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Outdoor Recreation Events

Exploring motivations for adventure recreation events: a New Zealand study

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Abstract

Adventure recreation events are a relatively new form of leisure that have become increasingly popular since the 1990s, yet little is known about motivations for participation. In this study, participant motivations were investigated through an interpretive methodology and the theoretical framework of self-determination theory (SDT). Exploratory, in-depth interviews with 22 participants in six different New Zealand events revealed intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, some of which overlap with motivations previously found for endurance sports and others which are also associated with outdoor recreation. In addition, two sets of dynamic relationships between motivations appear to exist: one set is competence, challenge and self-responsibility and the other is adventure, place and identity. These relationships need closer investigation. There is wide scope for further research that extends understanding of motivation for adventure recreation events beyond the context studied.

Keywords: motivation, adventure, event, participation, leisure, sport

Introduction

Adventure recreation events are a popular form of leisure that has attracted little research attention to date. The research literature on leisure events focuses primarily on major international sporting events such as the Olympics and World Cup competitions (Emery & Radu, 2007) and on food, music and community events, and other cultural festivals (e.g. Jaeger & Mykletun, 2009; Fowley & Mcpherson, 2007; Mykeltun, 2009; Rojek, 2013). Adventure recreation events appear to differ from other types of events by combining some of the characteristics of outdoor recreation and some more akin to sport, raising many questions including that of what motivates participation. The apparently distinctive nature of adventure recreation events suggests the possibility for anomalies in motivation for physical activity participation and subsequently, following Kuhn's (1996) logic, the potential for new insights into motivation for physical activity events.

This paper draws from a wider exploratory qualitative study that investigated what adventure recreation event participants took into account when considering entering an event (Lynch & Dibben, 2014). An interpretive approach enabled the participants' own meanings to emerge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). From semi-structured interviews, participant responses revealed much about their motivations for, attitudes towards, and experiences of such events. Based on analysis of 22 in-depth interviews, the paper draws on self-determination theory (SDT) as a theoretical framework for recognising and validating motivations for participation in six New Zealand adventure recreation events. This use of theory guards against subjective reading of the data without confining understandings of motivation for participation in adventure recreation

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events to the understandings previously found for other types of events (Flyvbjerg, 2001). SDT aligns well with experiential approaches to understanding leisure; both focus on the individual person as the unit of analysis and on experiences of autonomy and personal agency. We argue that self-determination and leisure experience are particularly fruitful conceptual frameworks for understanding adventure recreation event participation.

An adventure recreation event is an occurrence of organised outdoor recreational activities that involves an element of risk and that occurs at a time and place and has a purpose decided by someone other than the participants (i.e. by the event organiser). Adventure recreation events comprise single- or multi-day journeys completed by performing physical activities such as biking, running, kayaking, rafting, and/or rogaining (large-scale orienteering), often in combination, and ideally through relatively unmodified natural environments.

Beside its value for leisure theorising, knowledge about motivations can be used to inform event design and implementation and in policy and planning decisions (as Lynch and Jonson (2007) have suggested in relation to interpreting criminal law in accidental injury cases). In a physical activity and health context, for example, there is some evidence that involvement in organised outdoor recreation activities such as mountain biking motivates novices to become longer-term participants (Reis, Thompson, Lovelock & Boyes, 2010; Zink, 2012), but little is known about the potential for adventure recreation events in particular to have a similar effect. Further, adventure activity participation has been characterised as involving engagement with risk, challenge, control and autonomy (Krein, 2007; Lyng, 2005), factors that event managers must consider when deciding on event rules and routes. These characteristics may motivate participants to enter adventure recreation events but this has not been examined empirically, nor has the possibility that these are not the only motivations.

The relative dearth of literature on these events stands in contrast to the rise in popularity of this leisure form over the past two decades, as shown below, and highlights the need for research. Since the 1990s, adventure recreation events have grown in popularity internationally alongside the development of adventure sports (Bell, 2003; Breivik, 2010; Kay & Laberge, 2002). The various forms of adventure activity are not well distinguished in the academic literature; the term adventure sports, for example, has been applied to activities also known as outdoor recreations in New Zealand (see, for example, Booth, 2004). For the purposes of this exploratory study, the broader term 'adventure recreation event' is retained and is taken to encompass mass participation events as well as the more professional and specialised adventure racing events.

There are few published statistics for participation in adventure recreation events, with the exception of the USA. There, participation has increased by 211% to 2.2 million, or 0.8% of the total population aged 6 years and over, from 2008 – 2012 (Outdoor Foundation, 2013). This is a similar participation rate to BMS biking, mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, and martial arts in the USA (Outdoor Foundation, 2013). In the New Zealand context, Hunter (2006) reported that by 2006 at least 150 events were being held annually, involving approximately 50,000 participants. More recent data on the number of events and participants is not readily available. Evidence from the World Wide Web suggests that adventure recreation

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events are popular in other nations and regions such as Australia, Europe and Canada (AdventurePro, 2013; Canadian Adventure Racing Association, 2011; Sleepmonsters, n.d.; Xterra Nordic, n.d.). These events (alongside other types of events and cultural festivals) are considered to be 'prime manifestations of the experience economy' (Robertson et al, 2007, p. 99), yet the experiential dimensions of adventure recreation event participation, including motivation, are not well understood (Hunter, 2006).

The paper begins with a discussion of outdoor recreation events as a leisure form before reviewing relevant aspects of motivation theory. The focus then narrows to consider motivation in leisure contexts before moving to the methods and findings of the present study. In this respect, the paper follows an established theme within leisure and sports events literature, in developing an interpretive exploratory study of qualitative data (see e.g. Coghlan, 2012; and Shipway & Jones, 2008).

Adventure recreation events as a leisure form

Common in the adventure recreation literature is the view that both physical activity and risk inhere in adventure recreation to produce leisure experiences (Breivik, 2007; Lyng, 2005). However, Krein (2007) argues convincingly that participants do not necessarily pursue risk for the sake of risk-taking. Rather, most people participate in adventure activities 'because they value the experiences obtained' so highly that 'participating in them is worth the risks' (p. 86). In this view, adventure recreation participants seek opportunities in which they have the freedom to engage with risk in ways of their own choosing. Their aim is to take 'control and responsibility for their lives' in situations when 'survival depends on their judgement and skills' (Krein, 2007, p. 87). This view aligns with experiential perspectives that argue leisure is fundamentally about freedom and choice (Roberts, 2006; Rojek, 2005) even when these values are 'an articulation of peer group pressure, family tradition, class position or media sponsorship', among other things (Rojek, 2005, p. 31).

In leisure, freedom and personal identity occur in a dynamic relationship with one another (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2013). Freedom is never absolute (Blackshaw, 2010; Clarke, 2008; Roberts, 2006; Rojek, 2005), so it is perceived freedom that interests us here. Indeed, Bouwer and van Leeuwen (2013) argue that leisure occurs when we perceive freedom to be sufficient 'to express who we are or want to be – our personal identity' (p. 588), and, as a result of being able to craft an individual identity, we feel free. Significant leisure experiences, such as major sporting, touristic or aesthetic experiences and, arguably, adventure recreation events, are particularly important for personal identity, according to these authors, because they 'open us up to self-creation [or] ... the autonomous writing of self-narratives' (p. 589). Wolf-Watz' (2010) study of outdoor recreation in a Swedish youth environment organisation found, for example, that 'engaging in outdoor recreation is a way for people to socially place and distinguish themselves' (p. 41). Short-duration, high-intensity, relatively low-skill activities such as adventure recreation events have been understood as engaging participants in on-going processes of identity construction (Lyng, 2005) and identity communication (Frank, 1991; Phillips, 2005).

A major objection to mediated and commercialised leisure, such as adventure recreation events, is that experiences of enjoyment, creativity and satisfaction (and therefore freedom and choice) are degraded in comparison to self-made leisure forms

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(e.g. Dougherty, 2007; Ebert & Robertson, 2007). Counter arguments take the view that consumers are not passive but active agents in creative use of commodities for personal purposes. Aligned with this latter view, adventure is proposed as a vehicle of personal agency (Lynch & Moore, 2004). In this view, it is immaterial whether the activity is mediated, contrived or externally controlled; what matters is *how* the individuals at leisure utilise the features of their physical, social, economic and cultural environments to engage with risk to produce autonomy and enjoyment – and therefore leisure - for themselves.

Participation in adventure recreation events requires physical exertion and often, but not always, involves competition. There may be no entry requirements apart from paying a fee and being equipped with the appropriate equipment, although certificates of proficiency are sometimes required for water-based and alpine travel (Lynch & Dibben, 2014). Mass participation is a characteristic and commercial necessity of adventure recreation events in New Zealand. Each event commonly attracts 100-1200 people, usually a mix of professionals, serious amateurs and novices (Davidson & Stebbins, 2011; Hunter, 2006). In both New Zealand and Australia, adventure events are organised and managed by a mix of individuals, clubs and other non-profit organisations, and corporations (Hunter, 2006; Reid & Ritchie, 2011). They provide recreation opportunities and in New Zealand, at least, contribute to a strong culture of active physical recreation participation (Lynch & Jonson, 2007). The capacity for participative choice makes these events attractive to a wide range of individuals, whose motivations may lie in this freedom of choice. To explore this idea further, the next section focuses on theoretical approaches to motivations as studied in leisure. It then concentrates on leisure contexts that have some similarities to adventure recreation events, as a means by which to develop an understanding that may be applicable to this particular context.

Self-determination theory

Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (SDT) has been utilised widely to explain leisure motivations (Kleiber, Walker & Mannell, 2011) and, with its focus on individual agency, seems particularly applicable to the context of adventure recreation events. This model positions intrinsic motivation at the top of a hierarchy of motivations where it is related to the highest levels of self-determination. At the bottom of the hierarchy is amotivation, or a lack of self-determination. In between these two extremes is extrinsic motivation, which is sub-categorised into a hierarchy of four types. Placed at the bottom of the hierarchy, external motivation occurs in response to rewards and punishments; introjected motivation occurs in response to internal pressure to act ethically or morally (what one ought to do) and sits above external motivation. Next highest is identified motivation, which occurs when a person believes that a particular behaviour is important, such as in running for health reasons. At the top of the extrinsic motivation hierarchy is integrated motivation, which occurs when a person has internalised a behaviour to the extent that it has become part of their identity. In self-determination theory, motivations satisfy three psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Autonomy refers to 'freedom to initiate one's behaviour', competence means 'effective functioning' and desire to take on new challenges, and relatedness refers to being loved, understood and 'meaningfully involved with the broader social world' (Kleiber et al, 2011, p.

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134). Autonomy and competence are often associated with adventure recreation activities and might reasonably be extended to adventure recreation events.

More recently, Carbonneau, Vallerand and Lafreniere (2012) have proposed a tripartite model of intrinsic motivation (TMIM) with three non-hierarchical sub-types. These authors found three sub-types, intrinsic motivation to know, toward accomplishment, and to experience stimulation, to be related to personality orientations (e.g. a curious personality is mainly motivated to know) and outcomes such as activity choices or affective states. Accomplishment and stimulation are regularly associated with adventure activities (Krein, 2007), hence the TMIM model may also explain aspects of motivation for adventure recreation events. Both the TMIM and SDT models leave open the possibility that multiple types of motivation operate at any one time, be they extrinsic, intrinsic or mixed motivations (Carbonneau et al, 2012; Kleiber et al, 2011). To understand how these models may help explain the motivation to be involved in outdoor recreation events, it is pertinent to explore the motivation behind participation in three fields of leisure activity most closely related to adventure recreation events: endurance sports, outdoor recreation generally and outdoor recreation events. The studies discussed below draw on the theoretical work outlined above to unpack some of the complexity inherent in the decisions to participate in such activities, and point towards possible theoretical developments.

Motivation in leisure and adventure events

Adventure recreation events are endurance activities. Studies of motivation for endurance sports report that accomplishment through physical performance is an important motivator for marathon runners (Ogles & Masters, 2000), triathletes (Grand'Maison, 2004; Lamont & Kennelly, 2012), cyclists (LaChausse, 2006) and mountain bikers (Skår, Odden & Vistad, 2008; Taylor, 2010). Accomplishment occurs through challenging oneself, testing one's limits, and setting and achieving performance goals. The effects of performance on the physical body were also found to be important motivations for participation in endurance sports, especially weight loss and enhanced body image in marathon runners (Bond & Batey, 2005; Ogles and Masters, 2000; Smith, 2000) and cyclists (LaChausse, 2006), and fitness in these groups as well as in triathletes (Lamont & Kennelly, 2012). Similarly, Hunter's (2006) informal analysis of New Zealand adventure recreation events found the benefits of participation to include 'promoting health and fitness' (Hunter, 2006, p. 7; other motives related to leadership and self-responsibility). Motivations for adventure recreation events may be similar to those of endurance sports, but other motivations might arise from dissimilarities in other characteristics, such as the type of performance arena and degree of competitive behaviour.

Lamont and Kennelly's (2012) study of Australian triathletes is of particular interest for its specific focus on amateur participants, exploratory approach, use of self-determination theory as a framework for interpreting the data, and the wide range of motivations found. These authors clustered the motivations they found into nine categories, of which two were the intrinsic motives of competence and enjoyment. These map on to Carbonneau et al's (2012, p. 1161) intrinsic sub-types 'toward accomplishment' and 'experience stimulation' respectively. Lamont and Kennelly (2012) also found a theme of enjoyment which arose from informants' descriptions of

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experiencing sensory pleasure from their participation, experiencing purpose and meaning in life, fulfilling aspirations and minimising the potential for regrets. From the conceptualisation of adventure set out above, it is reasonable to expect competence and enjoyment to motivate outdoor recreation event participation.

The remaining seven categories aligned with extrinsic motivation: wellbeing, external rewards, ego involvement, sociability, self-transformation, enduring commitment, and consolidation. Wellbeing encapsulated health-oriented motives, such as pursuing a healthy lifestyle, ageing healthily, and physical fitness. External rewards included opportunities to travel, owning technical equipment and being provided with food and drink during an event. Ego-involvement focused on competition. Competition makes outdoor adventure activities attractive, according to Krien (2007) and has been found to be valued by male New Zealand mountain bikers (Fowler & Mansell, 2008) and to motivate adults in professional-level adventure racing (Kay & Laberge, 2002). However, not all outdoor recreation events are competitive and, as Zink (2012) found in the case of family-oriented outdoor recreation events, it may be the absence of competition that is a key to their attractiveness. Further, competition is not a requirement of participation in adventure recreation events. This leaves open the question of how important competition is as a motivator for participation.

Lamont and Kennelly's (2012) fourth extrinsic motivation category was sociability, an amalgam of friendship, enhancing family relationships and peer pressure. Social motivations have also been found among mountain bikers in Norway (Skår et al, 2008) and in outdoor recreation and outdoor education in New Zealand (Campbell-price, 2011; Fowler & Mansell, 2008; Kulczycki, 2001; Reis, Thompson, Lovelock and Boyes, 2010; Zink, 2012). Self-transformation, Lamont and Kennelly's fifth category, comprised substitution, in which triathlon was substituted for previous sporting activities, and for lifestyle enhancement, wherein triathlon became a means by which individuals gained greater satisfaction from life. The final two categories were enduring commitment and consolidation. Enduring commitment refers to triathletes' inability to imagine not participating, not least for fear of losing hard-won fitness. Consolidation refers to participants' engagement in triathlon as a consequence of having previously participated in one or more of the contributing activities (swimming, running, cycling); triathlon consolidates their previous interest and experience. Outdoor recreation event participation may also be motivated by opportunities for social interaction, self-transformation, enduring commitment and, perhaps most interestingly, the opportunities to experience nature itself. It is to this aspect that we now turn.

Escape into nature

Studies focusing particularly on outdoor recreation, in contrast to studies of endurance sports, have found that the qualities of the activity's venue motivate participation (Btymer & Gray, 2009; Budvik & Stanis, 2013; Davidson & Stebbins, 2011). Skår et al (2008, p. 41-43), for example, found that 'contemplation' (made up of relaxation, renewal, rest and escape) and 'nature experiences' were important motivations, as was 'speed and excitement'. 'Managing challenges', equipment and performance were lesser motivations. Similarly, Taylor (2010) identified the motivations of New Zealand and UK mountain bikers as 'feelings of thrill and escapism' (p. 274),

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escaping urban environments and gaining a sense of freedom in 'wilderness' places (p. 268). Taylor (2010) concludes that 'natural landscapes, whether consumed dynamically or more passively appreciated, are important settings for mountain bikers' (p. 268). References to the natural landscape stand in contrast to Lamont and Kennelly (2012) and SDT theory (Kleiber et al, 2011) where the geographical location of the leisure action does not feature.

Leisure can produce feelings of attachment to particular places, such as urban and national parks (Kyle et al, 2003; Kyle et al, 2004). Attachment is an environmental psychological construct, in which an affective relationship between a person and a specific place arises from symbolic meanings associated with that place (Kyle et al 2003; Stedman, 2002). Further, Wynveen et al (2011) found that the meanings ascribed to places are associated with intensity of place attachment. Recreation opportunities only featured in the meanings ascribed to places by those with moderate and relatively low attachment intensities. Positive relationships between outdoor recreation participation and place-relatedness have been reported in several recent empirical studies (e.g. Budruk & Stanis, 2013; Mansfield & Wheaton, 2011). Only recently has the inverse relationship been studied – that is, place-relatedness as a motivator for outdoor recreation participation. In this view, 'places are often a criterion for choosing an activity, for achieving personal goals, or for embracing certain opportunities and experiences associated with specific places' (Freire, 2013, p. 68). Respectively, Fredman and Heberlein (2005) and Budruk and Stanis (2013) found positive correlations between place-relatedness and visits to the Swedish mountains and to an urban green space in India. Further, Lovelock, Jellum and Thompson's (2011) quantitative survey of New Zealand hunters, fishers, mountaineers and trappers found that being in a natural area and enjoying natural scenery were the strongest motivations for participation in each activity. As in outdoor recreations, adventure recreation events rely on outdoor venues with at least some natural features (such as streams, rivers, lakes, bush or forest). More specifically, Davidson and Stebbins (2011) argue that in adventure racing and multisport events, race locations are selected in part for the physical challenges offered but also for 'the beauty of the terrain' (p. 183) and 'it is not uncommon for racers to talk about feeling that they are "part of nature"' (p. 183). In sum, considering place as a motivator for participation in adventure recreation events is therefore warranted.

The diverse motives associated with participation in activities somewhat similar to adventure recreation events indicated that an exploratory approach was appropriate for the study on which this paper is based.

Method.

The study utilised an interpretive approach similar to that adopted by Lamont and Kennelly (2012), in which motivation data was extracted from exploratory interviews designed to elicit broad information about participation in triathlon. In keeping with the exploratory nature of the study, the three interview questions were deliberately broad, asking what the interviewees considered before and during an event and what sources of information they used during this consideration. It was clear from the interview process that in articulating their understanding of the events they were participating in, there was a close connection between participants' understanding of

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the way in which events were managed, their own focus on preparation for participation, and their motivations for participation. Bearing this in mind, participant interviews were re-analysed for the present paper, with a particular focus on motivations for participation. In adopting an approach similar to Lamont and Kennelly (2012), this study shares the limitations inherent in researcher interpretation of interviewee transcripts. However, importantly, it also shares the advantage of avoiding leading interviewees to particular responses (such as the motivations they perceive one ought to have).

In-depth interviews of 60-90 minutes in duration were recorded with 22 people (12 female, 10 male; aged 20-50 years) who had participated in one of six adventure recreation events held in the South Island of New Zealand during the period 31 January to 31 March 2005. Recent evidence from relevant websites (e.g. Multisport Calendar) indicates that the current nature and scope of adventure events in New Zealand is consistent with that of 2005 and therefore the data present here is relevant to the contemporary context. Events were selected to maximise variability within time and cost constraints. Two of the events studied were single-day mountain biking events, two were single-day mountain-running events and two were multi-day multisport events. The study method was approved by the ethics committee of Lincoln University, New Zealand.

A snowball method was used to directly recruit 6-10 willing interviewees, a mix of 1-2 professional, serious amateur and novices, on the final day of each event. All interviews were conducted within 4 weeks of the end of the respective event and were transcribed verbatim before coding. Transcripts were coded manually by one researcher and a research assistant and checked for inter-coder reliability. In keeping with the interpretive approach, descriptive codes were initially induced from the data (Saldaña, 2013) to expose the range of motivations experienced by event participants. Subsequently, the descriptive codes were mapped on to the frameworks provided by SDT and TMIM theories (Carbonneau et al, 2012; Kleiber et al, 2011) to facilitate discussion of the data in the light of these theories. By this means, expressions relating to free choice of participation, interest, enjoyment, autonomy, competence, relatedness, knowledge, accomplishment and experiences of stimulation were coded as signals of intrinsic motivation. Expressions relating to rewards, punishments, what it is important to do and what one ought to do were coded signals of extrinsic motivation. Finally, the possibility of participants being amotivated was kept open by searching for statements expressing a lack of efficacy or control (Kleiber et al, 2011). The findings are presented with a numerical interviewee code followed by the letter P denoting participant (e.g. 02.P) and without indication of demographic characteristics. Given the exploratory nature of the study, it would be highly speculative to associate any particular finding to persons of similar characteristics generally.

Findings and discussion

The intrinsic motivations indicated by interviewees were enjoyment, challenge, progressively improving performance, opportunities for self-responsibility, and balancing challenge and skill. The extrinsic motivations found most commonly were competition, social interaction, development of personal identity, aesthetics of place, and novelty. Physical fitness and prizes appeared as minor motivations. We found no

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evidence that participants lacked efficacy or control – that is, were amotivated - in their decisions to participate. Relationships between these various motivations are highlighted in the more detailed discussion that follows.

Intrinsic motivations

A primary motivation for participating in adventure recreation events was *enjoyment*. Some interviewees expressed this as the prospect of having fun by participating ‘in your own time’ (12.P) in ‘a friendly race’ (17.P). For others, enjoyment was gained from pitching one’s competence against the challenges of the event and achieving a satisfying performance. This is consistent with Krein’s (2007) analysis of adventure sports being about competence and control rather than risk-taking for the sake of risk.

Several interviewees mentioned that the difficulty of the event influences their enjoyment of it. For example, one likes ‘to really test’ himself, with greater enjoyment coming from the hardest races (02.P). For him, the *challenge* of mastering new techniques is highly motivating. Others described striving for a goal such as bettering the previous year’s time (4P, 11P) and enjoying both the challenge and the achievement (4P, 11P, 14P). The element of control was important for achievement to be possible, as explained by one interviewee: ‘I want it to be hard but I want to know I can complete it’ [12.P]. A good event was one in which ‘[you] might have to push yourself, but not going beyond your limits’ [4.P].

Progressively improving performance is an additional motivation for at least some participants, ‘just to test yourself and... always aiming higher to climb the ladder’ [2.P]. This participant referred to the time it takes for the body to adapt to such demanding physical activity, to accumulate the stamina and skills to perform well. Another referred to the fitness, experience and knowledge as being things ‘you can’t buy ... and you only get by doing lots of events or doing tramping or doing climbing or doing lots of things’ [25.P]. Specialised training, for road cycling in bunches and river kayaking for example, and doing the same event several times enabled participants to ‘get better and better’ [1.P].

These findings of challenge and progressive improvement echo those in Lamont and Kennelly’s (2012) study of amateur triathletes and align well with Carbonneau et al’s (2012) intrinsic motivation sub-type ‘to accomplish’. However, in contrast to Lamont and Kennelly (2012), in this study participants were motivated by *opportunities to be self-responsible* in their leisure performance. In each of the events, there was potential for physical injuries and interviewees consistently stated that they viewed themselves as responsible for their own safety during the event. Self-responsibility is part of the attraction of these events because, in the words of one interviewee, ‘you are not pampered too much. ... It’s the difference between an adventure race ... and ... a run in the park’ (02.P). This sentiment aligns with the desire for autonomy through leisure (Roberts, 2006) and with SDT’s major goal of autonomy (Kleiber et al, 2011). Arguably, this is the element of adventure that marks the difference between the amateur triathletes’ responses and those in this study, indicating that endurance sport events and adventure recreation events must be distinguished from one another at least in studies that rely on motivation for explanatory power. This argument can be further tested in research that directly compares participants in the two types of events.

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As noted above, participant enjoyment of adventure recreation events is linked to challenge, though enjoyment does not necessarily signal immediate pleasure. Testing oneself, being ‘knackered’ (26P), wanting to tackle hard challenges, pushing oneself were the expressions used by interviewees to communicate the physical and psychological effort that was required in order to enjoy achievement. This is consistent with Lamont and Kennelly’s (2012, p. 244) ‘masochism’ motivation, also linked to enjoyment, though it was not expressed as overtly as ‘when you feel trashed you feel really good’ (Lamont & Kennelly, 2012, p. 246). Interviewees in the present study were motivated more by *balancing challenge and skill*, choosing events in which they could perform at their highest level of competence ‘but not go beyond your limits’ (4.P). They did refer to ‘hit[ting] the wall’ (10.P) and times during an event when they think ‘what am I doing here?, I’m never doing this again, I must be crazy’ (10.P), but these negative feelings were not stated as motivations. Rather, it was the positive aspects of participation that encouraged further participation: ‘you try to think about the aspects of the race you’ve enjoyed ... I think that’s why most people go back ... they’ve forgotten all the negative or painful thoughts they’ve had during the event and they think about the next one’ (10.P). Lack of enjoyment was expressed as failure in this regard and was de-motivating, at least for repeating the same event.

Extrinsic motivations

In contrast to earlier research (Bond & Batey, 2005; LaChaussee, 2006; Lamont & Kennelly, 2012; Ogles & Masters, 2000; Smith, 2000), physical body-related benefits such as fitness, body shape and weight loss did not emerge as major motivating factors. Only once were any of these factors mentioned – *fitness* – and then only as one minor motivator among several others: ‘I like to use it [the event] as a bit of a stretch and a gauge of fitness’ (25.P). Further, and in contrast to Lamont and Kennelly (2012), neither health benefits such as offsetting sedentary occupations, stress relief or healthy ageing, nor life enhancement effects such as gaining life purpose or ticking off a ‘bucket-list’, were mentioned as motivations by participants in the present study. This suggests that, to an extent, adventure recreation event participants are motivated differently to amateur triathletes. Differences between sport and recreation may be at play here, though it is not obvious why physical body-related benefits, at least, are not common to people engaging in physical activity recreationally and in sporting mode. Research directly comparing various forms of endurance activities, sporting and recreational, will help to resolve this puzzle.

Competition motivated many participants, though in slightly different ways. Those with expectations of winning stated clearly that they were, for example, ‘always aiming higher to climb the ladder’ among elite performers (02.P) or ‘get to the top of the events ... in my age group’ (10.P). These participants learn who their main rivals are and look forward to the challenge of trying to beat them; ‘if they’re not there, that’s part of the challenge gone’ (10.P). If they don’t manage this, the event remains ‘unfinished business’ (18.P). Competition motivated participants in contradictory ways. For one, it influenced the choice of events: ‘I don’t do events that are too short, because I get dominated by other people, and I don’t do events that are too long ... I don’t have the endurance pace yet’ (1P). Despite this, the same person stated that they are ‘not in it for the winning’ (1.P). Others who did not consider themselves as motivated by competition still recalled experiencing their own competitiveness during an event. One, for example, who defined himself as ‘a recreational sort of person’

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stated that they still ‘wanna beat this guy and that guy as well’ (05.P). Another, who was ‘quite happy to start at the back and sort of remain there-ish’ surprised herself by taking shortcuts to gain a competitive advantage (06.P). These findings are consistent with the results from research on marathon runners (Ogles & Masters, 2000), triathletes (Grand’Maison, 2004; Lamont & Kennelly, 2012), cyclists (La Chaussee, 2006) and outdoor adventure activities generally (Krein, 2007). However, perhaps understandably because most of those studies focus on sport rather than recreation, the findings presented here diverge by also finding contradictions in the role of competition and, also, that competition is not a motivator for all participants.

Prizes, or external rewards, were a minor motivator for some of the event participants interviewed. Many of the events studied provided spot prizes, drawn randomly at the post-event function and attractive particularly for those who are ‘never going to be up there in terms of performance prizes’ (21.P), but few mentioned these as major motivators. Spot prizes that have higher value and are tradeable may motivate some participants: ‘Bikes and boats are good ... you’ll be able to sell it and put it [the money] towards something’ (14.P). Performance prizes were considered to be no more than ‘nice’ by an elite performer (2.P). These statements indicate that prizes are at most an added incentive, on top of more important motivating factors.

Social interaction motivated participants in a variety of ways. For one interviewee, training or participating in events gave them a ‘common thread’ with others: ‘they bike and they run and they paddle, so when I’m doing that, it’s sort of just feels like I’m playing my part in that social group’ [14.P.F]. Team membership, the chance to do something with workmates or friends, motivated others because it produced ‘a sort of camaraderie’ which is ‘bloody good’ [5.P.M]. Several participants mentioned the post-event functions as part of the attraction, ‘the social part, where you just sit there and wait for the spot prizes, talk to the people, how they’ve done, that sort of thing’ (4.P). It is interesting to note that sociability and friendship have also been found to be motivators for endurance athletes (Ogles & Masters, 2000, 2003; Lamont & Kennelly, 2012); to find expressions of the same motivations among adventure recreation event participants suggests a degree of overlap in the drivers for the two activity fields.

Identity as motivation. Social interactions have another motivational dimension for the adventure recreation event participants interviewed – *development of personal identity*. This finding is shared only with one study of marathon runners (Bond & Batey, 2005). As Wolf-Watz (2010) has argued in relation to outdoor recreation, personal identity is created when individuals ‘socially place and distinguish themselves’ (p. 41). Some interviewees in the present study ‘placed’ themselves apart from non-participants, in part through the geography of their chosen activity. An interviewee whose training included biking through remote countryside recalled thinking that it was ‘pretty cool’ to have ‘found something that maybe no one else was doing’ (1.P). For another, identity was associated with ‘getting to see it [the surrounding area] from other places that a normal person from off the street wouldn’t see it’ [5.P]. These interviewees distinguished between themselves and non-participants, thus bringing adventure event participation into the frame of their own identity.

The intensity of their physical effort was also a point of distinction between event participants and other people. The logistics of training and participating made their

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daily lives different to others. The commitment to long hours of hard training and participation in the events allows some interviewees to mark themselves as 'a bit nuts' – that is, different to 'normal' people not only in behaviour but in psychology. This is viewed as a positive marker of individuality or identity: 'I think we've all got that, I guess you call it an X factor ... most of us are all pretty crazy, I think, to be doing it over and over and over again' (8.P).

One interviewee stated that 'I'm doing something that they [others] don't think they can do so that makes me a bit better than them ... in a funny way' (14.P). The t-shirts that are often provided to, or purchased by, event participants are another means by which participants can socially distinguish themselves, particularly early in their eventing history. As they become more experienced, the motivation becomes more subjectively 'about I did it and it went well for me and I felt really good about it' (14.P). Participants further distinguished among themselves as either the 'slightly more insane people' or the 'real nutters' (3.P.) who enter the most demanding events. Clothing was used as a means of distinction by one interviewee who did not want to identify with those wearing or using 'flashy' gear (5.P) but who looked for a 'sort of rough and ready event' (5.P).

For two people, performing at a satisfactory level during an event was important to their personal identities. In one case, the interviewee had not trained for biking for a while and thought it was important to train in order to maintain her self-image during an event: 'You got to get on your bike or you're going to make a dick of yourself' (4.P.). Another interviewee referred to being injured during an event, managing to complete it but in 'a terribly embarrassing time' (25.P), an experience that 'really knocked me back, my self-esteem' (25.P).

If the work of identity development is 'the art of life' as Blackshaw (2010, p. 145) argues, these interviewees utilised adventure recreation event participation as a canvas. In this perspective, persistent engagement with events enables individuals to create consistent 'scripts' of themselves (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2013, p. 589) which support self-image, self-esteem, and social distinction, motivating participants to select specific events and not 'make a dick of themselves' in up-coming events. These findings suggest that participants have freedom to choose how they participate in events and this freedom provides space in which to define themselves in ways of their own choosing.

However, the interviewees' responses also hint at constraints on the identities they can create. Setting themselves beyond the 'normal' may be as much an expression of society's intolerance of difference as it is of freedom of expression. Voluntarily pushing one's body and mind to perform strenuous feats of endurance can only be considered 'mad' against normative criteria. Participants who consider themselves to be 'a bit mad' are, arguably, expressing 'how identity is constructed by others and the pathologization of certain identities by society' (Clarke, 2008, p. 510). Similarly, those who referred to threats to their self-esteem from performing below their own expectations in an event signal the warning Rojek (2005) sounds that peer pressure or ranking among participants can impact leisure values, in this case identity development. In this way, once a participant has attained a level of competence that is recognised by others, that social recognition becomes a constraint on identity: being a less competent performer is an option blocked to them. The implication for understanding motivations is that identity development

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can be understood as intrinsic and extrinsic, though the extent to which it is either is open to further examination.

That individual event participants distinguish themselves as being beyond the normal, 'a bit nuts' or in other ways exceptional, may be of interest to event managers for marketing and risk management purposes. Regarding the latter, despite the same participants being motivated by self-responsibility within events, the spirit of competition can over-rule the self-responsibility ethic on occasions, as Lynch and Dibben (2014) have shown. The findings of the present study illustrate that it can entice even self-declared non-competitors to behave in ways they have not initially intended. The possibility exists that there is a connection between being 'a bit nuts' in socially approved ways (such as participating in adventure events) and disregarding event rules. Breaching the norm is consistent with the concept of adventure (Lynch & Moore, 2004) but can produce problems when practised in events settings. In light of the significant exposure that adventure recreation event managers have to legal litigation should accidents occur (Lynch & Jonson, 2007), closer investigation of this connection is warranted.

Aesthetics of place and *novelty* are the final extrinsic motivations to be presented in this paper. They are connected and represent divergence from prior research on endurance events. All but two respondents mentioned the physical environment as a significant motivating factor. One elite competitor stated that 'you just get to some incredible places, so ... its probably the best thing about the sport' (2P). For novice participants, too, what is important is 'that it's land that has got a really beautiful area' (12P). Being in natural or nearer-natural environments is part of the attraction of adventure recreation events: 'getting on a track, getting into the forest and the mountains' or 'over farmland because 'it's pretty ... there's lots of matagouri¹ ... it's tussock land ... it's just got rolling hills and ... the little valleys and creeks running' (12P). A runner described how it was possible to both run competitively and notice the environment at the same time:

'... even though you're running along you're often gazing, [getting] little snap shots of a little fern or a little flower or something even though obviously you are keen to just concentrate on what's in front, you still get a feeling of being out there' (10P).

This paper provides empirical evidence of the value event participants place on the natural qualities of the environments in which they find themselves, and on the direct experiences with nature the events enable. This factor is not evident in previous studies of motivation for physical activity events but is consistent with research on outdoor recreation (Brymer & Gray, 2009; Davidson & Stebbins, 2011). The nexus of adventure recreation events and nature-orientation is therefore ripe for more detailed investigation.

Further, some interviewees indicated that novelty in the natural environments they experienced was important; they preferred to be 'going new places' (2P), experiencing 'a new area' (5P). One stated that 'there's certainly no sense of excitement about being in the environment that you live in' (14P) and another valued events because they are 'all completely different ... and that's why they're good. If

¹ *Discaria toumatou*, an endemic New Zealand plant.

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... you were going to get pretty much the same thing, you'd get pretty bored' (12P). Novelty allows participants to gain new perspectives on the countryside and this was motivating: 'a very nice way to actually get out and see the country differently than you normally would see it ... you see totally different things than with a push bike' (4.P). Alongside this, novelty was utilised in social distinction because 'you get to see [the countryside] from other places than a normal person from off the street would get to see it' (5P).

In none of the interviews was there evidence that event participants are motivated by getting to specific places or to certain named or known places. Rather, they are motivated by a generic type of place: a relatively natural outdoor environment, away from their everyday place. This may signal that the place-relatedness associated with adventure recreation event participation is relatively superficial. However if place attachment arises from symbolic meanings (Stedman, 2002), and meanings can be associated with a general type of landscape as well as specific places, then those meanings are available to be utilised in identity construction. In support of this view, experienced adventure event participants can be considered to have extensive experience of, and therefore have identified meaningfully with, a particular type of place – natural or nearer-natural environments. Further development of this argument is beyond the scope of the present paper, but it is worth noting that place is significant and meaningful within adventure recreation event contexts and can be taken up during decision-making processes by event managers and recreation policy-makers and planners.

The recurring theme of novelty in relation to place is consistent with the idea of adventure and also links to identity. Interviewees associated the novelty experienced through visiting new places with going (geographically) beyond what is considered to be 'normal'. In this way, place-relatedness, adventure and identity development operate in a dynamic relationship with one another. This dynamic is consistent with Bouwer and van Leeuwen's (2013) configuration of leisure, freedom and identity. In the present case, the leisure form of adventure recreation events provides the freedom to engage with particular types of places and, through this freedom, develop an identity narrative based, in part, on geographical exceptionalism. The extent to which participants choose the specific places they visit during events is limited, however, by the fact that event courses are pre-determined by event managers. However, as the data shows, it is not specific places from which participants create identities, but a generalised natural environment. Events enable people to access a variety of natural or nearer-natural environments that are otherwise not available to them, at least not easily, thus providing a choice they would not otherwise have and the possibility to identify themselves in the ways that they do. Freire's (2013) conceptualisation of leisure as having a socio-physical dimension as well as a psycho-social dimension might prove useful in teasing out more nuanced understandings of this dynamic.

Multiple motivations

The study on which this paper is based has found that multiple motivations exist for adventure recreation event participation and this applies also at the level of the individual. One interviewee stated explicitly that they are motivated by a 'whole sweep of pure motivations ... and not one is dominant' (25.P). Their motivations

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included being in interesting terrain, enjoyment, social interaction and gauging fitness. Another was motivated by challenge ('beat at least my time from the year before'), enjoyment ('that you actually do enjoy it'), achievement ('you have a sense of achievement afterwards') and social interaction ('the social part, where you just sit there and wait for the spot prizes, talk to the people, how they've done it, that sort of thing') (4.P).

Further, participants' motivations changed over time. A participant who was initially motivated, in part, by the 'reflective glory' of being associated with adventure events later participated for reasons of personal satisfaction and goal achievement (14.P). Another stated that a major motivation was initially 'the challenge, to try and complete the run' but that 'the motivation changes' (10.P). Competition became more important as their success increased: 'I'm optimistic enough to think I'm going to get somewhere near the front of the field, so ... I usually try and get to the top of the events' (10.P). That motivations change as participants gain experience in the activity is consistent with previous literature (Lamont & Kennelly, 2012; Skår et al, 2008; Taylor, 2010).

This study neither ranked hierarchically nor measured the relative strengths of participants' motivations for participating in adventure recreation events, however some motivations were mentioned more than others and so appear to be more important to participants. The intrinsic motivations of enjoyment, challenge, competence, performance, and self-responsibility appear to be more important than the extrinsic motivations of fitness, prizes, and competition. That is not to say that extrinsic motivations are less important overall; interviewees also highlighted identity-development, aesthetics of place and social interaction as important motivations. Based on this data, it would be inappropriate to go beyond these broad observations and more exact assessment of the relative importance of motivations for adventure recreation event participation is left to future research.

Conclusions

In the absence of prior studies of motivation for adventure recreation events, this study was necessarily exploratory. Its relatively small scale and geographic specificity (the South Island of New Zealand) limit the generalizability of conclusions, however some broad implications can be drawn. The motivations for adventure recreation events appear to be a distinctive set that overlap to some extent with those associated with participation in outdoor recreation generally and those associated with endurance sports. Adventure recreation event participation, then, might best be viewed as a distinctive leisure form for policy, planning and management purposes, though the extent to which it is distinctive is not yet clear.

In concert with previous research, the data highlighted in this paper indicate that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations contribute to satisfaction of the human psychological needs for autonomy, competence, relatedness, experiencing stimulation and accomplishment. Further, adventure recreation events appear to offer a rich vein of experience for fulfilling these needs, though in apparently complex ways. We might therefore suggest that the increasing popularity of such events lies in their multifarious appeal; different motivational regulations exert influence over different participants' behaviour under the same conditions.

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Suggestions for further research on specific aspects of motivation, where the data from this paper converges and diverges from that of previous studies, have been made in the discussion above. In addition, there are two major conclusions from this study. First, further research is needed to better understand the dynamic interplay of competence, challenge and self-responsibility that apparently occurs during participation in adventure recreation events. In addition, the relationships between place, identity and adventure in adventure recreation event participants' experiences need to be teased out in order to understand the appeal of such events.

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