance was also distinguished by parental belief of goal orientations. Children whose parents supported a task-orientation (amount of effort) were more likely to try harder during the mile run. Children whose parents supported an ego-orientation (ability) were more likely to run faster during the mile run. This indicates parental beliefs can be a useful tool in motivating children to participate in physical activity.

In addition to parental attitudes influencing the activity choices of their children, parents also play a key role in making purchase decisions related to those activity choices. In regards to youth sport, clearly the children are the consumers because they actively participate in the sport. However, what is not clearly understood is who, in the family, is the purchaser. Howard and Madrigal (1990) explored this concept and found overwhelming support for mothers to be the primary purchase decision makers. Researchers surveyed parents who registered their child(ren) in public recreation programs to explore who made the purchase decisions. Howard and Madrigal found that mothers "screen and qualify" (p. 255) potential programs before the decision is made. This suggests mothers play a dominant role in deciding to register their children for

sport opportunities. These researchers also suggest mothers are powerful purchasing agents and decide on their child's involvement in sport largely based on what is convenient to them. Therefore, marketers of youth sports should target parents, particularly mothers in order to increase participation among the youth sector.

Green and Chalip (1998) also investigated the parent child relationship with sport involvement. Consistent with Howard and Madrigal (1990), Green and Chalip (1998) found that mothers were more involved in their children's sport participation. Focusing on purchase decision involvement, Green and Chalip (1998) discovered that parents who felt their child was benefiting from sport participation showed higher purchase decision involvement. Higher purchase decision involvement combined with high satisfaction also showed high parental commitment to the sport organization. These results show parents need to be satisfied with the sport program in order for continued commitment to occur. This reinforces the concept that although children are the consumers of youth sport, parents are seen as the purchasers and their expectations should not be overlooked. While some attention has been cast on purchasing decisions with sport involvement, clearly more research in this area is needed.

Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions

The satisfaction construct is widely studied and utilized in research across many disciplines (see Baker & Crompton, 2000 and Szymanski & Henard, 2001 for review). Imbedded in psychology, the satisfaction construct has been used to evaluate organizational success (Anderson, Fornell, & Mazvancheryl, 2004). Satisfaction as also been shown by some researchers as a way to predict behavioral intentions, such as repeat purchasing and customer loyalty (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000). Satisfaction has evolved over the years and has many definitions. One belief of customer satisfaction is an evaluation of expectations and organization

performance (Haumann, Quaiser, Wieseke & Rese, 2014). This is a broad definition as it applies to both tangible and intangible products. Oliver (1997) defines satisfaction as "the consumer's fulfillment response, the degree to which the level of fulfillment is pleasant or unpleasant" (p.28). Oliver's definition also provides a very general description of satisfaction. In a study on sports fans, Yoshida and James (2010) defined satisfaction as a person's pleasurable response to the entertainment of watching a game. Du et al., (2015) examined satisfaction of adult runners and determined satisfaction is a person's positive attitude following participation in a distance running event.

Previous literature in the sport marketing field has shown customer satisfaction to be an integral component to a variety of positive outcomes such as customer loyalty, providing positive word of mouth (WOM) advertising and intention for repeat purchases (Anderson et al., 2004; Cronin et al., 2000; Olsen, 2002). In the sport management literature, investigations of the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions have generally focused on spectator sports (Calabuig-Moreno, Crespo-Hervas, Nunez-Pomar, Valantine, & Staskeviciute-Butiene, 2010; Gong et al., 2015; Trail, Anderson & Fink, 2005; Yoshida & James, 2010; Yoshida, Heere & Gordon, 2015) and destination sport tourism (Chen & Chen, 2010; Jang & Feng, 2007; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). While there have been some studies on satisfaction with mass participatory running events (Du et al., 2015; Sato, Jordan & Funk, 2015), none of these studies focused on youth events or parental satisfaction with these events.

The consensus among sport consumer behavior researchers is the level of customer satisfaction can have an impact on the level of future intentions and repeat purchase behavior. Using a live action sports event, Tsuji, Bennett and Zhang (2007) examined the relationships of service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Researchers tested their proposed model

of service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions and found significant results to support a positive relationship among the three variables.

Yoshida and James (2010) examined the relationship between a spectator's game and service satisfaction and their behavioral intentions. Yoshida and James used a 3-item behavioral intention outcome measure that included: (1) intentions to attend future sporting events, (2) positive word-of-mouth advertising about the event, and (3) customer loyalty. It was hypothesized that both satisfaction with the service received and the game atmosphere would have a positive impact on a spectator's behavioral intentions. The researchers found the game atmosphere was extremely important in predicting future intentions. Specifically, the relationship between game atmosphere and game satisfaction were significant in predicting behavioral intentions. These results indicate since game atmosphere has been seen to have a positive impact on behavioral intentions, this is an area where sport marketers can have the most influence on spectator's satisfaction. For spectator sports the atmosphere consisted of the crowd, lighting, music, and the overall sense of excitement.

Satisfaction and behavioral intention research also extends beyond spectator sports. Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010) examined participants in an annual Senior Games event in a study on event tourism. They investigated if previous participation, attitudes toward participation, event satisfaction and destination image could predict future intentions to participate in the event again. In this study, the researchers examined sport tourist participants of a recurring event. The results indicated satisfaction and attitudes toward the event were shown to directly predict future intentions to participate in the event again. Surprisingly, past participation and destination image were not direct predictors of future intentions; instead, destination image was shown to contribute to the overall attitude towards the event. Kaplanidou and Gibson

acknowledged that satisfaction was the strongest predictor of future intentions to participate in the event among sport tourists.

Using a small-scale marathon event, Koo et al., (2014) investigated event image, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Koo and colleagues hypothesized that event image would positively influence both satisfaction and behavioral intentions of the marathon event. Additionally, they hypothesized satisfaction would have a positive influence on behavioral intentions. In this particular study, behavioral intentions were measured on a 2-item scale in asking participants if they were likely to revisit the marathon and if they were likely to recommend the event. The 2-item satisfaction scale items asked if participants enjoyed their visit to the event and if participants were satisfied with the overall experience. Researchers found support for all of their hypotheses. Event image influenced both satisfaction and behavioral intentions while satisfaction positively influenced behavioral intentions.

In a similar study, Du et al. (2015) examined the relationship between event satisfaction and behavioral intentions among participants in distance running events. Researchers found support to indicate satisfaction with the event does predict behavioral intentions. In this particular study, researchers also tested possible factors that contribute to event satisfaction and behavioral intentions. They hypothesized personal performance, service quality, perceived value and expectancy disconfirmation all contribute to a runner's satisfaction and therefore increase behavioral intentions. Perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation and service quality were found to contribute to overall event satisfaction. Satisfaction was shown to predict behavioral intentions. It was concluded personal performance alone does not explain satisfaction and predetermined expectations can also explain event satisfaction.

Summary

The sport of running has grown exponentially over the past 20 years. Running events have become a niche activity in many communities. It has been argued that mass participation running events can have positive economic impacts on the host community (Eagleman & Krohn, 2012; McGehee et al., 2003) and be beneficial to the well-being of event participants (Bunning & Walker, 2016; Baumann et al., 2009). Community running events represent a potential catalyst for increasing activity levels among citizens (Crofts et al., 2012; Funk et al., 2011). Most of the literature regarding running events has focused on adult participants. However, the number of youth running events has been steadily increasing around the country (Higdon, 2016). There is a need for research on factors contributing to youth participation in these types of events.

Research has shown that parents, mothers in particular, are primary influencers when it comes to activity choices and purchase decisions for their children (Dotson & Hyatt, 2005; Kim et al., 2014; Neulinger & Zsoter, 2014). Parental involvement may be a key to understanding why children choose to participate in running events. Research has also shown that satisfaction plays an important part in behavioral intentions. Specifically in sports, the more a person is satisfied, the more likely that person will be loyal and consume more of the sport product or service. This study on the relationships among parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions associated with a youth running event fills a gap in the literature and may provide relevant information to help market and promote running events for youth. While there is increasing scholarly interest in various factors associated with community running events for adults, there is a lack of research on running events for youth. A better understanding of factors associated with participation in youth running events can make a unique contribution to the

literature and would be of interest to road race organizers, parents and others concerned with positive youth development.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions associated with a youth running event. Specifically, this study sought to determine if parental involvement and satisfaction with a youth running event predicted behavioral intentions for their child's future participation in running events. Additionally, the investigation considered the influence of parent gender and parent runner status on the relationships among involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Chapter three describes the procedures used to carry out the investigation of the following research questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event?

Research Question 2: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event by gender?

Research Question 3: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event by parent runner status?

The methodology of the study is described as it relates to the following characteristics: (a) research design, (b) population and sample, (c) instrumentation, (d) operational definitions, (e) data collection procedures, and (f) data analysis procedures including assumption testing.

Research Design

This study utilized a cross-sectional correlational survey design that collected quantitative data to address the research questions. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013) correlational research attempts to investigate surface relationships and not necessarily causal relationships. The purpose of the present study was to assess whether parental involvement and satisfaction predicted behavioral intentions for future (child) participation. Additionally, the influences of the parent's gender and runner status on the relationships among these variables were examined.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was parents who register their children for youth running events. The sample comprised all parents whose children were registered for the 2016 Final Mile. The Final Mile, produced by J&A Racing, has proven to be a very successful event with 4,885 elementary school children registered in 2016. Created to promote lifelong fitness among elementary aged children, the Final Mile is not only an event, but also includes a running and/or walking program with an emphasis on fun and fitness. The Final Mile running program begins 10 weeks prior to event day and it is implemented in a variety of ways. The running program can take place during physical education classes, afterschool programs, at home with parents or any combination of these methods. Teachers or other school staff from various elementary schools in the Hampton Roads area are invited to organize and/or encourage their students to participate in the Final Mile running program. Students work up to the marathon distance of 26.2 miles by logging the first 25.2 miles at school or at home and finishing their last mile on the boardwalk at the Virginia Beach oceanfront on the day of the Final Mile event. The

inaugural Final Mile event began in 2005 with 10-12 schools participating (B. Schniedwind, personal communication, April 17, 2014). By 2016 it had grown to 160 schools participating with nearly 5,000 youth participants (Shamrockmarathon, 2017).

By focusing on parents of children who participate in running events there is an assumption the parents have learned about the event at some point and have freely chosen to register their child(ren) to participate in the event. Convenience sampling was used to obtain the sample of parents of the children who registered for the 2016 event. J&A Racing, the owners of the Final Mile, agreed to distribute the online survey to parents of all 4,885 children who were registered for the event.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument was developed to collect data on the variables of interest. The survey assessed parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Parental involvement was measured with the 8-item revised Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) (Celuch & Taylor, 1999). This measure was originally developed by Zaichkowsky (1985) as a 20-item 7-point semantic differential scale designed to assess a person's involvement with an object or product. To address criticisms of redundancy, the scale was reduced to 10-items and two distinct subscales were identified – cognitive involvement and affective involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1994). Cognitive involvement is described as a person's functional motivation and information processing, whereas affective involvement is described as emotional motivation or a person's feelings toward the object (Park & Young, 1986). Celuch and Taylor (1999) further revised the PII into an 8-item scale and found it to be a suitable measure of the cognitive and affective dimensions of the involvement construct within the context of services. They reported a

Cronbach alpha score of .88 for affective involvement and .93 for cognitive involvement among recreational services. Since the Final Mile event is a service experience rather than a tangible product, the 8-item PII revised by Celuch and Taylor (1999) was used for this study.

Satisfaction was measured with a 3-item scale validated by Funk et al., (2011) that was designed to measure satisfaction with event participation. The researchers reported a Cronbach alpha of .78 for their satisfaction scale. The wording of each item was adapted slightly so that it pertained to the Final Mile event. The satisfaction measure was designed to elicit an overall subjective evaluation of the parent's satisfaction with the decision to have their child participate in the Final Mile. The satisfaction items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree.

Behavioral intentions was assessed by adapting a 2-item measure used by Du et al., (2015). These researchers reported a Cronbach alpha score of .71. The wording of each item was changed slightly so that it related to the Final Mile event. This measure was designed to assess goal directed behaviors related to positive word-of-mouth promotion and future participation in an event. Because the current study was interested in future behavioral intentions related not only to the Final Mile, but to youth running events in general, a third item was added to assess the likelihood of the child's participation in other community running events. Thus, the behavioral intention measure was a composite score of three items measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = Not at All Likely to 7 = Extremely Likely.

Additionally, the survey collected sociodemographic data on both the parent respondent and their child. Specifically, data were collected on the gender of the parent

and the parent's runner status (i.e., whether or not they considered themselves to be a runner). The survey was sent to a panel of eight experts to establish face and content validity. The experts included two Sport Management doctoral students, two Sport Management professors with experience using the revised PII and satisfaction measures in other studies, one Educational Leadership professor with knowledge of the event and expertise in survey development, one Physical Education professor with knowledge in youth exercise motivations and survey development, and three staff members at J&A Racing. The individuals were provided with information regarding the purpose of the study and specific definitions to assist in analyzing the survey. The experts were asked to judge the items on the survey, as well as the survey as a whole for wording, format and clarity. The feedback from the experts led to several minor changes. These included rewording some items for greater clarity. Also, they recommended including the word 'guardian' alongside parent in the invitation to potential respondents. This was suggested to include all potential adults who make decisions for children registering for the Final Mile. The experts from J&A Racing requested the inclusion of several items about participation in other races they conduct throughout the year. The items about other J&A races were added to the survey to include in a report for J&A Racing, but they were not included in the analyses for this study.

Operational Definitions

Parental Involvement – this variable was measured by using the revised 8-item Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) (originally designed by Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1994 and adapted by Celuch & Taylor, 1999). The PII is a 7-point semantic differential scale with two dimensions, cognitive involvement and affective involvement. The mean score of

each dimension was calculated and used for analysis. The five items comprising the cognitive dimension included Needed/Not Needed, Important/Unimportant, Relevant/Irrelevant, Means A Lot/Means Nothing and Valuable/Worthless. The affective dimension consisted of three items which were Exciting/Unexciting, Appealing/Unappealing and Fascinating/Mundane.

Parental Running Status – this variable was measured by one item asking if the parent considered himself or herself to be a runner. This measure was based on a dichotomous response of either Yes = 1 or No = 0.

Satisfaction – this variable was operationalized as the mean score of a 3-item factor adapted from Funk, et al. (2011) and measured with a 7-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The three items were: (a) I was satisfied with the decision to register my child for the Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile, (b) I was happy that my child decided to participate in the Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile, (c) My child did the right thing by deciding to participate in the Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile.

Behavioral Intentions – this variable was operationalized as the mean score of 3-items adapted from Du et al., (2015) and measured with a 7-point scale ranging from Not at All Likely to Extremely Likely. The three items on the survey were: (a) Based on your child's experience at the 2016 Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile, please indicate the likelihood that you will say positive things about the Final Mile to others, (b) Based on your child's experience at the 2016 Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile, please indicate the likelihood that your child will participate in the 2017 Final Mile (or 8k) and (c) Based on your child's experience at the 2016 Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile,

please indicate the likelihood that your child will participate in other community running events during the next 12 months.

Data Collection Procedures

Authorization for the study was obtained from J&A Racing, the organizers of the event, and approval of exempt status was granted by the college's Human Subjects Review Committee. An online survey instrument was created using Qualtrics software to examine parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions associated with a youth running event. J&A Racing distributed the surveys via email to parents of the 4,885 children who registered for the 2016 event. Three emails were sent to potential participants of the study. First a recruitment email was sent. The recruitment email provided survey respondents with the following information: (a) the name of the individuals conducting the research study and the affiliated university, (b) the purpose of the study, (c) assurance of confidentiality, (d) who to contact with questions, and (e) and sincere appreciation for the participant's time completing the survey. A reminder email was sent three weeks after the recruitment email. Additionally, a final reminder email was sent five weeks after the initial recruitment email and one week prior to the survey closing.

Data Analysis Procedures

An analysis of descriptive statistics and multiple linear regressions were used to answer the research questions for this study. According to Field (2013), examining descriptive data is an important start to the analysis process. Descriptive data informs the researcher of frequencies and distributions in order to better understand the data. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) regression techniques can be used to examine

the relationship between a dependent variable and several independent variables. Regression analyses are also used to assist researchers in predicting outcomes of particular variables (Field, 2013).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The overall purpose of this study was to examine parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions associated with a youth running event. This chapter provides an analysis of data collected from parents who registered their child for the 2016 Final Mile. Chapter four is divided into three sections: (1) sample description, (2) preliminary analysis and (3) an analysis of data relating to the study's three research questions.

Preliminary Analysis

The results of this study were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive statistics were generated to provide a profile of the sample. Descriptive statistics were also used to identify the frequencies of each variable in order to discover the distribution of the sample. A description of the data analyses by each research question is detailed including a description of assumption testing.

Research Question 1: A multiple linear regression was used to examine if parental involvement (both cognitive and affective dimensions) and satisfaction predicted behavioral intentions. Prior to conducting the regression, a Cronbach's alpha test for reliability was conducted in order to evaluate the internal consistency of the involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intention variables (See Table 2). The dependent variable for this analysis was behavioral intentions and the independent variables were parental involvement (cognitive involvement and affective involvement) and satisfaction. A

significance level of .05 was used for the model and each independent variable. Before conducting the multiple linear regression, the assumptions of linearity, independence, normality and equality of variances were assessed through an examination of descriptive statistics and scatterplots. The first assumption is there should be independence of observations (or residuals). The Durbin-Watson statistic was used to test this assumption. For research question 1, there was independence of residual, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.144. The next assumption to test for multiple regression is linear relationships. According to Field (2013), this assumption can be tested by examining scatterplots. After examining scatterplots for all research questions, it was determined all variables had a linear relationship. Another assumption to test for with multiple regression is homoscedasticity of residuals (equal error variances). As assessed by visual inspection of a plot of standardized residuals there was homoscedasticity. This meets the assumption of multicollinearity as shown in Table 3. There were no significant outliers.

Table 2
Reliability of Variables

Variable	Cronbach alpha score
Satisfaction	0.915
Behavioral Intentions	0.702
Cognitive Involvement	0.851
Affective Involvement	0.774

Table 3
Multicollinearity Statistics - Overall Model

	Tolerance	VIF
Variable		
Cognitive Involvement	0.424	2.356
Affective Involvement	0.421	2.377
Satisfaction	0.952	1.051

Research Question 2: A multiple linear regression was used to examine if parental involvement (both cognitive and affective dimensions) and satisfaction predicted behavioral intentions by gender. Prior to conducting the regression, the data were split by gender to discover if model differences existed. The dependent variable for this analysis was behavioral intentions and the independent variables were parental involvement (cognitive involvement and affective involvement), satisfaction and parent gender. A significance level of .05 was used for the model and each variable. Before conducting the multiple linear regression, the assumptions of linearity, independence, normality and equality of variances were assessed through an examination of descriptive statistics and scatterplots. For research question 2, there was independence of residual, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.340 for males and 1.026 for females. After examining scatterplots for this research question, it was determined all variables had a linear relationship. As assessed by visual inspection of a plot of standardized residuals there was homoscedasticity. This meets the assumption of multicollinearity as shown in Table 4. There were no significant outliers.

Table 4
Multicollinearity Statistics - Gender

	Male		Female	
	Tolerance	VIF	Tolerance	VIF
Variable				
Cognitive Involvement	0.324	3.088	0.442	2.261
Affective Involvement	0.308	3.244	0.438	2.284
Satisfaction	0.918	1.089	0.952	1.05

Research Question 3: A multiple linear regression was used to examine if parental involvement (both cognitive and affective dimensions) and satisfaction predicted

behavioral intentions by parent runner status. Prior to conducting the regression, the data were split by runner status to discover if model differences existed. The dependent variable for this analysis was behavioral intentions and the independent variables were parental involvement (cognitive involvement and affective involvement), satisfaction and parent runner status. A significance level of .05 was used for the model and each variable. Before conducting the multiple linear regression, the assumptions of linearity, independence, normality and equality of variances were assessed through an examination of descriptive statistics and scatterplots. For research question 3, there was independence of residual, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.067 for parents identifying as runners and 1.443 for parents who do not identify as runners. After examining scatterplots for this research question, it was determined all variables had a linear relationship. As assessed by visual inspection of a plot of standardized residuals there was homoscedasticity. This meets the assumption of multicollinearity as shown in Table 5. There were no significant outliers.

Table 5
Multicollinearity Statistics - Runner Status

	Runner		Non-Runner	
	Tolerance	VIF	Tolerance	VIF
Variable				
Cognitive Involvement	0.47	2.128	0.324	3.091
Affective Involvement	0.459	2.181	0.329	3.037
Satisfaction	0.946	1.057	0.948	1.055

Sample Description

Surveys were sent to a census sample of 4,885 parents or guardians of children registered for the 2016 Final Mile. A total of 366 usable surveys were returned for a

response rate of 7.5%. Tables 6-14 illustrate a comparison of respondents of the survey. The typical respondent of the survey was female (77.9%), Caucasian (76.2%), between the ages of 30-49 (89.1%), married (86.1%), does self-identify as a runner (54.7%), has two children (49.4%) and registered one child for the event (69.9%). According to the responses to the survey the typical child registered for the Final Mile was female (53.3%), Caucasian (76.2%), was in the 1st or 3rd grade (39.8%), participated more than once (51.3%), participated in a school-based running program prior to the event (84.1%) and did not participate in the optional fundraising activity associated with the event (89.7%). When asked who the primary decision maker was for registering the child to participate in the Final Mile, 36.9% of respondents indicated it was the mother while 28.8% said it was a group decision with parents and child. Only 3.3% of respondents indicated the father was the primary decision maker.

Table 6
Gender

	Parent		Child	
	n	Percent	*n*	Percent
Female	285	77.9	188	53.3
Male	48	13.1	165	46.7

Note. There were 33 parents (9%) and 13 children (3.6%) where gender was not reported.

Table 7
Ethnicity

	Parents		Child	
	N	Percent	*n*	Percent
African-American	11	3.3	14	4
Asian-American	12	3.6	10	2.8
Caucasian	279	84	269	76.2
Hispanic/Latino	12	3.6	16	4.5
Native American	2	0.5	3	0.8
Multi-Racial	3	0.9	28	7.9
Other	2	0.6	2	0.6

Note. There were 45 parents (12.6%) and 24 children (6.7%) where ethnicity was not reported.

Table 8
Parent Marital Status

	n	Percent
Single	16	4.8
Married/Partner	286	86.1
Divorce/Co-parent	25	7.5

Note. There were 39 (10.8%) of parents who did not report marital status.

Table 9
Parent Age

	N	Percent
20-29	14	4.3
30-39	146	44.4
40-49	147	44.7
50-59	17	5.2
60 plus	5	1.5

Note. There were 37 parents (10.1%) who did not report age.

Table 10

Decision Maker

	N	Percent
Mother	123	36.9
Father	11	3.3
Both Parents	53	15.9
Child	46	13.8
Group Decision	96	28.8
Other	4	1.2

Note. There were 33 parents (9.0%) who did not report who the decision maker was.

Table11

Number of Children registered for Final Mile

	n	Percent
1	253	69.9
2	93	25.7
3	13	3.6
4 or more	1	0.3

Note. There were 4 parents (1.1%) who did not report the number of children they registered.

Table 12

Child Grade in school

	n	Percent
Kindergarten	28	7.7
1st Grade	73	19.9
2nd Grade	54	14.8
3rd Grade	73	19.9
4th Grade	61	16.7
5th Grade	61	16.7

Note. There were 16 children (4.4%) where grade in school was not reported.

Table13

Total number of years participating in the Final Mile

	n	Percent
1st	172	48.7
Multiple	181	51.3

Note. There were 13 children (3.6%) where the total number of yrs. participating was not reported.

Table14

Parent Identification as a runner

	n	Percent
Yes	185	54.7
No	153	45.3

Note. There were 28 parents (7.7%) who did not report running identification.

Involvement Scales. According to Zaichkowsky (1985, 1994), involvement focuses on personal relevance one has with a product. The 8-item revised Personal Involvement Inventory (Celuch & Taylor, 1999) measures a person's perceived relevance or involvement with a service. For the purposes of this study, that service was the Final Mile running event. A 7-point 8-item self-report semantic differential scale was used to collect data regarding the parent's involvement with the Final Mile. The 8-item scale examined both cognitive and affective involvement. Cognitive involvement is based on functional performance and utilitarian motives while affective involvement is based on emotional appeals and value-expressive motives. Items on the cognitive dimension were: Needed/Not Needed, Important/Unimportant, Relevant/Irrelevant, Means A Lot/Means Nothing and Valuable/Worthless. Items on the affective dimension were: Exciting/Unexciting, Appealing/Unappealing and Fascinating/Mundane. The 8-item PII was adapted from previous studies and has demonstrated evidence of reliability and validity. Cronbach alpha scores were satisfactory at .85 and .77 for cognitive and

affective involvement, respectively. Table 15 shows a summary of the descriptive statistics for cognitive and affective involvement. The mean scores for all items were high, well above the midpoint of 4.0. The mean scores ranged from 5.76 to 6.53. Among the cognitive involvement dimension, the item with the highest mean was "Important/Unimportant" and the item with the lowest mean was "Means a lot/Means nothing". On the affective involvement dimension, the item with the highest mean was "Exciting/Unexciting" whereas the item with the lowest mean was "Fascinating/Mundane".

Table 15
Cognitive and Affective Involvement Scale

	Mean	SD	α
Cognitive			.85
Important/Unimportant	6.49	0.72	
Relevant/Irrelevant	6.35	0.89	
Means a lot/Means nothing	6.09	1.02	
Valuable/Worthless	6.49	0.89	
Needed/Not Needed	6.39	1.01	
Affective			.77
Appealing/Unappealing	6.28	0.83	
Exciting/Unexciting	6.53	0.66	
Fascinating/Mundane	5.76	1.13	

Satisfaction scale. Parents of children who registered for the 2016 Final Mile responded to three items regarding satisfaction with the decision for their child to participate in the Final Mile. The 3-items were adapted from an established satisfaction scale (Funk et al., 2011) used among adults in running events. A 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree

to 7 = strongly agree) was used for all three satisfaction items. Reliability was examined for the satisfaction scale and the internal consistency estimate was good with the Cronbach's alpha score of .92. The satisfaction item with the highest mean was 'happy that my child decided to participate,' followed by 'my child did the right thing by deciding to participate'. The satisfaction item with the lowest mean score was 'satisfied with the decision to register my child'. Results are shown in Table 16.

Table16
Satisfaction Scale

Item	Mean	SD	α
			.92
W/Decision	6.37	1.35	
Happy Child participated	6.47	1.24	
Child did right thing	6.43	1.19	

Behavioral intentions scale. Parents of children who registered for the 2016 Final Mile responded to three items regarding future behavioral intentions based on their child's experience at this event. The adapted behavioral intentions scale (Du et al., 2015) measured the likelihood of positive word-of-mouth advertising of the event and the likelihood the child would participate in future running events. A 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 7 = strongly disagree) was used for all three behavioral intention items. Reliability was examined for the behavioral intention scale and the internal consistency estimate was satisfactory with the Cronbach's alpha score of .70 (Field, 2013). As shown in Table 16, the item with the highest mean on the behavioral intentions scale was 'provide positive word-of-mouth advertising' followed by,

'participate in the Final Mile next year'. 'Participate in other community running events' had the lowest mean on the behavioral intentions scale.

Table17
Behavioral Intentions Scale

Item	Mean	SD	α
			.70
Positive WOM	6.51	0.92	
Participate next year	6.30	1.33	
Participate in other events	5.55	1.53	

Research questions. Statistical analyses were conducted on the data to answer the proposed research questions from Chapter 1. The analyses included Multiple Linear Regression. The results are examined and presented by each research question.

Research Question 1: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event?

Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intentions

Independent Variables: Parental Involvement (Cognitive & Affective) and Satisfaction

Analysis: Multiple Linear Regression

A Multiple Linear Regression was used to determine the extent of parental involvement and satisfaction predicted behavioral intentions for (child) future participation with a youth running event. Multiple Linear Regression assumptions were examined first. There are several assumptions a researcher must consider: linearity, independence, normality and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and examination of scatterplots showed all of the variables have a linear relationship. Normality and homoscedasticity were also assessed by examining histograms and Q-

plots. The data did not violate these assumptions. Additionally, large sample sizes are said to be robust and represent the population therefore can violate the assumption of normality (Field, 2013). Potential multicollinearity issues were also examined. According to Field (2013), one way of identifying multicollinearity problems is through the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance statistic. Field suggests if the tolerance statistic is below 0.2 there is a potential multicollinearity problem. For this model, the tolerance statistics for each of the predictor variables were all above 0.2 with the lowest being 0.421 on the affective involvement variable. These results indicated there were no multicollinearity issues in this regression model.

A significance level of .05 was established *a priori* when analyzing the regression model. Table 18 illustrates results of the multiple linear regression model. The overall model was found to be significant ($F(3, 326) = 41.733$, $p < .001$), explaining 28% of the variance in behavioral intentions. All of the independent variables were significant in the model, Cognitive Involvement ($p = .001$), Affective Involvement ($p = .025$), and Satisfaction ($p < .001$). These results indicate Satisfaction was the strongest predictor for Behavioral Intentions followed by Cognitive and Affective Involvement.

Table 18
Multiple Linear Regression Results (Dependent Variable = Behavioral Intentions)

Independent Variable	Beta	*B*	*t*	*p*-value
Cognitive Involvement	.235	.238	3.251	.001
Affective Involvement	.163	.187	2.245	.025
Satisfaction	.299	.256	6.201	<.001

Note: ($F(3, 326) = 41.733$, $p < .001$), $R^2 = .227$

Research Question 2: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event by gender?

Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intentions

Independent Variables: Gender, Parental Involvement (Cognitive & Affective) and Satisfaction

Analysis: Multiple Linear Regression

A multiple linear regression was used to assess gender differences among parental involvement (both cognitive and affective dimensions), satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The data were split by gender to discover if model differences existed. Assumptions were examined and were not violated. A significance level of .05 was established *a priori* in analyzing the regression model. Table 19 provides results of the multiple linear regression model. The model was found to be significant for men ($F(3, 44) = 7.591$, $p < .001$), explaining 34% of the variance in Behavioral Intentions. The significant variable for men was Satisfaction ($p < .001$). The model was also found to be significant for women ($F(3, 273) = 36.689$, $p < .001$), explaining 29% of the variance in Behavioral Intentions. All independent variables were significant in this model, Cognitive Involvement ($p = .001$), Affective Involvement ($p = .021$) and Satisfaction ($p < .001$). These results indicate for both men and women, Satisfaction was the strongest predictor of Behavioral Intentions.

Table 19
Multiple Linear Regression Results (Dependent Variable = Behavioral Intentions) by gender

Independent Variable	Beta	*B*	*t*	*p*-value
Female				
Cognitive Involvement	.253	.261	3.294	.001
Affective Involvement	.179	.222	2.320	.021
Satisfaction	.276	.232	5.268	<.001
Male				
Cognitive Involvement	-.243	-.231	-1.130	.264
Affective Involvement	.272	.252	1.235	.223
Satisfaction	.527	.276	4.124	<.001

Note: ($F(3, 273) = 36.689$, $p < .001$), R^2 .287 Female. ($F(3, 44) = 7.591$, $p < .001$), R^2.341 Male

Research Question 3: To what extent does parental involvement and satisfaction predict behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event by parent runner status?

Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intentions

Independent Variables: Runner Status, Parental Involvement (Cognitive & Affective) and Satisfaction

Analysis: Multiple Linear Regression

A multiple linear regression was conducted to investigate the parent runner status differences among parental involvement (both cognitive and affective dimensions), satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The data were split by runner status to discover if the model differed between runners and non-runners. Regression assumptions were examined and no violations occurred. A significance level of .05 was established *a priori* in analyzing the regression model. Table 20 provides results of the multiple linear regression model. The overall model was found to be significant for parents that

identified themselves as a runner ($F(3,180) = 26.731$, $p < .001$) explaining 31% of the variance in Behavioral Intentions. The overall model was also found to be significant for parents who do not identify themselves as a runner ($F(3,148) = 12.969$, $p < .001$), explaining 21% of the variance in Behavioral Intentions. For parents who consider themselves a runner all variables in the model were significant. Cognitive Involvement ($p = .014$), Affective Involvement ($p = .046$), and Satisfaction ($p < .001$). For parents who consider themselves to be runners, satisfaction was the strongest predictor of behavioral intentions followed by cognitive and affective involvement, respectively. For parents who do not consider themselves to be runners, the only variable that predicted behavioral intentions was satisfaction ($p < .001$).

Table20

Multiple Linear Regression Results (Dependent Variable = Behavioral Intentions) Runner Status

Independent Variable	Beta	*B*	*t*	*p*-value
Runner				
Cognitive Involvement	.226	.230	2.486	.014
Affective Involvement	.185	.230	2.010	.046
Satisfaction	.333	.315	5.189	<.001
Non-Runner				
Cognitive Involvement	.196	.186	1.509	.133
Affective Involvement	.137	.127	1.063	.289
Satisfaction	.270	.179	3.566	<.001

Note: ($F(3,180) = 26.731$, $p < .001$), R^2 .312 Runners. ($F(3,148) = 12.969$, $p < .001$), R^2 .212 non-Runners.

Summary

Chapter four described the demographic information for parents with children participating in the 2016 Final Mile running event. A total of six variables were investigated. The variables included parent gender, parent runner status, satisfaction, affective involvement, cognitive involvement and behavioral intentions. Preliminary

analyses were performed on all of the data involved with this study. The analyses included screening and coding the data, examining the data for normality (including outliers), and investigating reliability and validity. Also assumptions of normality, linearity, independence and homogeneity of variances were examined for all variables analyzed.

Research Question 1 investigated the extent parental involvement and satisfaction predicted behavioral intentions for future participation in a youth running event. A multiple linear regression was used to analyze if there was a significant relationship in behavioral intentions based on affective involvement, cognitive involvement and satisfaction. The results found significant relationships for both dimensions of involvement as well as for satisfaction in predicting behavioral intentions for future participation in youth running event.

Research Question 2 examined the extent parental involvement and satisfaction predicted behavioral intentions for future participation in a youth running event by gender. A multiple linear regression indicated affective involvement, cognitive involvement and satisfaction were significant in predicting behavioral intentions for female respondents. For male respondents, however, satisfaction was the only predictor of behavioral intentions.

Research Question 3 investigated the extent parental involvement and satisfaction predicted behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event by runner status. A multiple linear regression indicated satisfaction was a significant predictor for all parents. However, for parents who identified themselves as a runner,

both affective and cognitive involvement were also found to be significant predictors of behavioral intentions for future participation with a youth running event for their child.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are many positive benefits associated with physical activity for children (Bryan & Solmon, 2012), and community based running events have emerged as opportunities for children to become more physically active (Xiang et al., 2004). While there is growing scholarly interest in a variety of factors associated with community running events, prior research has focused on adult participants. Little is known about factors associated with participation in youth running events. Most sport participation decisions for youth are ultimately made by parents (Howard & Madrigal, 1990). Because parents play a crucial role in the consumer decisions (Ironico, 2012; Kim et al., 2015; Mau et al., 2014; Neulinger & Zoster, 2014) and activity choices of their children (Brustad, 1993; Dempsey et al., 1993; Trost et al., 2003), this study focused on an investigation of parental factors influencing participation of children in youth running events. The purpose of this study was to examine parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions associated with a youth running event. Specifically, this study sought to determine if the level of parental involvement and satisfaction with a youth running event influenced behavioral intentions for their child's future participation in running events. Additionally, the effects of parent gender and parent running status were explored.

Theoretical Implications

This study adds to the literature in several ways. First, no studies were found that investigated the relationship between parental involvement and behavioral intentions for their child. This study is unique because it extended the use of the PII to examine

parental involvement. No other studies were found that utilized the PII to examine involvement of parents with a product or service for their children. Other studies using the PII have examined an individual's own involvement with a product or service.

Only two studies were found to have used the PII to examine involvement of runners, and both investigated the runner's own involvement with the sport product. Mueller (2012) examined ultramarathon runners using the 10-item PII and while the PII was shown to be significant in predicting commitment to the sport, the affective and cognitive dimensions failed to predict intentions for future participation. Perhaps there were no significant findings for the affective and cognitive involvement dimensions because of the high response rate of male participants (71%) in Mueller's study. The present study showed significant results for both affective and cognitive involvement with female respondents, but not for male respondents. McGehee et al., (2003) analyzed runners using the 9-item PII as a unidimensional scale and found medium involved runners were more likely to travel to distant road races than highly involved runners. Because the MeGehee et al. study did not examine cognitive and affective involvement separately, it is difficult to compare its findings with the current study.

Although there is a growing scholarly interest in mass-participation running events, all previous research has focused on adult participants. No previous studies have investigated youth running events. With the increasing number of youth running events being conducted, it is important to have an understanding of factors impacting registration in these events. This study add to the literature because of the focus on youth participating in running events.

Both cognitive involvement and affective involvement were significant predictors of behavioral intensions in the main model (Research Question 1). Cognitive involvement was a slightly better predictor than affective involvement. Since cognitive involvement is based on functional and utilitarian motives, this finding makes sense because many parents could be registering their child for the event for health and fitness reasons. Baumann et al., (2009) suggested participation in running events can serve the purpose of becoming more physically active. Parents may want their children to become more physically active and feel running events are a great catalyst in doing so. Parents might also be more cognitively involved with the Final Mile if it serves a functional purpose. Many parents may view the Final Mile and its training component with the functional purpose of keeping their children healthy and active. Affective involvement, on the other hand, is seen as emotional motives. Parents who are affectively involved may feel the Final Mile serves an emotional purpose. There are various race components that give value-expressive benefits such as the overall festive atmosphere of the race, the excitement of running in a big event, and the appeal of earning the finisher medal. Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010) also found participants who were happy with the overall atmosphere of the event were more likely to register for the event again.

When examining parental involvement based on gender there were some differences between men and women (Research Question 2). For women, both affective and cognitive involvement predicted behavioral intentions; however, for men neither dimension of parental involvement was significant in predicting behavioral intentions. This is not a surprising result. It has been shown that mothers make the decisions for their child's recreational activities more so than fathers (Howard & Madrigal, 1990).

Since mothers actively research the recreational programs for their children, it makes sense women would be seen as more involved than their male counterparts.

Additionally, more mothers completed the survey than fathers. Not only did more mothers complete the survey, respondents also indicated that mothers typically made the purchase decision to register their child for the event. Interestingly, group decision making was indicated as the second most frequent method of decision making in the home whereas decision making made by fathers was only 3%. This is consistent with previous work from Neulinger and Zsoter (2014) and Dotson and Hyatt (2005) where the family unit is seen as a large influence on purchase decisions. Results from the present study also extend the notion and are consistent with previous research that mothers tend to be more involved than fathers with their children's recreational activities (Howard & Madrigal, 1990) and consumer decision making choices (Kim et al., 2015; Neulinger & Zsoter, 2014).

Similar to the findings regarding gender, there were differences when comparing runner vs. non-runner status. People who identify themselves as runners are likely to place more value on running and running events. Therefore, it was not surprising that both affective and cognitive involvement were significant predictors of behavioral intentions for parents who considered themselves to be runners. For the parents who did not consider themselves to be runners, involvement was not seen as a significant predictor for future intentions. This is consistent with the involvement literature which indicates someone will be more involved with products or services that hold value with the individual (Zaichkowsky, 1994).

The strongest predictor of behavioral intentions was satisfaction. Parents in this study were more likely to do positive word-of-mouth promoting of the event to others and were also more likely to register their child for the Final Mile and other running events if they were satisfied with the event. Consistent with Green and Chalip (1998), there was a positive relationship between parental satisfaction and future behavioral intentions. Yoshida and James (2010) also found similar results indicating overall satisfaction and excitement of the atmosphere impact behavioral intentions. Generally speaking, the more satisfied the parent was with the decision to register their child for the Final Mile, the more likely it was that their child would participate in future running events. This finding is consistent with the results of both Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010) and Koo et al. (2014). Kaplanidou and Gibson determined satisfaction could predict future intentions to participate in a recurring sports event again. Koo et al. found that satisfaction predicted behavioral intentions for future participation for adult marathon runners. Although both studies focused on adult participants themselves, it can be argued that if parents are satisfied with their child's participation in the event, there is an increased likelihood of a parent registering their child for the event again.

Practical Implications

Results from this study provide race directors with several practical implications. Satisfaction was the strongest predictive variable to contribute to behavioral intentions. While it is the child participating in the event, it is the parent ultimately making the decision to register the child for the event. Race directors should focus on enhancing the elements of the event that parents deem important. The overall atmosphere is one factor race directors have control over to impact satisfaction. The excitement of race day,

security of the race route, being able to witness their child crossing the finish line and finisher medals are elements that can contribute to the overall parental satisfaction of the event. It has been shown mothers have considerable influence on their child's participation in recreational activities. From a marketing standpoint, race directors can use this information to target mothers specifically to increase the likelihood of race registration.

Since both cognitive and affective involvement dimensions were shown to be significant predictors of behavioral intensions among women, marketing strategies should focus on both aspects of involvement. Incorporating the aspects of the cognitive involvement dimension such as Needed, Important, Relevant, Means a lot and Valuable, race directors could focus their marketing plans to include methods to increase parental involvement. Once youth are registered for the race, race directors can focus on relaying information to parents to convey the importance and value of running for children. As an example, race directors could create home training plans for parents to implement. This could enhance the value of being physically active and also include the entire family. There could also be a year-long running program that incorporates additional races to keep youth motivated in being physically active. Communication between race directors and parents is a key aspect in repeat registrations. This communication can come via emails, direct mailers and providing incentives to other races.

Communication can also focus on the fun aspects of participating in the race. Identifying the exciting, appealing and fascinating aspects of affective involvement, race directors can focus on the emotional appeal of the event. Photographs of children having a great time at the start and finish line, wearing event t-shirts, and earning finisher medals

are all examples of the emotional appeal of race day. Many races for adults culminate with some type of post-race party. Perhaps race directors can incorporate a festive party at the finish line for children as well. These aspects of the event add excitement to the overall atmosphere of the event, which can increase the likelihood of repeat registration. Race directors could also utilize the teachers in the schools that conduct running programs in a manner that could enhance the race elements that factor into making the event more appealing, exciting and fascinating. Teachers can be great allies to parents as previous research has shown that with elementary school aged children, teachers are seen as important socializing agents that contribute to influence activity choices (Carr & Weigand, 2002).

Limitations and Future Research

There were several limitations of this study. First, there was a low response rate of only 7.5%. This impacts the overall generalizability of the study. The parents that responded to the survey could be considered more highly involved with their children's activities and more likely to respond to the email invitation to complete the survey. Future research should broaden the sample by exploring multiple youth races in several different regions to better understand parental involvement, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Future research should also focus on ways to increase the response rate. Incentives such as free race entries, event t-shirts or gift cards may entice parents to respond to the survey. An increase in communication could also impact the response rate. For example, researchers can work with race directors to inform parents that there will be a survey following the race. Flyers placed in the registration goodie bags plus communication regarding the survey coming from a trusted and known source might

make a difference in parents responding to the survey. Researchers being present at packet pick up and having some type of interactive table to inform parents about the study in person could also increase the response rate. Parents may like the idea of meeting the researchers in person.

Another limitation of this study was specific event factors that could contribute to parental satisfaction factors were not explored. For the purpose of this study, satisfaction focused on the parents' level of satisfaction with the decision to register their child for the event. Future research could also examine specific elements of a youth running event that contribute to parental satisfaction such as organization of the start line, race route, and ease of finding children after the race. Trail et al., (2005) found that expectations of the event can factor into the satisfaction and therefore impact behavioral intentions. Future research on youth running events could investigate parental expectations.

Another idea for future research would be to investigate parental involvement among first time participants in comparison to participants that have participated more than once. Perhaps parental involvement increases over time. Additionally, there may be other factors that contribute to parents' repeat purchase decisions for registering their children in running events. It would also be interesting to know if the child's participation in a running event encourages parents to become more physically active.

Finally, this study focused on parental involvement and satisfaction. It did not explore the children's motives for participating or their satisfaction with the event. Future studies should explore factors that are relevant to the youth participants. While it is important to understand parents' involvement with activity choices of their children, it is also imperative to know why children themselves want to participate in youth running

events and what factors will contribute to their continued participation. The purchase decision family dynamic is not a well understood phenomenon. Generations and gender roles change over time. Children have increasingly more power in regards to making decisions within the family. Future research could include an investigation of the family decision making roles when it comes to participation in events and sports in general. This combined with cultural differences could impact marketing strategies for race directors.

Conclusion

An increasing number of running events are being targeted to youth and are adding to the growing road racing industry (Higdon, 2016). Offering running events for children along with a lineup of races ranging from 5K runs to marathons for adults is a way for race organizers to expand their businesses, increase economic impact in their communities and meet the needs of the entire family. In addition to economic benefits, there are other benefits associated with running events for youth. Community running events provide one potential intervention to counter rising childhood obesity rates by increasing the levels of physical activity for youth (Bauman, et al., 2009).

Parents are seen as important agents in the socialization processes that shape and influence youth physical activity decisions (Brustad, 1993; Dempsey, et al., 1993; Trost et al., 2003). Most sport participation decisions for youth are ultimately made by parents (Howard & Madrigal, 1990), and because parents play a crucial role in the consumer decisions and activity choices of their children, this study focused on an investigation of parental factors influencing participation of children in youth running events. Specifically, this study sought to determine if parental involvement and satisfaction with

a youth running event predicted intentions for their child to participate in future running events.

This study makes two unique contributions to the literature. First, while there is a growing body of literature on running events for adults, this is the first study to focus on factors impacting participation in youth running events. Also, it is the first study to use the PII to examine involvement for someone other than the actual consumer. For the Final Mile, the children are the consumers, but the parents play a key role in the purchase decision. Thus, it is important to understand the parents' involvement with the event and how it might impact future participation for their children in other youth running events.

The results of this study may assist race directors in creating more salient marketing plans for youth events that are targeted to parents. Understanding parental involvement and satisfaction with youth running events may be key factors for increasing the number of children who participate in such events. This study found that parents who view a youth running event as valuable, relevant, and exciting and those who are satisfied with the decision for their child to participate in the event are more likely to encourage their children to participate in future running events. This may lead to children becoming more physically active on a regular basis and could give rise to the many benefits associated with lifelong engagement in physical activity**.**

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