

Exploring Charity Sport Events in Barcelona Province: A Phenomenon on the Rise, albeit with Pending Issues

Explorando los eventos deportivos solidarios en la provincia de Barcelona: un fenómeno en auge con asignaturas pendientes

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Abstract. The purpose of this research was to analyse the main characteristics of charity runs and walks in Barcelona Province, attending at the format of the event, at the organising agents and, with a particular emphasis, at the level of accountability in the management of charitable giving at such events. Data were collected from an analysis of 189 websites for charity runs and walks. A participatory action research group contributed to the development of the analysis model, whose design guided the different stages of the research. The results show the growing popularity of events like these within the context of an ever-increasing diversity of event types and organising agents, as well as the importance placed on charitable causes. A considerable variability is observed in the criteria used for charity management, together with a very low awareness of the need to render account to stakeholders through the website of the events analysed.

Keywords. Charity Sport Events; Accountability; Transparency; Website; Barcelona.

Resumen. El propósito de esta investigación fue analizar las principales características de las carreras y marchas solidarias en la provincia de Barcelona, en cuanto al formato de los eventos, a los agentes organizadores y, haciendo especial énfasis en el grado de rendición de cuentas en la gestión de la solidaridad de estos eventos. Los datos fueron obtenidos a través del análisis de 189 páginas web de carreras y marchas solidarias. Par ello se diseñó un modelo de análisis desarrollado a partir de las aportaciones de un grupo de investigación social participativa que ha guiado la investigación durante sus diferentes fases. Los resultados muestran la creciente popularidad y auge de este tipo de eventos en un marco de creciente diversidad en cuanto a su tipología, a los propios agentes organizadores y a la importancia otorgada a la causa solidaria. En este sentido, se observa una considerable variabilidad en los criterios utilizados en la gestión de la solidaridad, así como muy poca conciencia de la necesidad de rendir cuentas con los colectivos interesados a través de las páginas web de los eventos analizados.

Palabras clave. Eventos deportivos solidarios; Rendición de cuentas; Transparencia; Website; Barcelona.

Introduction

The proliferation of fun runs in recent years is a phenomenon called the «second wave of running» (Scheerder, Breedveld & Borgers, 2015; Van Bottenburg, Scheerder, & Hover, 2010). Such growth has been observed both internationally (Running USA, 2016) and nationally, in this case in Spain (Subdirección General de Estadística y Estudios, 2016).

Of particular note in Spain is the huge rise in the number of running and walking races in some way linked to charity (CinfaSalud, 2017). These are organised by local authorities, sport organisations, third-sector bodies, commercial organisations and even by individuals. In most instances, part of the event registration fee is donated to a charitable cause in accordance with criteria established by the organisation. And, depending on the organisers' degree of charitable involvement, that part may be more or less significant. It may also be the case that such events simply aim to raise awareness of the charitable cause supported. Despite the diversity of formats used for managing such events and for linking them to a charitable cause, they are popularly known as 'charity sport events'. Thus, the adjective 'charity' often forms part of the official name of an event, but this does not necessarily imply that its contribution to a charitable cause will be any higher than another event whose charitable link is weaker. While Filo, Funk and O'Brien (2009, p.363) consider that charity sport events «can include any sport event where a significant portion of proceeds benefit a specified charity», the boundary between mass-participation running events and charity-related events has become blurred due to their enormous growth. This study is based on a broad notion of charity sport events, it being understood that such a notion enables the relationship between charity and sport-related runs and walks within the current Spanish context to be grasped.

In terms of sports policies, in recent years Spain has seen growing support and promotion of this type of event by the local authorities in cities such as Zaragoza, Valencia, Barcelona and Girona. Specifically,

Zaragoza City Council offers these sports events exemptions from the fee for using the public highway and other municipal services for sports events, depending on the real percentage of profits to be set aside for charity (Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, 2017). In its Strategic Sports Plan, Valencia includes charity among the five essential aspects for ensuring full use is made of any major sports event (Fundación Deportiva Municipal de Valencia, 2010). Similarly, as part of the contracting conditions for the organization of the Barcelona Marathon and Half Marathon between 2015 and 2018, companies had to present Barcelona City Council with a strategy to highlight the charitable aspect of these events (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2013). Finally, Girona City Council promotes participation in charity races such as Trailwalker Girona and Oncotrail among its citizens by awarding subsidies to cover the cost of registration and the required charity donation (Ajuntament de Girona, 2018).

From the charitable perspective, the organisation of charity sport events is becoming an increasingly popular strategy (Bennett, Mousley, Kitchin & Ali-Choudhury, 2007; Ruperto & Kerr, 2009) because such events allow participants to satisfy several motives at once, e.g., doing sport, taking time off and having fun while contributing to charity (Filo, Funk & O'Brien, 2008). However, following Díaz, Piedrafita, Marcén and Marcén (2014), despite their charitable nature, the main reasons for participating in this type of event are often related to the event's physical characteristics, self-improvement and personal challenge, successful past experiences or as part of a training programme.

As far as charitable organisations are concerned, they try to strengthen the relationship between them and the donors through innovative marketing strategies to attract charitable participation. As Taylor & Shanka (2008, p.954) pointed out, this kind of events «are increasingly being used by not-for-profit organisations for revenue generation and to develop awareness and support of the organisation's cause». They do so alone, as the organisers of such events, or in conjunction with organising agents (Bunds, Brandon-Lai & Armstrong, 2016).

In Spain, an issue related to the growth of events like these is the management of charitable giving in terms of information, transparency and accountability to stakeholders. Communicating charitable motives and being transparent about charitable proceeds could lead to the creation of a significant experience of the event. To that end, and as stated by

Filo, Groza and Fairley (2012, p.136) «social media technologies can communicate needs in advance of the event, while also providing a mechanism to thank participants following the event and communicate the outcomes achieved».

Gibson and Fairley (2015) have asserted that the gradual increase in charity sport events warrants the scientific community's focus on research into the participants' motives and experiences, the role of philanthropy and the participants' charitable links. They underscore the works by authors such as Filo et al. (2008, 2009, 2014), Hendriks and Peelen (2013), Higgins and Lauzon (2003), Nettleton and Hardey (2006), Taylor and Shanka (2008) and Webber (2004), among others. For example, Filo et al. (2008) have suggested that charity sport events should be a particular focus for research activity, distinguishing it from other sport events. However, only a few studies have explored the relationships between charity and running and walking races, and the management of charitable giving.

This article explores charity runs and walks based on two conceptual domains: the rise of and growing interest in charity race events within the context of the above-mentioned «second wave of running», and accountability to stakeholders. The approach taken to that object of study is an analysis of the importance of technology in general and of websites in particular to improving transparency and accountability associated with charity running and walking races. Taking into account the current diversity of charity runs and walks, as well as the lack of regulation of the charity information provided, this study's contribution centres on determining the characteristics of charity runs and walks on its format and organising agents, as well as their level of transparency and accountability in the management of charitable giving.

This type of information may be of interest to a variety of stakeholders: organisers, participants, charitable organisations, public authorities and sponsors. Regarding charity sport events, Higgins and Lauzon (2003, p.375) have stated that «ethical considerations, including financial accountability, (...) also need to be explored, particularly when private contractors are responsible for the implementation of physical activity events».

From Mass-Participation Running Events to Charity Running Events

Since the early 21st century, there has been an unprecedented increase in participation in events of every type (Mair & Whitford, 2013). According to Scheerder et al. (2015, p.2), «mass running [in the United States] may be defined as a mass movement, being a prominent social expression of the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s». The late 1970s saw the start of the 'first running boom' in European countries like Belgium, Finland, Germany and Holland. In the 1980s, that expansion of running increased as the number of runners got bigger, though it plateaued to some extent in the 1990s (Scheerder, et al., 2015). Running races also proliferated in Spain after the Francoist dictatorship (1939-1975), i.e., in the early years of restored democracy (Abadia, 2011, 2014). The number of runners began to increase again from the late 1990s, not only in the United States and Europe, but also worldwide. This marked the start of the phenomenon called the «second wave of running», with the number of runners in Europe ranging between 45 and 55 million (Scheerder, et al., 2015). Research such as that of Seguí, Inglés, Labrador and Faría (2016) and by Seguí and Farias (2018) corroborate the rise in the number of these events in Spain. Currently, the running industry is stable (Wahba, 2015), and this has been observed in Spain too, where the number of habitual Spanish runners has been put at 3.14 million, each spending around €75 per year on average on this activity (CinfaSalud, 2017). Indeed, the rise of sport in Spain is reflected by the citizens' habits, with running being the second most popular weekly sport activity (10.6%) (Subdirección General de Estadística y Estudios, 2016).

In the specific case of charity sport events, their worldwide proliferation is similarly noteworthy (Palmer, 2016). According to Won (2009), their success is due to the popularity and universality of the sport, its potential to arouse expectation and attract spectators, and its

association with a healthy lifestyle. Organisationally, Hendriks and Peelen (2013, p.62) distinguish a number of formats, such as «CSEs with emphasis on the cause» (a greater focus on charity) and when «physical activity was the priority» (a greater focus on sport).

From the perspective of agents involved in the management of charity events, authors such as Filo et al. (2012) and Higgins and Lauzon (2003) highlight the fact that their organisation is one of the most common ways of fundraising among third-sector organisations, and this is something that can be extrapolated to sport-related organisations too (Bunds, et al., 2016; Filo, et al., 2009). According to Filo, Spence and Sparvero (2013), the pervasiveness of sport in society and in charitable organisations' quest for fundraising alternatives explains the growing popularity of charity sport events.

In Spain, and particularly in the region of Catalonia, runs like these have proliferated in recent years (Abadia, et al., 2016). In Catalonia's case, the success of new events like Oxfam Intermón Trailwalker or Barcelona Magic Line bear witness to that rise, as do the charity proceeds from runs organised by Barcelona City Council in 2013, which amounted to €45,000 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2014).

Accountability in Charity Sport Events

A key aspect in the organisation of events like these is the need to develop a communication strategy to strengthen the link with the participants (Bunds, Brandon-Lai & Armstrong, 2016). Communicating charitable motives and being transparent about the management of charitable proceeds could lead to the creation of a significant experience of the event, thereby strengthening the perception among participants that they are making a difference and setting themselves apart from their competitors (Filo, Groza & Fairley, 2012; Filo, et al., 2014). To that end, the organisers need to know the mechanisms through which the participants associate themselves with a certain event.

From the charitable organisations' perspective, Hyndman and Jones (2011) suggest the need for there to be some degree of monitoring by the donors, by the beneficiaries of charitable giving and by the regulators. A key element in the good governance of third-sector organisations is accountability (Hyndman & Jones, 2011), from which a further two key elements emerge: the need to identify the main stakeholders – donors, beneficiaries, promoters, regulators and staff – and to determine the type of information that ought to be provided (Connolly & Hyndman, 2013; Hyndman & Jones, 2011; Lee & Rhoda, 2013). Another theoretical perspective that needs to be taken into account is the one that links the ethical criteria applied to charity to the organisation's reputation. This is so because, without an explicit ethical investment policy, there is a risk of tension between the expectations of the donors, the investment managers and the charity team (Kreander, Beattie & McPhail, 2009).

According to Hyndman and Jones (2011), it is important to provide accountability by publishing information on a website or in annual reports in order to achieve a greater and longer-lasting donor involvement. In this respect, the Internet has become an important and very effective means for organisations to communicate with their stakeholders (Gandía, 2011). Authors such as Saxton, Neely and Guo (2014) have noted a positive relationship between the level of charitable contributions and the amount of information about charitable giving disseminated via the websites of non-governmental organisations. Those authors have asserted that there is an information effect that determines donations. Similarly, just as social media has become an increasingly more important means of communication, especially among young people (García-Fernández, Fernández-Gavira, Durán-Muñoz & Vélez-Colón, 2015), so has it been progressively included in tertiary sector organisations' stakeholder communication and relations strategies, as stated by authors such as Lovejoy & Saxton (2012).

In the case of charity sport events in general and charity race events in particular, registration is often done online, so information about the charitable causes and the charitable outcomes also needs to be provided once the event is over. Filo et al. (2009) have asserted that a charitable cause can be strengthened by constantly communicating the fundraising

success achieved, which should include specific data about the use of the proceeds.

According to Gandía (2011), disseminating information via a website is initially determined by the organisations' communication and transparency strategy, in relation to which two organisational forms have been identified: opaque and transparent (Florini, 1998).

Method

Research context

It is absolutely necessary to frame the descriptive statistical analysis of the data obtained from the systematized study of the Runedia website – the basis of the paper presented here – within the global design of the research studying the problems associated with managing charitable initiatives in charity runs in Catalonia, with the goal of proposing evaluation and administrative and societal control strategies. This study is part of a broader project that seeks to explore the reality of charity runs and walks in the context of Catalonia (Spain) and whose ultimate goal is to draw up a best practices manual for organizing this type of event.

It is precisely this latter intention that led us to structure the study's overall design as plurimethodological participatory social research (PSR) (in which this descriptive analysis would be only one of the methods used), characterised by the incorporation of the participants' opinions and interests into the research process, which is aimed at action and problem-solving within a programme, organisation or community (Patton, 2002; Sánchez, 2007). A participatory action research group (PARG) was formed by representatives of local authorities (Barcelona Provincial Council, Esplugues de Llobregat City Council's Sport Service) and of charity runs and walks (Oxfam Intermón, Obra Social Sant Joan de Déu, Aspasim), as well as two long-standing and highly respected charity runners. By means of several meetings held throughout the entire research process, this group contributed to the definition of the object of study, to the instruments used (which includes the systematized observation file which provides the basis of the statistical analysis discussed here) and to the analysis and interpretation of the main results obtained.

In short, the research performed here is a partial, albeit unavoidable step in the performance of a complete study of the management of charity initiatives involving charity runs in Catalonia.

Procedure and Materials

In the specific case of this initial research, 2 meetings were arranged with the PARG. The purpose of the first meeting was to define the sample's inclusion criteria –charity races and walks over all types of

distances held in urban and natural environments- and also the geographical area -the province of Barcelona- to which the study was circumscribed. Excluded are multisport events -such as duathlons and triathlons- orienteering races, obstacle races and canicross. In turn, the online platform for accessing information about the existing charity runs and walks was decided, and possible dimensions and indicators to be included in the analysis model were proposed. Subsequently, the members of the PARG were contacted by email so that they could evaluate the analysis model created. The work done by the PARG led to the design of the analysis model that has 3 dimensions and 21 variables, as shown in Table 1. The analysis was carried out between April and July 2016. Lastly, at the second meeting, the main results found were presented and discussed.

Sample

In order to study the different types of running and walking races with a charitable link based on their management of charitable giving, 189 events of this type held in Barcelona Province were analysed. A 12-month period was analysed, from March 2015 to February 2016.

For the definition of the study sample, the Runedia website was used. This website contains one of the most comprehensive race event calendars for Spain. Using the information on Runedia, the websites of all the existing runs and walks were accessed to exclude those that did not have any charitable link. After analysing 873 runs and walks held in Barcelona Province in the above-mentioned period, a total of 189 events with some charitable content were identified to form the sample of this study.

After selecting the sample, analysis of the websites of those 189 charity runs and walks was performed. The data were supplemented with details of the number of participants and of the final proceeds by scouring the social media and press releases of those events after they had been held.

Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 (IBM.SPSS Statistics, Chicago, IL, USA), obtaining the descriptive analysis of the all assessed variables. A frequency study of the three dimensions: event characteristics, event management and management of charitable giving, was run in order to show the main characteristics of charity runs and walks in Barcelona Province.

Results

An Approach to the Different Types of Runs and Walks with Charitable Content

A total of 189 runs and walks with charitable content were identified in Barcelona Province. Held between March 2015 and February 2016, this number represents 21.64% of the 873 total runs and walks in the Province.

The distribution of races throughout the year was not uniform. The highest number of events like these took place in spring (particularly in May) and autumn (October/November), in accordance also with periods when more race events were held (see Table 2). The most popular distances were 10k (26.5%) and 5k (24.3%). Nevertheless, it should be noted that 36% of the runs and walks with charitable content did not fall into the main distance categories (5k, 10k, half marathon and marathon).

Of the events analysed, 83.1% were held outside the city of Barcelona. The most common mode of participation was individual (94.7%) and the main type was road running (52.4%), followed by mountain running (21.7%), trekking or walking (14.3%) and track running (11.1%).

Regarding the scope of the charitable causes supported, in 89.9% of cases it was local, and the most commonly supported charitable causes were health (39.7%) and humanitarian services (37%). Of the runs and walks analysed, it should be noted that 57.1% of them had had a link to a charitable cause in the past 4 editions of the event.

Table 1
Variables and indicators to be considered in the analysis of the transparency of charity runs and walks, as judged from their websites

Variables	Indicators
Features of the event	Main distance
	Area
	Typology (paved road, dirt track, mountain, long-distance route or walk)
	Format (individual, pairs, group, several options)
	Type of registration (fixed cost, free, voluntary, charity contribution)
	Month of the year
	Scope of the charity action (local, international)
	Type of charity cause supported (animal kingdom, environment, education, health, community development, humanitarian services, art and culture, several combined causes)
	No. of charity events
	Promotion of other values
Event management	Organizer (third sector for own / external cause, public sector, private sector / commercial, ad hoc organization, individual person, cooperation between several institutions)
	Information on the website of the charity organization that is the beneficiary of the charitable initiative
Management of charitable giving	Location of the information about the charity on the event's website (in the main menu / in secondary sections of the website)
	Link on the website to the charity organization
	Information about the charitable initiative's track record (funds raised and charity causes supported in previous editions)
	Channel for receiving charitable contributions
	Charitable contribution (material, financial)
	Type of contribution (voluntary fixed / open, obligatory fixed / open, no information)
	Information about advice for raising funds and fostering solidarity
Specification of the total amount collected for the charitable initiative	
Follow-up information on the projects undertaken with the funds raised	

Table 2

Main characteristics of runs and walks with charitable content

Event characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Main distance		
10k	50	26.5
Other distances	68	36
Zone		
Other parts of the Province	157	83.1
Type of run or walk		
Road	99	52.4
Registration mode		
Individual	179	94.7
Month of the year		
October	33	17.5
May and November	23	12.2
Charitable action sphere		
Local	170	89.9
Type of charitable cause supported		
Health	75	39.7
Humanitarian services	70	37
Number of charity editions		
Between 1 and 4	108	57.1
Promotion of other values		
No	142	75.1

A total of 337,851 participants were counted based on data obtained for 168 of the 189 runs and walks analysed, whether from the websites, press releases or social media of those events. The participation distribution was not very uniform, since 8 runs had over 10,000 participants, and 7 of those 8 were held in the city of Barcelona, thus representing 48% of all participants. In accordance with Hendriks and Peelen (2013), from these 8 events, the 7 with the highest participation were characterised by their emphasis on the sport and participatory components, with charity being a complementary aspect.

These charity runs and races managed to raise funds and obtain material donations. To be precise, €41,980 were raised, and 21.4 tonnes of food and 2,900 individual items (toys, T-shirts, etc.) were obtained, based on data from 108 of the 189 runs and walks analysed. These data were obtained mainly from the analysis of those events' press releases and social media.

Regarding the organising agents (see Table 3), the events were organised mainly by third-sector sport-related organisations (46%) that linked the event to an external charitable cause -mostly with support from a third-sector social organisation.

In descending order after third-sector sport-related organisations, events were organised directly by the commercial private sector (19.5%) and by local authorities and third-sector social organisations (10.8% in both cases). It should be noted that the latter (third-sector social organisations) organised events to obtain donations for their own social causes.

Table 3

Main organising agents of runs and walks with charitable content

Event management	Frequency	Percentage
Organising agent		
Third sector, linking the event to an external charitable cause	87	46
Commercial private sector	36	19.5
Local authority	20	10.8
Third sector, linking the event to its own social cause	20	10.8

Management of Charitable Giving: Accountability as a Pending Task

As shown in Table 4, most events provided information about the organisation benefitting from charitable giving on their websites (90.5%), although information about the charitable cause was not always accessible from their respective websites' main menu (60.3%). Regarding information in the charitable giving history of previous editions of the event, only 1 in 10 charity runs or walks made information about proceeds available.

There is some degree of balance between events that managed charitable giving using different channels, principally via their websites and face to face (30.7%), via the website of the event or the organisation (28.6%), face to face during the event or at the headquarters of the organising agent (20.1%), or via other websites (16.9%) such as those specialising in the management of registration fees. Worthy of mention is the fact that, in the main, charitable proceeds were linked to registration for the event, as the type of charitable contribution was mostly financial (84.7%). Whether proceeds or material donations, the charitable

contribution was mainly compulsory and pre-defined by the organisation (69.8%). Other much less common options included the possibility for the participants to decide whether or not to make a charitable contribution and on the amount thereof (15.1%) or, when making a contribution was compulsory, to decide on the amount thereof (7.5%). This type of charitable giving also explains why, in most instances, the participants were not given any advice about how to raise funds (95.2%). That option was exclusive to those events that even allowed the participants to decide which charitable challenge they wanted to support.

Regarding accountability to stakeholders, in 82.5% of cases, no information was given on the website of the organisation or event about the total proceeds or material donations obtained for the social cause supported. Moreover, only 10.1% of the events analysed provided follow-up information on their websites about the charitable projects supported. At the same time, a greater use of social media in the post-event period was observed, e.g., as a means of providing accountability.

Table 4

Management of charitable giving via websites

Management of charitable giving	Frequency	Percentage
Information on the website of the charitable organisation benefitting from charitable giving		
Yes	171	90.5
Charity information placed on the event website		
In the website's main menu	114	60.3
Existence of a link to the charitable organisation		
No	97	51.3
Information about charitable giving history		
No	173	91.5
Charitable fundraising channel		
Mixed	58	30.7
Website	54	28.6
Charitable contribution		
Financial	160	84.7
Type of charitable contribution		
Compulsory set amount	132	69.8
Information giving advice on how to raise funds and promote charitable giving		
No	180	95.2
Specification of the total proceeds raised for charity		
No	152	82.5
Follow-up information about the projects undertaken thanks to charitable contributions		
Not provided	163	86.2

Table 5 shows the relationship between the variable *organising agent* and the studied variables of the dimension *management of charitable giving*. It is possible to assert that there is a fairly uniform behaviour in relation to the management of charitable giving, regardless of who the organising agent or what the distance of the main event might be. There is little awareness of accountability to stakeholders via the website; except for events organised jointly by several organisations (35.3%), the percentage of events organised by other agents that reported their charitable proceeds was no higher than 20%. Specifically, other than third-sector organisations that linked an event to their own charitable cause, the percentage of websites analysed that included follow-up information about the charitable causes supported by the event ranged between 5% and 11.5%.

Discussion

The results show that there are a wide range of sports events with a charitable link. Despite having their own unique characteristics, they fell within the «second wave of running» (Scheerder, et al., 2015). As stated by Scheerder et al. (2015, p. 7), «new values and motivations entered the running scene, including a less competitive attitude», and charitable giving is a good example of that. This increase in the popularity of such events is consistent with the latest research by CinfaSalud (2017), which shows that more than half of all Spanish runners (55.5%) had taken part in a race in the past year, and 42.8% had taken part in a charity fun run. In turn, the results reveal that the prevalence of 10k races is consistent with the preferences of Spanish runners (CinfaSalud, 2017).

Previous research (Palmer, 2015) has shown that among the charity sports events held in Australia, breast cancer is the most common charitable cause for fundraising. This ties in with the predominance of

Table 5
Relationship between the variable 'organising agent' and the variables of the dimension 'management of charitable giving'

	Variables of management of charitable giving							
	Information on the website of the charitable organisation benefiting from charitable giving	Charity information placed on the event website	Information about charitable giving history	Charitable fundraising channel	Charitable contribution	Type of charitable contribution	Specification of the total proceeds raised for charity	Follow-up information about the projects undertaken
Third sector, linking the event to an external charitable cause (N= 87)	Yes 93.1%	Main menu 55.2%	No 93.1%	Website 34.5%	Financial 86.2%	Compulsory set amount 77%	No 83.9%	Not provided 88.5%
Third sector, linking the event to its own social cause (N= 20)	Yes 90%	Main menu 85%	No 85%	Mixed 45%	Financial 100%	Compulsory set amount 85%	No 80%	Not provided 60%
Local authority (N= 20)	Yes 80%	Main menu 55%	No 90%	Mixed 45%	Financial 75%	Compulsory set amount 55%	No 85%	Not provided 95%
Commercial private sector (N= 36)	Yes 88.9%	Main menu 61.1%	No 100%	Website 36.1%	Financial 88.9%	Compulsory set amount 55.6%	No 86.1%	Not provided 88.9%
Organised jointly by several organisations (N= 17)	Yes 88.2%	Main menu 58.8%	No 76.5%	Website 35.3%	Financial 94.1%	Compulsory set amount 88.2%	No 64.7%	Not provided 94.1%

support for health-related charitable causes found in this research. The last four times that many of the events analysed were held, there was a link with charitable causes, and this in line with the notion that race events with a charitable link have proliferated within a context of welfare state cutbacks and of prominent discourses on a healthy, active lifestyle (Nettleton and Hardey, 2006).

The results obtained also reflect the importance of the tertiary sector in the organization of this type of event. In the case of sports clubs, the importance of the relationship with other stakeholders is key, regardless of whether or not they are directly connected with the world of sport. In this respect, city councils are the bodies with which greater interaction exists (Observatori Català de l'Esport, 2016). As regards social tertiary sector organizations, the staging of charitable sports events, in agreement with Taylor and Shanka (2008), took a more businesslike approach to management, based on innovation in the development of various kinds of initiatives and products. In turn, such events become a good platform for public relations, awareness raising and resource mobilisation for charitable organisations (Bunds, et al., 2016; Filo et al., 2009; Filo, Groza & Fairley, 2012; Higgins & Lauzon, 2003; Webber, 2004).

As asserted by Herrick (2015), besides the characteristic creation of networks by sport events, those presenting this charitable link are characterised by the creation of networks among for- or not-for-profit sport organisations, or between local authorities and charitable and non-governmental organisations through different levels of cooperation.

Thus, the results show a gap between the websites' potential to strengthen transparency and accountability and their actual use should be noted. This is particularly significant when it comes to the lack of post-event information, which could damage the donors' perception of either the event or the organising agent and, therefore, have an impact on fundraising potential (Gandía, 2011). Rather than a transparent, open communication strategy via their websites, most of the runs and walks with a charitable link analysed in this study were characterised by the opaque nature of their accountability (Florini, 1998). At the same time, a greater use of social media in the post-event period was observed, e.g., as a means of providing accountability.

The little attention paid by the organisers to accountability via the event website or the agent's website could be considered a difficulty in terms of achieving a greater and more long-lasting emotional link with the participants and donors (Gray, Bebbington & Collison, 2006; Hyndman & Jones, 2011; Lee & Rhoda, 2013).

In order to achieve a better alignment between the objectives of runs and walks with a charitable link and the stakeholders, this study makes three recommendations for the organising agents of such events:

1. Organisers wishing to link their event to a charitable cause should develop a robust link with the supported organisation and charitable cause. Such a link should be reflected in the detailed information given about the event, in charitable proceeds that are significant, and in accountability to stakeholders. As stated by Filo et al. (2009, p.379) «charity sport events may be unique from events with minimal on

nonexistent links to a charitable cause in a variety of ways».

2. The link to charitable organisations should be maintained beyond the actual event in order to strengthen the relationship between the event organisers and charitable organisations. This will enable charitable organisations to get involved gradually in the organisation of the event, and the event organisers to monitor better the progress of the charitable projects supported. In order to increase charitable donations, the organisers will also be able to take advantage of the event to organise parallel events to raise awareness of the charitable cause, thereby aiming to extend the participants' involvement beyond the charitable donation they make.

3. In the information society, technology plays a prominent key role as a factor of knowledge production and dissemination. Consequently, charity runs and walks should take advantage of websites' potential as ideal spaces for providing transparent information all year round, engaging with stakeholders and improving their charity event status (Gandía, 2011; Lee & Rhoda, 2013). Social media can be used to supplement the website but, because of the ephemeral nature of their content, they should not be the sole platform for accountability.

This study is not without limitations. In the main, the data were obtained from an analysis of websites. While they are important communication platforms, they are not the only ones to provide information about events and the management of charitable giving. It should also be noted that the features of the websites analysed were very diverse due to the size of and resources available to each organising agent. For example, a local sport body does not have the same resources as a company specialising in the management of sport events to administer their respective websites, and this is something that may impact on the data obtained about an event. The use of certain qualitative research technique, such as in-depth interviews with event managers, might be a good strategy to adopt in order to supplement the data obtained.

Regarding the analysis model used, certain difficulties in terms of identifying the organising agent are acknowledged, given the diversity of agents and the collaborations between them. In this respect, no data were obtained about agents promoting an event but not participating directly in its management.

Using the current research as a starting point, three future directions are proposed. Firstly, longitudinal data could be obtained to understand better the evolution of events like these and to determine whether changes in the management of charitable giving occurs. Regarding that issue, and using a qualitative methodology, the authors intend to look into best practices for the management of charitable giving based on the opinions of the various agents involved in such events. Holding a focus group would be an effective technique. Secondly, given the wide range of runs and walks with a charitable link within the Spanish context, the identification of different types of such events based on the management of charitable giving is considered important, using proposals like the one by Webber (2004) as the starting point. This would allow a distinction to be made between events that are really charitable and

those in which charity is an ancillary or complementary aspect. Third and lastly, using a proposal like the one by Nettleton and Hardey (2006) as the starting point, the authors intend to explore the existence of different participant profiles according to the extent to which an event is oriented towards sport or towards charity (Hendriks & Peelen, 2013). In this respect, it would also be interesting to explore whether or not such events enable groups of people initially distanced from charitable goals to be drawn to them (Webber, 2014).

Conclusions

This study represents initial research into the reality of runs and walks with a charitable link in Spain, based on the analysis of a sample corresponding to Barcelona Province. One of the main findings was the growing trend towards the organisation of events like these within the context of the «second wave of running». Despite the long organisational history of some of these events, they are a recent phenomenon underpinned by the convergence of several factors. Firstly, a greater public sensitivity towards charitable causes within the context of economic crisis and weakening of the welfare state. Secondly, the perception among organisers from the private sector – associative private sector and commercial private sector – of not only contributing to a good cause, but also of differentiating themselves from other similar events while taking advantage of the previously mentioned running boom (Filo, et al., 2008). Thirdly, the interest of charitable and third-sector organisations in reaching out to new audiences, raising awareness of their organisations and projects and also funds for them.

Another notable finding was the diversity of organising agents. While a common feature was an event's link to a charitable cause, several organisational formats were identified. The most common of such formats was for a club, a sport body, a company in the sport sphere or a local authority, as organising agents, to link an event to charity by cooperating with a third-sector organisation, to which they gave the charitable proceeds while using the event to spread the word about its cause and to raise funds. To a lesser extent, the third-sector organisations, sometimes with the support of a company specialising in event organisation, organised a charity event in order to expand its network of collaborators, thereby raising awareness of and also funds for its charitable projects.

The last finding was the wide range of criteria applied to the management of charitable giving, which made it difficult to distinguish events that were clearly charitable from those in which charity was a complementary aspect. The need to strengthen the organisers' transparency and accountability via the event websites should also be noted.

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