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Traditional Foot Racing v. Obstacle Racing

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Sands

Traditional Foot Racing v. Obstacle Racing

Kathleen Sands

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Dr. Fruzzetti
Spring 2014

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how to best promote, execute, and manage traditional foot racing and obstacle racing in the 21st century. Accurately measured traditional foot racing has been in existence since the 1600s (“Running History Story”). Much more recently, in 1990, obstacle racing originated and brought change to the racing industry (“The History of Obstacle Races”). As a result, this study investigated the two different cultures of traditional foot racing and obstacle racing, and what the introduction of obstacle racing means for racing coordinators of both types of events.

A mixed methods study was conducted to examine this situation. 100 traditional foot race participants and 100 obstacle race participants were surveyed at races and through relevant social media regarding: demographic background of both traditional foot racers and obstacle racers, feelings toward traditional foot racing and obstacle racing, drivers of behavior to race traditional foot races and obstacle races, the frequency of engagement in both traditional foot races and obstacle races, and with whom traditional foot race competitors and obstacle race competitors decide to race. Expert interviews were also conducted to supplement survey findings and to gather expert opinions on both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing.

The findings from this study are important because they provide race directors of both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing with a foundation upon which to plan future races. Obstacle racing has impacted the industry, but not to the

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determent of traditional foot racing. Instead, a new demographic of young, single early professionals have emerged to run obstacle races; compared to the older, established business professional traditional foot racing demographic. Each of these demographics brings their own varied set of wants and needs to traditional foot racing and obstacle racing. These findings are translated into product, place, price, and promotion suggestions that race directors of both events can receive guidance from when planning races.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Spartan Race, Tough Mudder, BoldrDash, Tuff Scramblers, F.I.T Challenge... all terms that instill different reactions in individuals depending on to whom you are talking. All these terms are titles of popular obstacle races. Obstacle racers may instantly perk up at the mention of one of their favorite races, while traditional foot racers may show drastically less enthusiasm. Other individuals may not even know what an obstacle race is, or have heard of the aforementioned terminology.

This paper will discuss both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing with the ultimate goal of establishing knowledge on how to promote, execute, and manage traditional foot racing and obstacle racing in the 21st century. Similarities and differences of traditional foot racing and obstacle racing will be analyzed and studied to see if these play a role in whether or not participants are shifting their focus from traditional foot racing towards obstacle racing. This paper will also examine what marketable benefits can be drawn from these findings.

Chapter Two will provide an extensive background on the etymology, history, and participants of traditional foot racing and obstacle racing. This information will be drawn from a comprehensive literature review of the existent body of knowledge in regards to traditional foot racing and obstacle racing.

Chapter Three will explain the research questions studied in regards to traditional road racing and obstacle racing. The instrumentation and participants involved in this data collection will also be discussed, alongside the research design.

Chapter Four presents the findings discovered through the research design considered in Chapter Three. These findings will be looked at in segments according to the research questions examined.

Chapter Five will summarize both the topic and study performed. Conclusions from the findings will be also reviewed. Suggestions by the author will be made for traditional foot race coordinators and obstacle race coordinators in regards to the overall study and the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study performed. These recommendations will be presented according to product, place, price, and promotion suggestions.

Chapter Two: Traditional Foot Racing v. Obstacle Racing

Introduction

In this chapter, terminology of traditional foot racing and obstacle racing will be defined. A comprehensive overview of the history of both types of racing will be provided, alongside an explanation of the culture that makes up both of these areas of the racing industry. The average traditional foot race and obstacle race participants will also be described and defined through present-day demographic statistics that have been collected.

Traditional foot racing and obstacle racing are two different types of racing that are both major players in the athletics industry of the 21st century. Traditional foot racing has been in existence for nearly 400 years longer than obstacle racing, which makes these two events different in nature and presents interesting concerns regarding the impact obstacle racing's creation will have on traditional foot racing. Numerous individuals participate in both these races every year. Many participants view racing as a hobby, and some aspire to obtain professional recognition.

Etymology

“Traditional foot racing” can be seen as a combination of the terms traditional and foot race. According to Merriam-Webster Online, traditional can be defined as “a way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been used by the people in a particular group, family, society, etc., for a long time.” A foot race can be defined as: “a race run by humans on foot” (“Footrace”). Therefore, a traditional

foot race is a race run by humans on foot with a system that has been used by people for a long time.

“On the most basic level, any event where impediments or challenges are placed on the course in the path of competitors is an obstacle race” (“History & About the Sport”). In particular, those impediments and challenges typically consist of climbing, crawling, and traversing obstacles that require strength, endurance, stamina, and courage (“History & About the Sport”). It is important to note that obstacle races are often discussed alongside other events such as adventure races, scavenger races, themed events, and mud runs. Obstacle races are different from these events. Adventure races are considered the “grandfather of obstacle races” (“History & About the Sport”) and are some of the “most grueling endurance events in the world” (“History & About the Sport”). According to “History & About the Sport,” “adventure races require the use of various modes of transport such as running, map-reading/orienteering, kayaking, mountain biking, mountain climbing, rappelling, swimming, horseback riding, as well as tackling a host of obstacles both natural and man-made.” Scavenger races involve using puzzle-solving skills and highlight the fundamentals of a scavenger hunt on a large scale (“History & About the Sport”). Themed events are when standard races incorporate a motif that participants follow (“History & About the Sport”). Themes can range from zombies, to holidays and colors. Mud Runs are races in mud with the sole obstacle in place being mud (“History & About the Sport”). While most obstacle races incorporate

mud as an obstacle, they differ from mud runs with the additional obstacles found, such as ropes and walls.

History

“Humans evolved from ape-like ancestors because they needed to run long distances” (University of Utah). Those whom could run were favored in natural selection (University of Utah). This biological fact is where traditional foot racing began. “Running as a sport evolved from this competition to survive” (“Running History Story”). The quickest runners were often the most successful hunters (“Running History Story”). This made it prestigious to be known as the best runner, and this naturally led to competition amongst the fastest runners to be known as the paramount runner (“Running History Story”).

The first event of the inaugural Olympic Games was a footrace of 200 yards, and competitive running only gained momentum from thereon out in the world (“Running History Story”). Racing was simplified when the Romans measured their roads with mile markers (“Running History Story”). Having a standard unit of measure along the roads allowed for a uniform distance for races. This led to the English having races between these markers in the 1600s when they were travelling the Roman roads (“Running History Story”). The development of cheap and accurate pocket watches during this time period only further encouraged competition, as performances in different races could be compared against one another for the first time (Milroy 52). “Each city had its fastest running heroes and they used to race

against each other for City and National pride” (“Running History Story”).

Oftentimes, these running heroes were the footmen of nobility (Milroy 50).

The determinant factor in making foot racing a viable and popular sport in England was the gambling trend within the upper class during the 1600s (Milroy 52). Athletics provided the perfect event for wagers (Milroy 52). This popularity led to the running footmen of nobility being “supplanted by their competitors in the growing class of professional pedestrians. These pedestrians competed in parallel with the gentlemen pedestrians but seldom against them” (Milroy 52). The Napoleonic Wars at the end of the 18th century brought a period of abundant economic activity that allowed professional foot races to flourish (Milroy 53).

The economic decline after the Napoleonic Wars led to the end of the era of gentlemen pedestrians competing for wagers (Milroy 53). This led to the remaining professional foot race competitors struggling to maintain their prior standards of living. The 1840’s ended their struggle due to the growth of the railway system, which allowed for large numbers of paying spectators to travel to professional racing events (Milroy 54). By the 1850’s, this translated into twelve running tracks being built in the major cities in Britain and the first official “records” being logged (Milroy 56).

Amateur foot racing appeared in the late 1800s (Milroy 58). The interest in professional running events led to amateurs wanting to see if they could beat the professional records, and later, either professional or amateur records (Milroy 58). Women were also allowed to compete at an amateur level for the first time (Milroy 58). The development of amateur foot racing eventually morphed into what we

consider traditional foot racing today. Presently, individuals choose to be active, through activities such as traditional foot racing, all over the United States and the globe. These individuals are most active in the western part of the United States near the Rocky Mountains, and least active in the south (“America’s 15 Most Active Cities”).

In the 1990s obstacle racing in its present-day form was originated (“The History of Obstacle Races”). The Tough Guy Obstacle race broke ground in Wolverhampton West Midlands, UK, and set the precedent for all future obstacle races (“Tough Guy Est. Jan 1987”).

Racing elements have been in existence since the time of the Ancient Greeks who added these types of races in their ancient Olympic Games, such as the steeplechase (“The History of Obstacle Races”). They also used mud and obstacles such as ditches and lead weights for military training to prepare for war (Mullins 101). “They engaged in a great diversity of activities, which constitute elements of modern day obstacle courses, including running, jumping, climbing, swimming, vaulting, balancing, and swinging from ropes” (Mullins 101). A more modern-day adaptation of Spartan training can be found in today’s military training. Military personnel are often put through a variety of modernized obstacles courses to prepare the skills necessary for particular missions: crawling, creeping, climbing, walking, running, and jumping while carrying full field equipment for long periods of time (Mullins 101). All these elements can be found in today’s obstacle races.

Alongside military purposes, obstacle courses can be found within physical

education curriculums (Mullins 101). These obstacle courses can enhance motor development, develop cognitive and emotional learning, and teach basic anatomy and physiology (Mullins 101). “Obstacle courses can also be used to develop skills related to orienteering, problem solving, constructing, leading groups, and working as a team, and to strengthen personal qualities, like courage, persistence, and confidence” (Mullins 101).

Spawning from military training and physical education, obstacle races eventually broke ground within the racing culture. This was a result of the increasing interest in adding obstacles to your traditional foot race as a way to further challenge participants (Mullins 103). Once this idea broke ground, it quickly gained popularity for a couple of reasons. Two popular theories for the fast growth in obstacle racing popularity are the achievement goal theory and the self-determination theory (SDT) (Mullins 103). Achievement goal theory is the want to exhibit proficiency in order to feel accomplished based on self-established criteria (Mullins 103). “SDT maintains that all individuals have three major needs: 1) to act according to their own free will (autonomy); 2) to feel capable and effective in their actions (competence); and 3) to feel socially connected (relatedness)” (Mullins 103). Obstacle races provide the perfect medium to satisfy all these internal drives, and as a result are quickly growing in number and popularity. This has led to numerous obstacle challenge events being established today, including but not limited to: Civilian Military Combine, Metro Dash, Muddy Buddy Rebel Race, Ruckus Sports, Rugged Maniac, Rugged Warrior, Spartan Race, Tough Mudder, and Warrior Dash (Mullins 102).

Culture

The culture of traditional foot races and obstacle races vary in several different ways. Traditional foot race participants tend to view their racing as weight loss and exercise motivation (Bieler). Running positively affects the traditional foot race participant's sense of self by expanding visions and heightening confidence levels (Rammohan). 5K foot races are often considered the most popular distance to race (Yishane). 5K races are also considered an excellent tool for training for a variety of other races ("For Better Racing, Focus on the Five"). Many traditional foot race participants find racing to be a fun and social event (Yishane). Most participants are in a good mood, which encourages other participants to continue their traditional road racing because, as Bieler states in "Your First 5K", "almost everyone there is in a good mood. How many other events in your life are like that?"

There is also a sector of traditional foot race participants who are extremely competitive and dislike what they call "the festivalization of sport" (Reavis). These participants believe that all the new races being established, from themed events to obstacle races, are reducing the competitiveness of events and promoting the mentality of everyone being a winner (Reavis). Traditional foot race participants with this mentality often see obstacle race events as "gimmicky" (Senger).

Obstacle race participants enjoy this emphasis on obstacle races being more of a challenge than a strictly competitive race (Murphy). Obstacle race participants also often view obstacle races as an alternative to "boring" traditional foot races (Frazier). Participants of obstacle races see these races as an escape from daily

stress and challenges (Murphy). Numbers of participants in obstacle races are increasing rapidly; and this is in part because experiences are being considered the new luxury good (Wallack). This fact is also tied into the vast amount of Internet publicity and marketing usage performed by obstacle race hosts (Frazier). With obstacle race hosts promoting obstacle race discussion so heavily through social media, the first thing those who complete an obstacle race want to do is post about it on social media (Wallack). As a result of the level of fun obstacle race participants have, sharing this news on social media attracts new participants and further encourages repeat participants as well (Senger).

Finally, it is important to note that a phenomena called the “Biggest Loser effect” encouraging participants to run obstacle races (Murphy). The Biggest Loser effect is the term to describe the motivation racers and taking from “the fact that there was a prime-time television show about people who were very obese, who were losing hundreds of pounds in a boot-camp setting and who, at the end of each season, attempt a marathon” (Murphy). The Biggest Loser effect and its corresponding television show have become an influential recruiting factor for endurance events, such as obstacle races (Murphy).

Participants

Due to the varying cultures of traditional foot racing and obstacle racing, it is natural that these events have different participants. The 2013 National Runner Survey is a far-reaching study conducted by Running USA every two years (Lamppa). “The National Runner Survey assesses the demographics, lifestyle

attitudes, habits and product preferences of the running population nationwide. Results from the National Runner Survey reflect “core runners,” that is, active adult participants who tend to enter running events and train year-round” (Lamppa). According to the National Runner Survey, the typical female U.S. traditional foot race participant is 39.3, married, college educated, and earns a household income of \$75,000 or more. On average, she is 140.2 pounds and 5 feet, 5 inches tall. The typical female participant has been running for approximately 9.6 years and participates in 7.1 events a year. Their favorite race is the half-marathon and their primary motivation to start running was for exercise. Motivation to continue running is to stay in shape. They purchase about 2.9 pairs of running shoes a year and spend over \$100 in running apparel annually.

According to the National Runner Survey, the typical U.S. male foot race participant is 43.8, married, college educated, and earns a household income of \$75,000 or more. Typically, he would be 174.4 pounds and 5 feet, 10.4 inches tall. The typical male foot race participant has been running for nearly 13.6 years and participates in about 8 running events annually. Their favorite race is the half-marathon and their primary motivation to start running was for exercise. Motivation to continue running is to stay in shape. They tend to purchase 3.1 pairs of running shoes a year, and spend over \$100 on running apparel each year.

Obstacle race participants tend to have at least some level of college education and do not have children (Sandercock). Obstacle racing is an expensive hobby and often involves traveling, which would explain why a majority of participants do not have children (Sandercock). A majority of obstacle racers are

between 18 and 34 years of age, with a drastic decrease in participation after the age of 44 (Sandercock). There are also more women athlete participants in obstacle racing than in traditional road racing (Frazier). The women that compete in obstacle racing do not enjoy being looked at as extremely girly or fragile, and instead want to showcase that they are as strong and capable as men (Hill).

When looked at in a composite view, traditional foot racers are therefore males and females who are approximately 40 years old, married, and college educated. They receive a household income of \$75,000 or higher, have been running for 10-14 years, and run 7-8 races a year. They run for exercise and weight loss motivation, and a certain segment of the traditional foot race population sees traditional foot racing as an extremely competitive event.

Obstacle racers are 18-34 year-old males and females, with a higher percentage of participants being female. Obstacle race participants have no children and are motivated to run obstacle races as an escape from daily stress and challenges. Participants see obstacle racing as a personal challenge, rather than a highly competitive event.

All the literature reviewed in this Chapter provides a firm foundation to begin to understand the similarities and differences of the traditional foot race market and the obstacle race market. Through performing a rigorous scientific study of individuals whom characterize themselves as either a traditional foot race participant or an obstacle race participant, a more extensive body of knowledge can be found from which the marketable benefits of each race type can be established. Alongside marketable benefits can be discovered the feelings individuals have

towards traditional foot racing vs. obstacle racing, the drivers of their behavior, the propensity of these individuals to engage in each type of race, and with whom these participants race with typically.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Within Chapter Three, the research questions, instrumentation, research participants, and research design regarding traditional foot racing vs. obstacle racing will be discussed. The purpose of this study was to discover how to promote, execute, and manage traditional foot racing and obstacle racing in the 21st century. A rigorous scholarly methodology was applied to analyze this concept. This methodology consisted of administering a survey to a purposeful sample of participants in order to collect data on the topic, as well as performing expert interviews to add further depth to the knowledge base of the study.

Research Questions

The research questions designed for the purpose of this study are as follows:

1.
 - a. What is the demographic background of traditional foot race participants.
 - b. What is the demographic background of obstacle race participants?

2.
 - a. What are traditional foot race participant's feelings toward traditional foot races and obstacle races?
 - b. What are obstacle race participant's feelings toward traditional foot races and obstacle races?

3.
 - a. What are the drivers of behavior for traditional foot race participants when it comes to traditional foot races and obstacle races?

foot racer runs compared to how many races an obstacle racer runs, and what this would mean for the race director's marketing. Lastly, research question 5 was devised to provide race coordinators with the knowledge as to with whom their race participants are running races, and how this varies whether they are planning a traditional foot race event or an obstacle race event.

Research Design

A mixed methods study was pursued while conducting this research on the subject of traditional foot racing and obstacle racing. First, a combination of informal expert interviews and background research resulted in an extensive literature review and plethora of knowledge and insight into both the traditional foot race industry and the obstacle race industry. This research culminated in a 2-phase quantitative survey research design. A mixed methods study was chosen because it allowed the maximum quantity of information to be gathered on the subject matter through incorporating a variety of both qualitative and quantitative resources (Creswell). For the purpose of this study, these resources included expert interviews and survey distribution and data analysis.

Survey Participants

Purposeful sampling was performed to select participants to contribute in the survey administration. The survey was duplicated and distributed in a 2-phase process. One copy of the survey was dispersed to 100 participants at traditional foot

racers and the other identical copy was distributed to 100 participants at obstacle races.

Race directors were contacted for a variety of traditional foot races and obstacle races within the New England region. Once establishing contact with the race directors, select races were chosen according to location convenience to become survey distribution sites. After being granted permission from the race directors, races were attended in-person and surveys were distributed both at the finish line and through participant e-mail lists. For the traditional foot race sample, the survey was distributed at smaller 5Ks, which included the Nyatt 5K Race, Quonset Point 5K, and the Day One 5K. For the obstacle race sample, the survey was distributed at the much larger Fit Challenge obstacle race event. Survey data was also collected through social media. Traditional road race participants were targeted through posting the survey link on the Central Mass Striders Facebook page with explicit instructions that only those who ran traditional road races were to take the survey. The same process was followed for obstacle race participants by coordinating with Unleashed, an obstacle racing gym. Once data was gathered from both traditional foot races and the obstacle race, the data was merged into one Excel spreadsheet to combine the thoughts of both sectors of participants.

These participants were chosen because, through actually attending traditional foot races and obstacle races, a truly valid sample of active participant finishers was established. This survey method was also able to capture immediacy of responses. Distributing surveys at the finish line, and through an e-mail sent to finishers the night after a race was completed, made it so that participants were able

to respond to the survey accurately and in a timely manner without having to worry about recalling certain aspects of the race or the emotions they were feeling. It was made clear to participants surveyed at the race to not respond to the online version of the survey as well in an effort to avoid duplicate respondents.

Having participants respond immediately after they finished the races, when they were still filled with raw emotion, allowed the researcher to collect the most honest responses. Social media sites were used to build upon that sample under the consideration that an individual must have some type of emotional draw to either traditional foot racing or obstacle racing if they have decided to follow Central Mass Striders or Unleashed on Facebook.

Instrumentation

Expert interviews

The first instrumentation used to gather data regarding traditional foot racing and obstacle racing were expert interviews. Expert interviews are discussions with individuals knowledgeable about an issue and its characteristics (“Expert Interview”). For this study, the experts were individuals both knowledgeable about traditional foot racing and obstacle racing, as well as frequent competitors of either traditional foot racing or obstacle racing. Two interview guides were created. This provided structure for the expert interviews. One interview guide targeted traditional foot racers being interviewed, and the other targeted obstacle racers being interviewed. The interview guide requested information regarding the individual’s relationship with racing, and then their

opinion regarding each of the research questions being studied. This information was then coupled with knowledge discovered in the literature review, as well as the survey data, to draw conclusions regarding the research questions being studied.

Three traditional foot racers were interviewed: Alan Bernier, Nich Haber, and Kim Breivogel Wamback. Alan Bernier has 22 years of experience with traditional foot racing and participates on a personal level, as well as through coaching athletes and coordinating, overseeing, and managing traditional foot racing events of all sizes. Nich Haber is the President of a local nonprofit, New England Distance. New England Distance focuses on fostering elite post-collegiate athletes who volunteer 20 hours a week tutoring, mentoring, and coaching local city youth in regards to healthy living habits. Haber started running through his gym and became avidly involved after watching the 2001 New York City Marathon and deciding to run it in 2002. Wamback has been a traditional foot racer for 13 years now and has run distances ranging from 5k's to marathons. She is debating an attempt at an ultra marathon and considers herself a mid-pack foot racer.

Three obstacle racers were also interviewed: Kevin Roy, Danny Hall, Anthony Dagnello, and Janine Calise. Kevin Roy ran the Vermont Tough Mudder in 2011 as his first obstacle course race. He became actively involved in obstacle course racing immediately after through working with the Spartan Races. Roy both competes at an elite level, and makes a living training others to compete in obstacle races. Danny Hall is a member of the elite obstacle racing team at the gym Unleashed. He considers obstacle racing a way of life and trains extremely hard to compete at an elite level. Anthony Dagnello has been participating in obstacle racing for the past 3

years and has run 3 Tough Mudders and 7 Spartan Races to date. Dagnello also works as a personal trainer. Janine Calise both competes and trains individuals to race obstacle course races. Calise finds it extremely rewarding to witness the vast improvements individuals make in their ability level after her assistance training them to race.

Copies of the interview guides can be found in Appendix A and responses can be found in Appendix B.

Survey Research

The second instrument used to gather data regarding traditional foot racing and obstacle racing was a survey. The questionnaire included fourteen different questions including both demographic and psychographic attributes. The purpose of this survey was to gather data regarding the differences and similarities in the views participants had on traditional foot racing and obstacle racing.

Qualtrics software was chosen to create and distribute the survey. After evaluating other survey software options, such as SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics was chosen because it appeared more user friendly. Qualtrics also provided the benefit of providing easy access to a survey link that could be e-mailed to participants that were not reached in-person at the finish lines of the races.

During the design phase, the survey underwent several adaptations. One of the demographic questions that was changed after the initial survey draft was the question addressing the age of participants. For the survey draft, age brackets reflected standard race result page age brackets for races including the JingleBell5K

in Providence, RI. These race brackets included the choices: “Under 40,” “40-49,” “50-59,” “60-69,” and “70+.” Upon a second evaluation, it was decided that such a broad primary choice was not as useful when it came to market research. This choice also did not address a separate college market deviation. Therefore, when reevaluated, it was determined that the “40 and under” category be separated into 2 new choices: “18-24 years” and “25-34” years. The marketing rationale behind this decision was that college students are a very distinctive demographic than early-career individuals, and therefore require separate targeting methods from advertisers due to their different wants and needs.

Other survey questions remained the same throughout the entire survey creation process. The demographic questions addressing gender, family size, and education were all straightforward. Yet, Question 6, which addressed household income, was reflected upon in the draft revision process and changed to better reflect survey psychology and the college market. A classical approach was initially taken with the income demographic question, which included 11 choices. The brackets were made larger so that participants were not overwhelmed with what psychologically would appear as a lengthy and domineering question at the beginning of the survey. Also, a “less than \$10,000” option was added to include participants, such as college students, that might be taking the survey. Initially, the brackets simply began with the choice: “10,000-\$29,999” income level.

Questions addressing feelings toward both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing underwent a minor change as well in the survey design process. Instead of labeling each of the response scale options, five choices were simply

provided that ranged from least favorite, three in-between selections, and most favorite. This way, the respondents were not swayed by particular wording and could choose their true emotional correlation as it related to most or least favorite race. Questions relating to drivers of behavior and frequency of participation experienced no changes throughout the survey development procedures.

The survey was distributed both at traditional foot races and obstacle races, as well as through e-mail and social media. At the traditional foot races, participants were asked to answer the survey on an iPad after they finished running the race. Then, to reach any participants that did not answer on the iPad, the race directors e-mailed a link to the survey to their participant list. At the obstacle race attended, the survey was printed and participants were asked at the FIT Challenge check-in table to answer the hard copy of the survey. Then, their results were manually entered online. A follow-up survey link was also sent to the participant e-mail list. To retrieve further responses, the survey link was also posted on traditional foot race- and obstacle race-specific social media sites.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to communicate the findings of the research administered and discussed in Chapter 3. Findings will be relayed in a two-part structure. Part 1 will present a summary of findings from expert interviews. Part 2 will present a summary of findings from survey research. These findings will provide relevant insight into both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing through a variety of viewpoints in order to gather the most information on the subject as possible.

Summary of Findings: Expert interviews

Traditional Foot Racing

Alan Bernier, Nich Haber, and Kim Wamback were the traditional foot racing expert interview subjects for the purpose of this study. Their interviews led to several findings regarding traditional foot racing. The first finding is that Bernier, Haber, and Wamback all described traditional foot racers as white, middle to upper class affluent individuals anywhere from 30 to 50 years of age. Bernier, Haber, and Wamback also mentioned it is most common to see women running traditional foot races.

Traditional foot racers view traditional foot races as fund-raisers for charity, a chance to compete, or as a personal challenge (Bernier). "It's a way to test yourself" (Haber). Meanwhile, traditional foot racers have a more negative connotation regarding obstacle racing. Traditional foot racers see obstacle racing as

a fad that is too physically demanding (Bernier). Traditional foot racers also view obstacle races as being too expensive and of a limited supply (Bernier). As Haber noted, obstacle racing to the traditional foot racer is “like going to the circus. Probably fun, but it’s not a real sport.” Wamback did mention that, although she is not a fan of obstacle racing, she does know some traditional foot racers that enjoy obstacle racing because it allows for different muscle usage and is fun.

Traditional foot racers are motivated to run traditional foot races because of charity, competition, and personal challenge (Bernier). Haber stresses the competitive element as being the most important of the three motivators Bernier described, and Wamback said that camaraderie helps traditional foot racers with the personal challenge aspect of racing.

Bernier, Haber, and Wamback all mentioned that traditional foot racers run anywhere from 6-20 traditional foot races a year depending on how serious an athlete they are. According to Bernier, Haber, and Wamback, these traditional foot racers tend to run alone or with friends. Bernier explains that many traditional foot racers run alone to meet like-minded people and see new areas. Meanwhile, Haber believes traditional foot racers race with friends as a bonding activity. Wamback supports Haber by explaining that traditional foot racing allows friends the opportunity to do something together. However, Wamback notes that the more serious of traditional foot racers tend to run alone with the objective of beating certain pre-determined elite competitors.

From these expert interviews emerges the image that a traditional foot racer is 30-50 years of age, white, and middle-to-upper class. More women run traditional

foot races than men, and all participants run either to compete, as a personal challenge, or as a fund raiser. Traditional foot racers run 6-20 races a year, and do not have a regard obstacle racing in a positive light.

Obstacle Racing

Kevin Roy, Danny Hall, Anthony Dagnello, and Janine Calise were the obstacle racing expert interview subjects for the purpose of this study. Their interviews led to several findings regarding obstacle racing. The first finding was that “everyone from all walks of life seems to be coming out to OCR’s (obstacle course races)” (Roy). This observation of Roy’s demonstrates how significantly different obstacle racers are from the white, middle-upper class traditional foot racers previously discussed.

According to Roy and Dagnello, obstacle racers view obstacle racing as fun. Hall mentions that there is also a whole group of racers who focus primarily on the competitive side of obstacle racing and “make sacrifices to be competitive.” Calise supports Hall’s statement, explaining that the competitive obstacle racers “want to have and achieve the ultimate mental toughness to keep going no matter what.”

From my point of view as a researcher, I believe the drastic difference between a segment of obstacle runners focusing on obstacle racing being fun, versus the individuals taking obstacle racing extremely competitively, stems from the fact that there are always individuals who look to take something to the next level. There are people who play chess for fun, and there are also people who play chess competitively and with a timer. The same concept applies to obstacle racing. While a majority of racers appear to focus on the less competitive elements of obstacle

racing, there are also those who strive to push themselves to the limit doing something about which they are passionate. In this case, these individuals love obstacle racing, and therefore want to take away some of the *lassiez-faire* atmosphere so they can see just how much they are capable of achieving.

As mentioned by Roy, Dagnello, and Calise, obstacle racers view traditional foot racing as boring. Hall explains this is because traditional foot racing lacks the all-around strength, endurance, and mental toughness that obstacle racing provides.

The motivation for obstacle racers to run obstacle races is in part the unknown challenge that awaits the obstacle racer (Roy). There are also the elements of being outside in nature and camaraderie that come into play as motivators (Dagnello). These motivators help people stay on track with their fitness in a way that is fun enough that they willingly come back for more (Roy).

According to all four obstacle race expert interviews, obstacle racers tend to run anywhere from 4-8 obstacle races in a year. Hall notes that the most diehard of obstacle race competitors will run anywhere from 10-30 obstacle races. Dagnello also mentions that the ethos of the event an obstacle racer identifies with can determine and/or predict the number of races that obstacle racer will run in a given year. "If a racer is drawn to organizations such as Tough Mudder, Super Hero Scramble, Warrior Dash, 1-2 (races) per year. If a racer is drawn to organizations such as Spartan Race, Civilian Military Combine, 3-5 (races) per year" (Dagnello).

For obstacle racers, Roy, Hall, Dagnello, and Calise agree it is all about running with friends, family, co-workers, or teams centered around a cause or elite skill levels. Typically, obstacle racers view racing with others as a source of "support

and friendship” (Roy). Obstacle racers focus on “the camaraderie of participating in something challenging and overcoming those challenges together” (Dagnello).


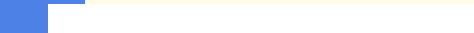
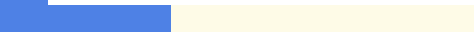
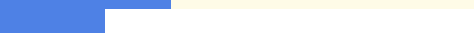


This emphasis on connecting and bonding could potentially explain the importance of social media to the obstacle racing culture. As discussed in the literature review, there is a plethora of social media pertaining to obstacle racing. This would make sense for individuals wanting to connect with fellow racers online to maintain communication channels before or after a race, as well as to feel personally connected to the event they are going to partake in through following the event’s page.

Overall, obstacle racers are described as individuals from “all walks of life” who enjoy racing obstacle races for fun and for the unknown challenge that awaits them on the racecourse. There are also certain individuals who want to see just how far they can push themselves in obstacle racing, Therefore the elite heat has emerged, comprised of individuals wanting to lessen the emphasis on fun and make obstacle racing more competitive. Obstacle racers place a huge emphasis on camaraderie, and this emphasis extends through to social media where participants continue to connect with other racers, as well as the event itself, both prior to and after an obstacle race event.

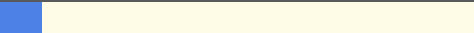





Summary of Findings: Survey Research

Survey question 1 addressed the age demographic of both traditional foot race participants and obstacle race participants. The charts below show the responses:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	18-24		18	18%
2	25-34		10	10%
3	35-44		36	36%
4	45-54		22	22%
5	55-64		12	12%
6	64+		2	2%
	Total		100	100%

Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	18-24		9	9%
2	25-34		31	31%
3	35-44		48	48%
4	45-54		11	11%
5	55-64		1	1%
6	65+		0	0%
	Total		100	100%



Survey question 1 demonstrates that the majority of traditional foot race participants are between 35 and 44 years of age. The same applies to obstacle race participants. However, a variant in results here demonstrates that more individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 will run traditional foot races than obstacle races, and more participants between the ages of 25 and 34 will run obstacle races than

traditional foot races. It is also important to note that individuals over the age of 55 tend to only run traditional foot races.

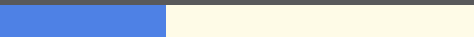

When considering the literature review, it was indicated that traditional foot racers would tend to be older than obstacle racers. I believe the discrepancy where 18-24 year-olds are more likely to run traditional foot races than obstacle races may result from the cost associated with obstacle races compared to traditional foot races. Entry fees for traditional foot races can be around \$80.00 less than obstacle races. Therefore, 18-24 year-olds often are broke college students looking to competitively exercise would not be able to afford an entrance fee upwards of \$100.00, and therefore prefer traditional foot races with entrance fees closer to \$20.00.

Survey question 2 addressed the gender demographic of both traditional foot race participants and obstacle race participants. The charts below show the breakdown of male and female race respondents:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Male		35	35%
2	Female		65	65%
	Total		100	100%

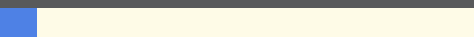




Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Male		35	35%
2	Female		65	65%
	Total		100	100%






Survey question 2 shows that more females are inclined to run both traditional foot races and obstacle races. Having a primarily female sample decide to participate in the survey research may have skewed these results.

Survey question 3 analyzed how many individuals were in the race participant's household for both traditional foot races and obstacle races. The results can be seen in the charts below:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		8	8%
2	2		31	31%
3	3		17	17%
4	4		33	33%
5	5+		11	11%
	Total		100	100%


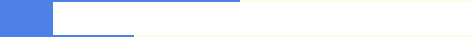

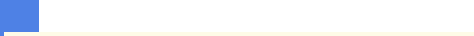
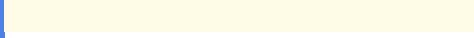

Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		14	14%
2	2		23	23%
3	3		17	17%
4	4		24	24%
5	5+		22	22%
	Total		100	100%

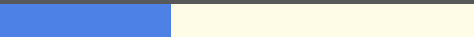

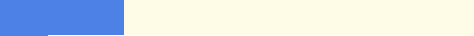
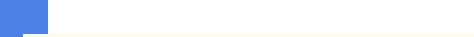


Survey question 3 shows that most traditional foot race households have either 2 or 4 occupants. Obstacle racing households tend to have 2 or 4 occupants, with 5 or more occupants also a common occurrence.

Survey question 4 then looked at how many children each participant had in their household. The results of survey question 4 are shown below:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	0		50	51%
2	1		11	11%
3	2		28	28%
4	3		8	8%
5	4		1	1%
6	5+		1	1%
	Total		99	100%

Obstacle Race Participant Results:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	0		36	36%
2	1		18	18%
3	2		26	26%
4	3		10	10%
5	4		5	5%
6	5+		5	5%
	Total		100	100%

Survey question 4 shows that most traditional foot race participant households had no children. If households did have children, they were most likely to have 2 children. Obstacle racing households were also most likely to have no children. If there were children in the household, the number of children ranged between 1 and 3 fairly equally represented in survey findings. It appears that







traditional foot race households are slightly smaller than obstacle racing households.

Survey question 5 studied the demographic of education level of both traditional foot race participants and obstacle race participants. The charts below show the responses:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	High school or less		7	7%
2	Some college		5	5%
3	Associate degree/Trade degree		10	10%
4	Bachelor's degree		38	38%
5	Master's degree		30	30%
6	Terminal degree (Ph.D, M.D, J.D.)		9	9%
	Total		99	100%

Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	High school or less		7	7%
2	Some college		21	21%
3	Associate degree/Trade degree		11	11%
4	Bachelor's degree		44	44%
5	Master's degree		12	12%
6	Terminal degree (Ph.D, M.D, J.D.)		5	5%
	Total		100	100%

Survey question 5 shows that most traditional foot race participants have a Bachelor's degree, closely followed by a Master's degree. Obstacle race participants were most likely to have a Bachelor's degree. If an obstacle race participant did not have a bachelor's degree, then the next common education level of participants was having completed some college. Traditional foot race participants appear to be more likely to have completed higher levels of education than obstacle race participants.

Survey question 6 addressed the demographic question regarding income level of traditional foot race participants and obstacle race participants. The results can be seen in the chart below:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than \$10,000		1	1%
2	\$10,000-\$49,999		6	6%
3	\$50,000-\$99,999		25	25%
4	\$100,000-\$149,999		24	24%
5	More than \$150,000		25	25%
6	Prefer not to answer		19	19%
	Total		100	100%

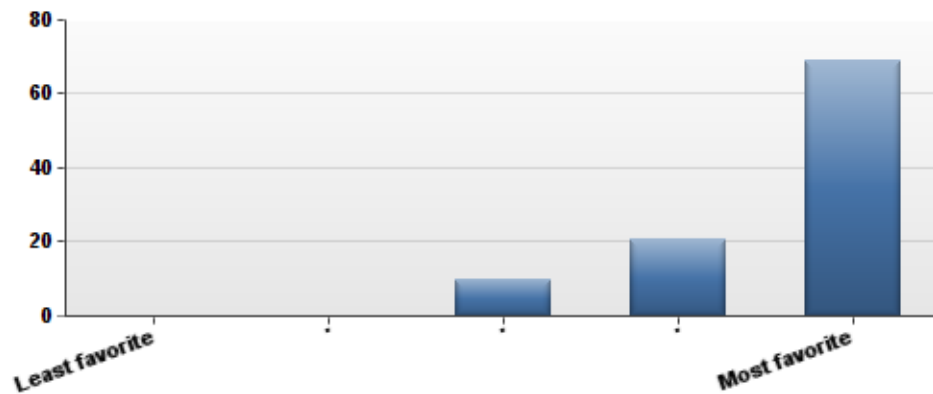
Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than \$10,000		2	2%
2	\$10,000-\$49,999		17	17%
3	\$50,000-\$99,999		34	34%
4	\$100,000-\$149,999		29	29%
5	More than \$150,000		12	12%
6	Prefer not to answer		5	5%
	Total		99	100%

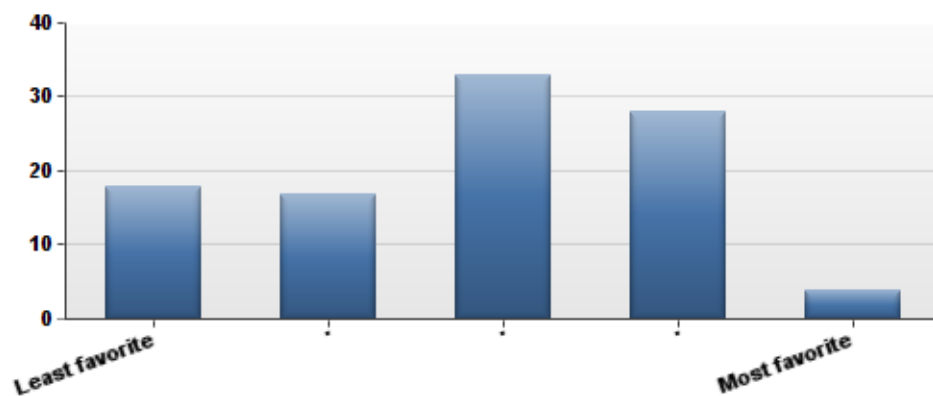
Survey question 6 demonstrates that the average traditional foot race participant makes an income anywhere from \$50,000 to over \$150,000. Obstacle race participants are more likely to make an income between \$50,000 and \$99,999. It appears that traditional foot race participants generally have higher total household incomes than obstacle race participants.

Survey question 7 looked at both traditional foot race participant and obstacle race participant feelings towards traditional foot racing. Their responses are depicted in the charts below:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:



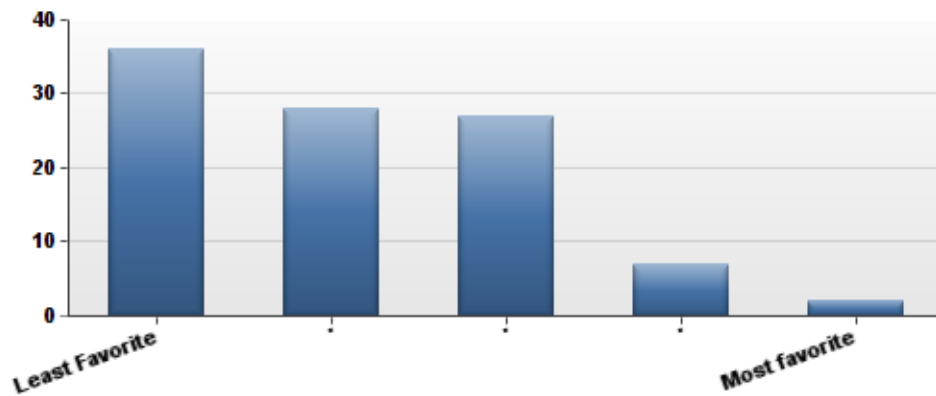
Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

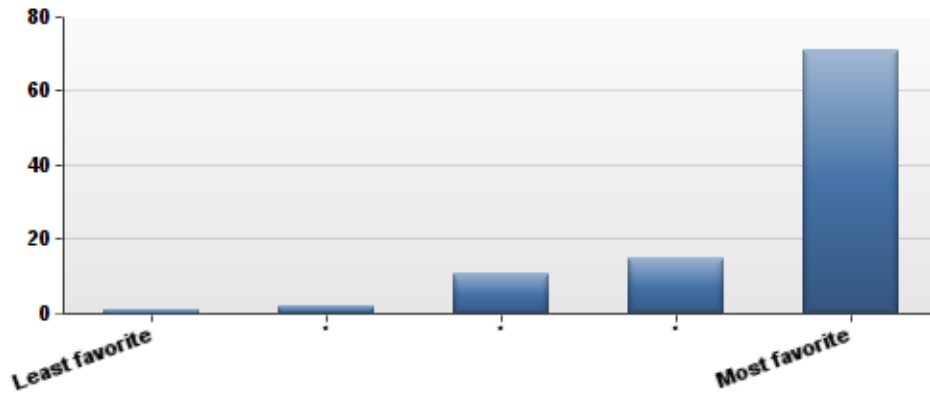


Survey question 7 demonstrates that traditional foot race participants strongly feel that traditional foot racing is their most favorite type of racing. Obstacle racers enjoy traditional foot racing, but do not indicate it is their most favorite race.

Survey question 8 asked the same question in regards to obstacle racing. The responses to survey question 8 can be visually seen in the charts below:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:



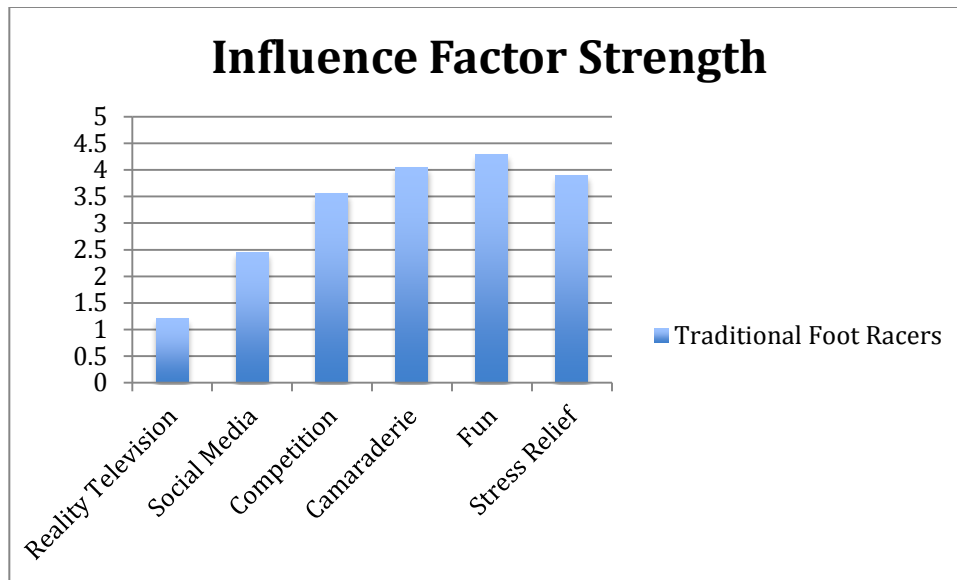
Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

Survey question 8 shows that traditional foot race participants find obstacle racing to be their least favorite type of race. Obstacle race participants strongly feel it is their most favorite type of race.

Survey question 9 then studied drivers of behavior for both traditional foot race participants and obstacle race participants in regards to traditional foot racing. The breakdown of these drivers of behavior can be seen below:

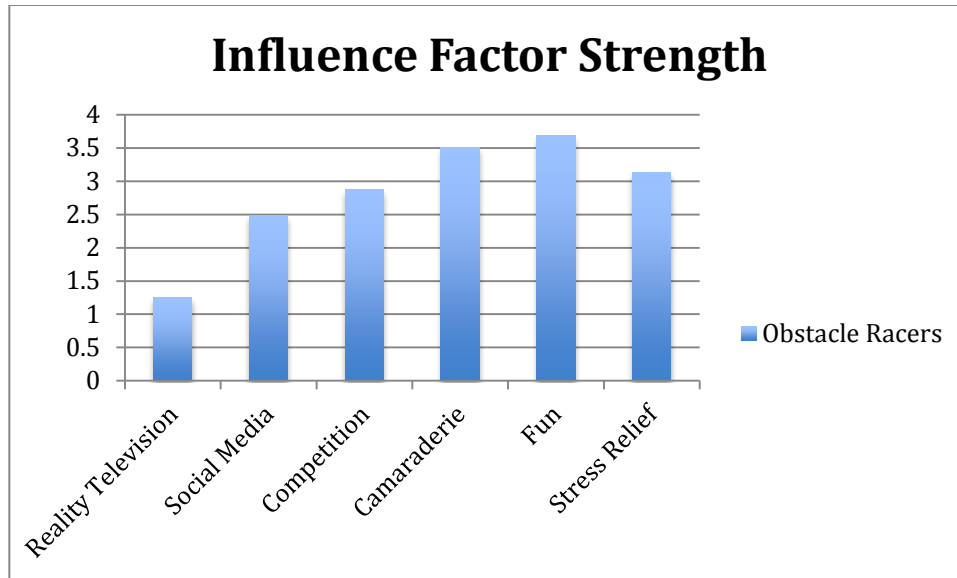
Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total Responses	Mean
1	Reality television	82	14	2	1	0	99	1.21
2	Social media	32	12	33	20	1	98	2.45
3	Competition	7	9	27	34	22	99	3.56
4	Camaraderie	2	7	11	43	36	99	4.05
5	Fun	1	2	11	38	46	98	4.29
6	Stress relief	2	7	20	41	30	100	3.90



Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

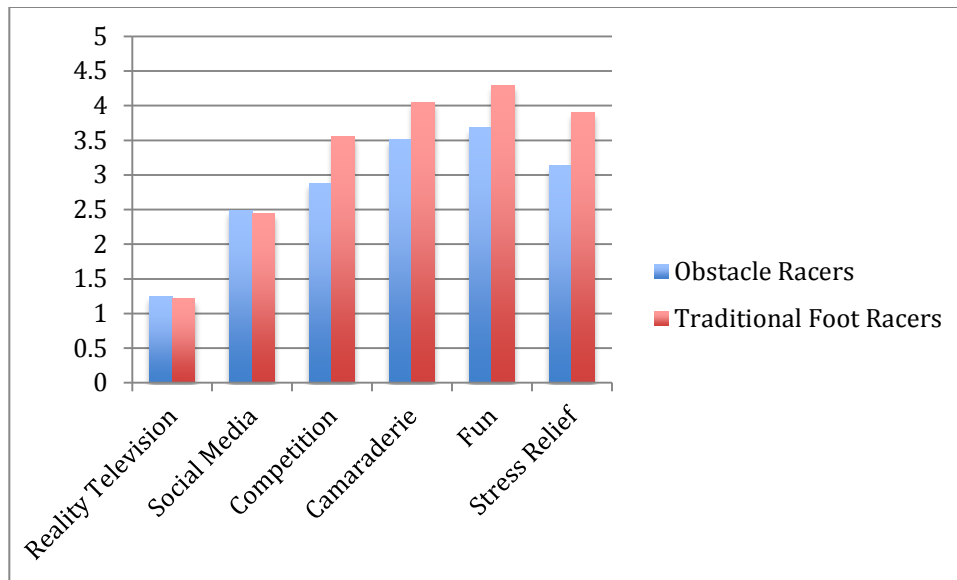
#	Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total Responses	Mean
1	Reality television	83	10	6	1	0	100	1.25
2	Social media	32	10	38	17	3	100	2.49
3	Competition	18	14	38	22	8	100	2.88
4	Camaraderie	10	8	27	31	24	100	3.51
5	Fun	12	8	13	34	33	100	3.68
6	Stress relief	25	6	21	27	21	100	3.13



Survey question 9 shows that reality television does not influence traditional foot racers to run traditional road races, as was previously alluded to in the literature review under the term “Biggest Loser effect” (Murphy). Traditional foot race participants are most influenced by the fun element that traditional road racing provides them. They are also somewhat influenced by social media, competition, camaraderie, and stress relief.

Obstacle race participants are also never influenced by reality television to run traditional foot races. However, if obstacle race participants are to run a traditional road race they are strongly swayed by the fun element, and somewhat influenced by social media, competition, camaraderie, and stress relief.

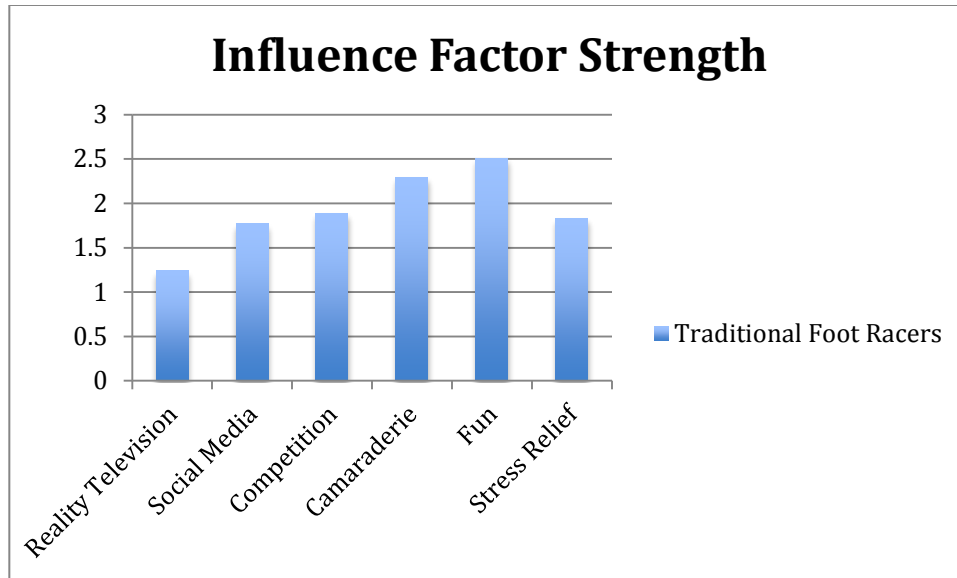
The chart below shows a side-by-side comparison of these results:



Survey question 10 studied the same drivers of behavior in regards to obstacle racing. The breakdown of these drivers in response to obstacle racing can be seen below:

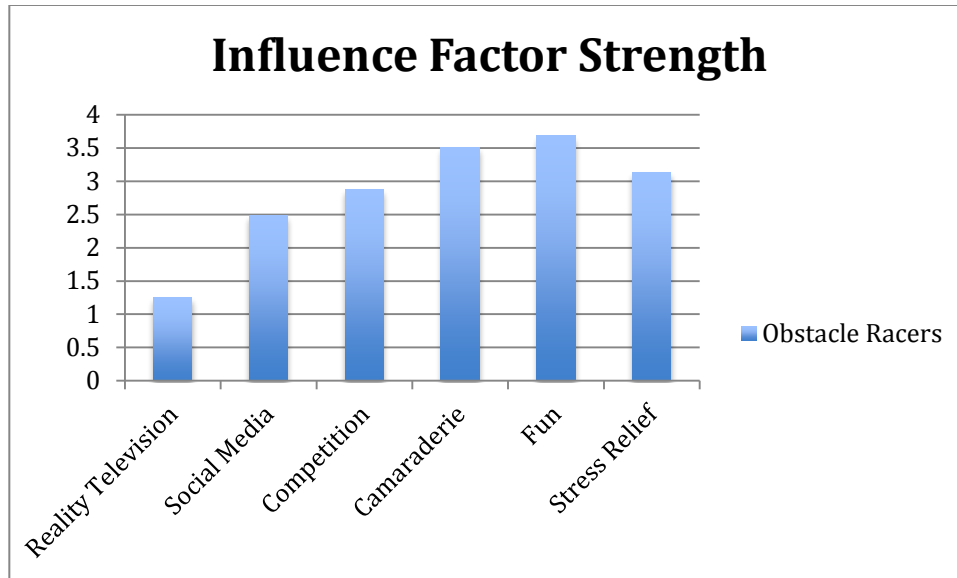
Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total Responses	Mean
1	Reality television	83	6	9	0	0	98	1.24
2	Social media	58	13	19	8	0	98	1.77
3	Competition	55	16	13	8	5	97	1.89
4	Camaraderie	48	9	16	15	10	98	2.29
5	Fun	44	8	14	16	16	98	2.51
6	Stress relief	62	11	12	6	7	98	1.83



Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

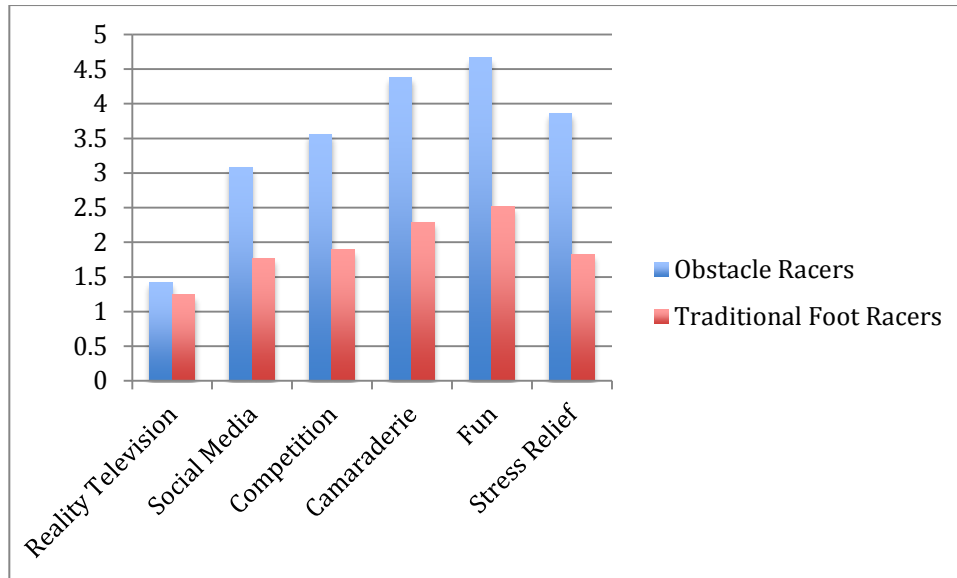
#	Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total Responses	Mean
1	Reality television	78	5	12	3	1	99	1.42
2	Social media	20	6	32	30	12	100	3.08
3	Competition	8	10	26	27	27	98	3.56
4	Camaraderie	1	1	12	31	55	100	4.38
5	Fun	0	0	9	16	75	100	4.66
6	Stress relief	9	4	21	23	42	99	3.86



Survey question 10 shows that traditional foot race participants are not influenced by reality television, social media, competition, camaraderie, the fun element, or stress relief to run obstacle races. They are extremely unlikely to run obstacle races at all.

Obstacle race participants are strongly influenced by camaraderie, the fun factor, stress relief, and competition to run obstacle races. They are also somewhat influenced to run obstacle races by social media. Obstacle race participants are never influenced by reality television to run obstacle races.

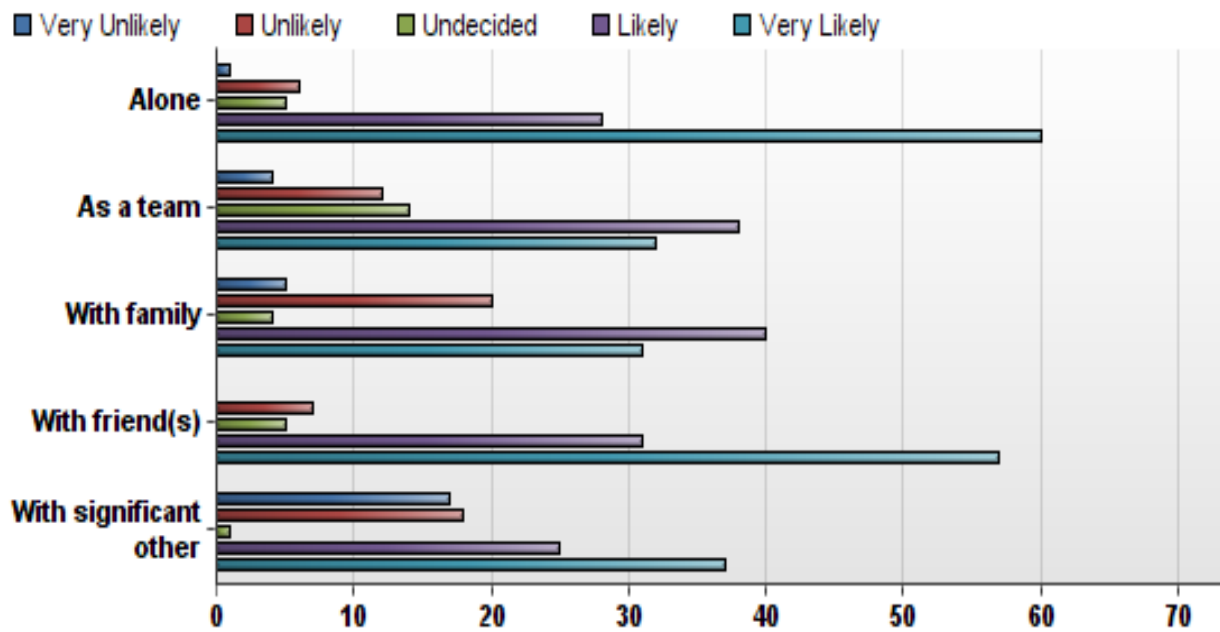
The chart below shows a side-by-side comparison of these results:



Survey question 11 looked at with whom both traditional foot race participants and obstacle race participants are to run traditional foot races with. The results of responses to this question can be seen in the chart below:

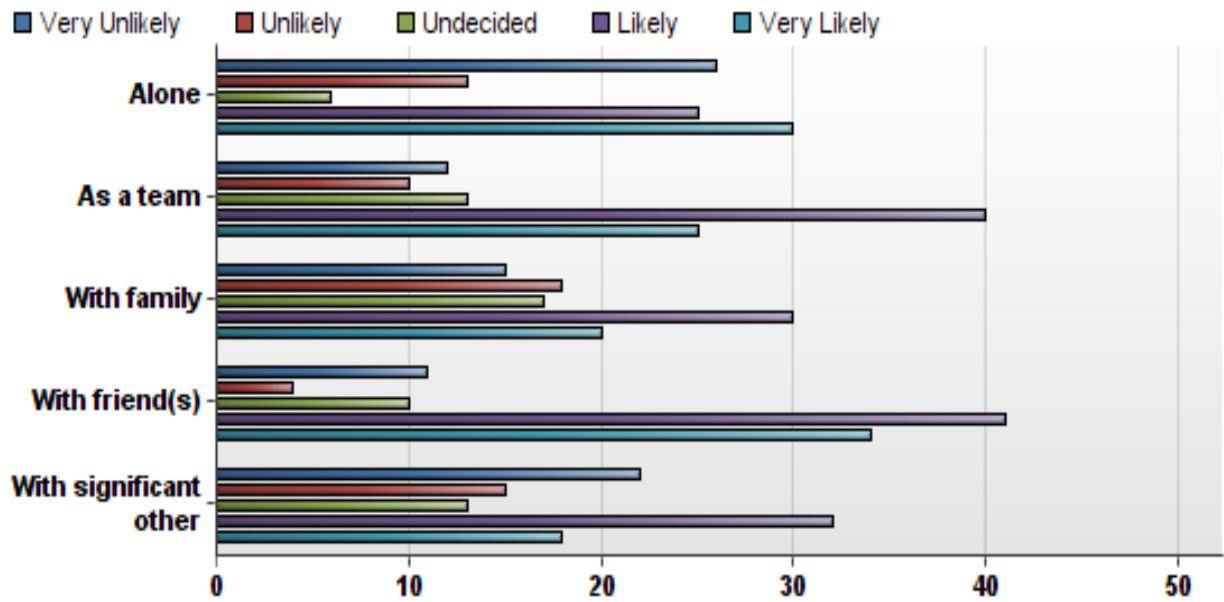
Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Question	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very Likely	Total Responses	Mean
1	Alone	1	6	5	28	60	100	4.40
2	As a team	4	12	14	38	32	100	3.82
3	With family	5	20	4	40	31	100	3.72
4	With friend(s)	0	7	5	31	57	100	4.38
5	With significant other	17	18	1	25	37	98	3.48



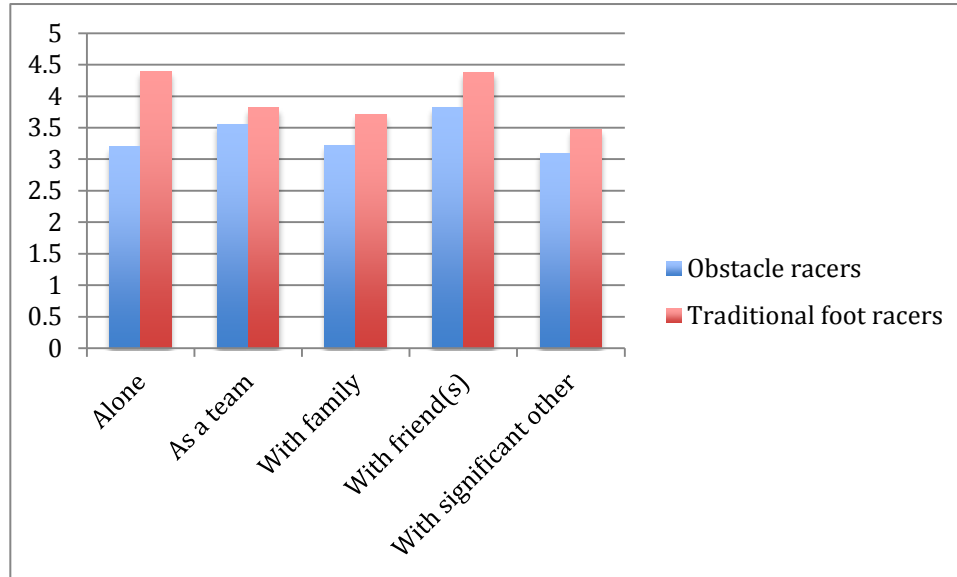
Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Question	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very Likely	Total Responses	Mean
1	Alone	26	13	6	25	30	100	3.20
2	As a team	12	10	13	40	25	100	3.56
3	With family	15	18	17	30	20	100	3.22
4	With friend(s)	11	4	10	41	34	100	3.83
5	With significant other	22	15	13	32	18	100	3.09



Survey question 11 demonstrates that traditional foot race participants are most likely to run a traditional foot race alone. If they are not running a traditional foot race alone, then they are most likely to run the race with friends. Obstacle race participants are somewhat likely to run traditional foot races if they are with friends or a team.

The chart below shows a side-by-side comparison of these results:

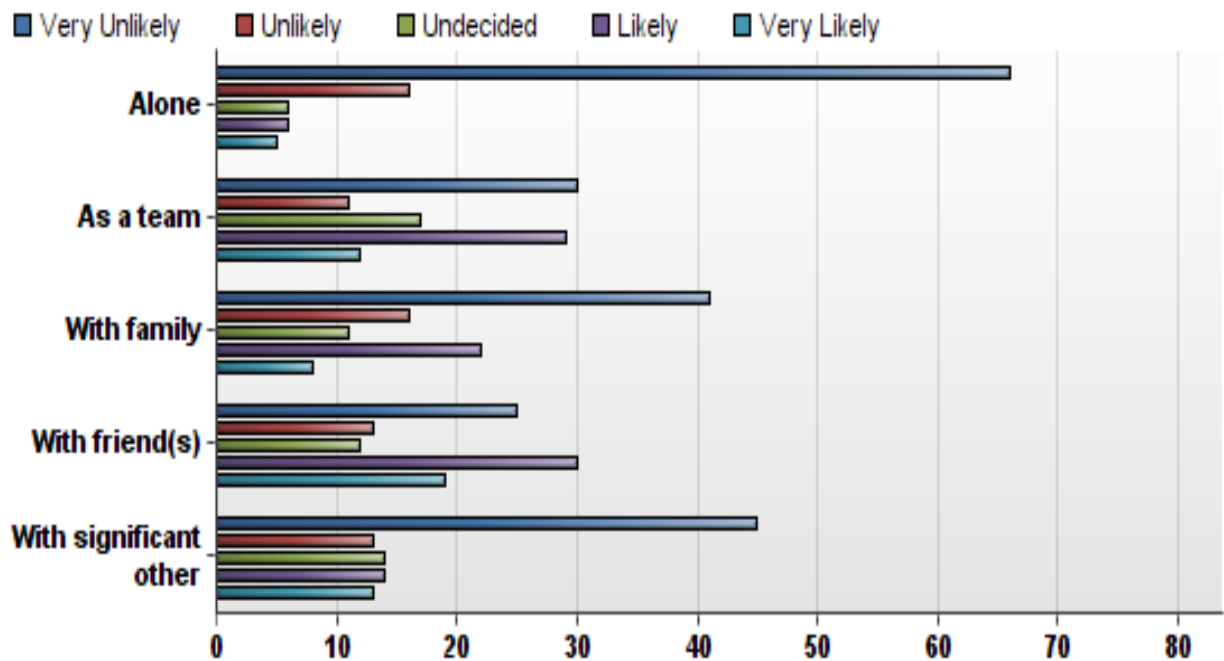


Survey question 12 analyzed the same scenario in regards to obstacle racing.

The breakdown of this question can be seen below:

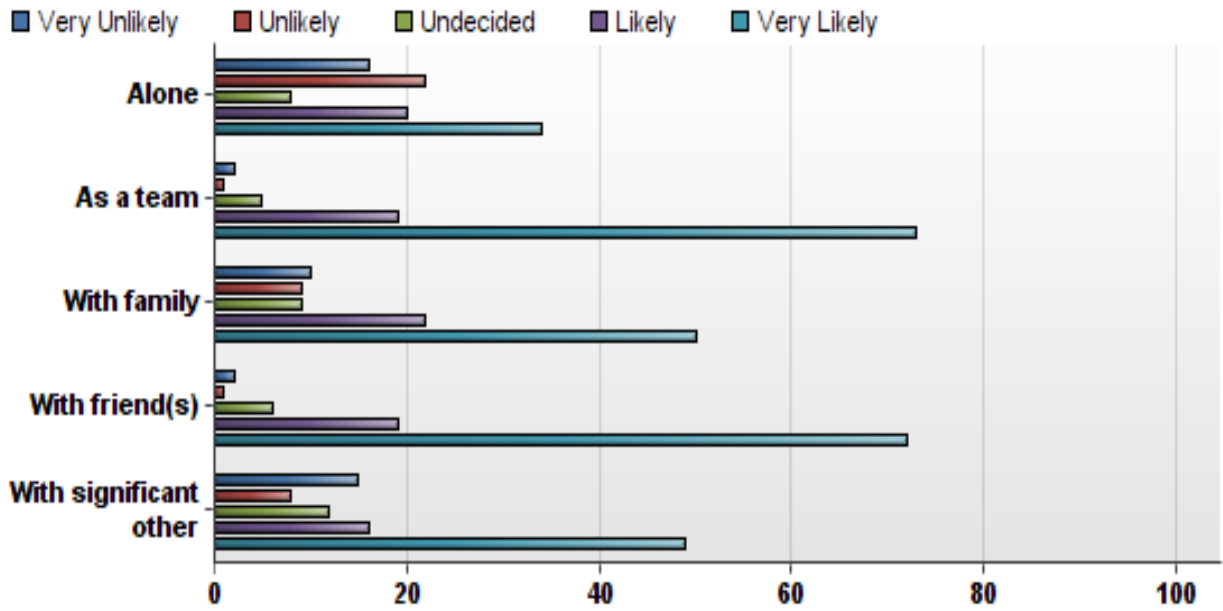
Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

#	Question	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very Likely	Total Responses	Mean
1	Alone	66	16	6	6	5	99	1.67
2	As a team	30	11	17	29	12	99	2.82
3	With family	41	16	11	22	8	98	2.39
4	With friend(s)	25	13	12	30	19	99	3.05
5	With significant other	45	13	14	14	13	99	2.36



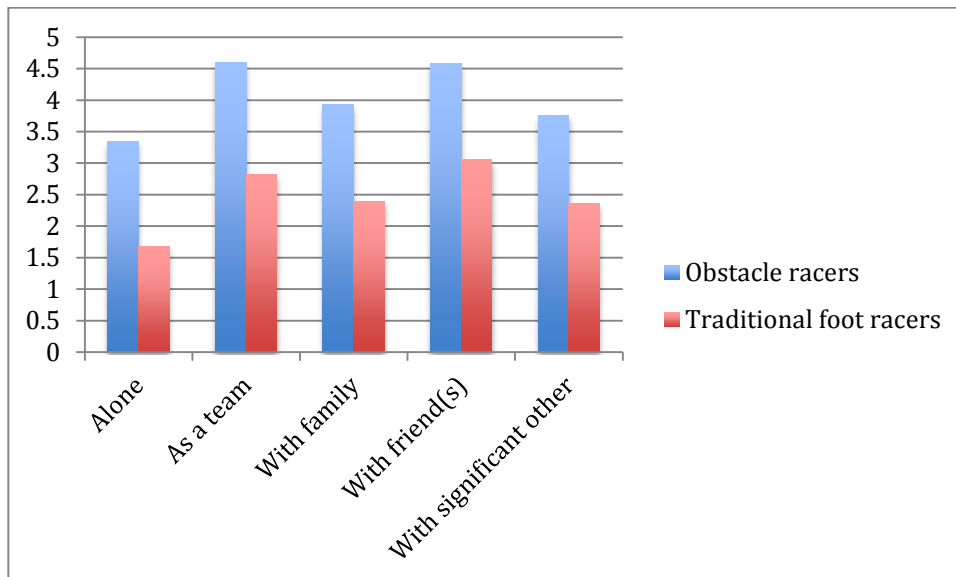
Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Question	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very Likely	Total Responses	Mean
1	Alone	16	22	8	20	34	100	3.34
2	As a team	2	1	5	19	73	100	4.60
3	With family	10	9	9	22	50	100	3.93
4	With friend(s)	2	1	6	19	72	100	4.58
5	With significant other	15	8	12	16	49	100	3.76



Question 12 shows that traditional foot race participants are very unlikely to run obstacle races whether they are alone, part of a team, with family, with friends, or with a significant other. Obstacle race participants are very likely to run obstacle races as a team or with friends.

The chart below shows a side-by-side comparison of these results:

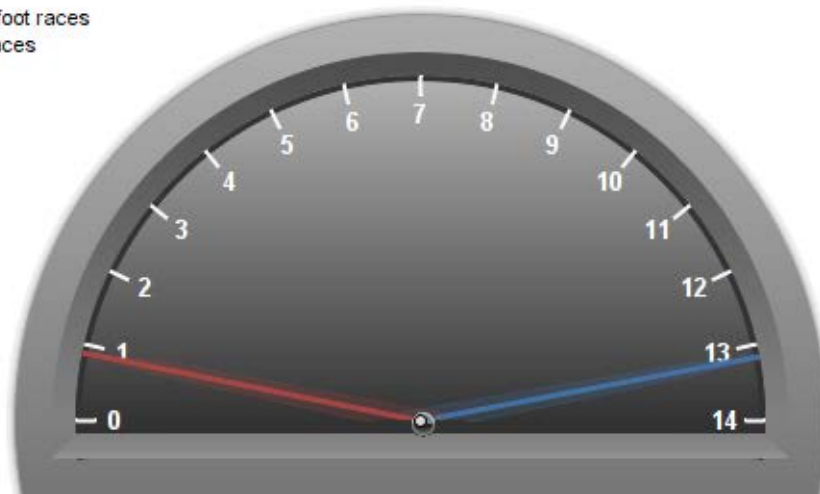


Survey question 13 measured the propensity to engage in both traditional foot races and obstacle races for both traditional foot race participants and obstacle race participants. The results of this question can be seen in the chart below.

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

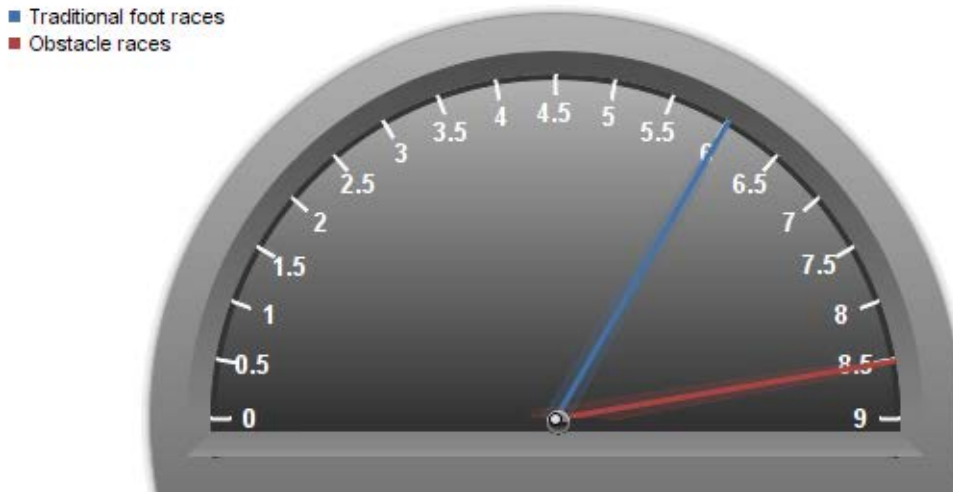
#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
1	Traditional foot races	0.00	50.00	13.17	10.73	96
2	Obstacle races	0.00	8.00	0.89	1.53	61

■ Traditional foot races
■ Obstacle races



Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
1	Traditional foot races	0.00	38.00	6.01	6.51	93
2	Obstacle races	0.00	40.00	8.52	7.54	97



Survey question 13 shows that traditional foot race participants plan on running 13 traditional road races this year, on average. On average, traditional foot race participants plan on running less than 1 obstacle race this year.

Obstacle race participants plan on running, on average, 6 traditional foot races and 9 obstacle races this year.

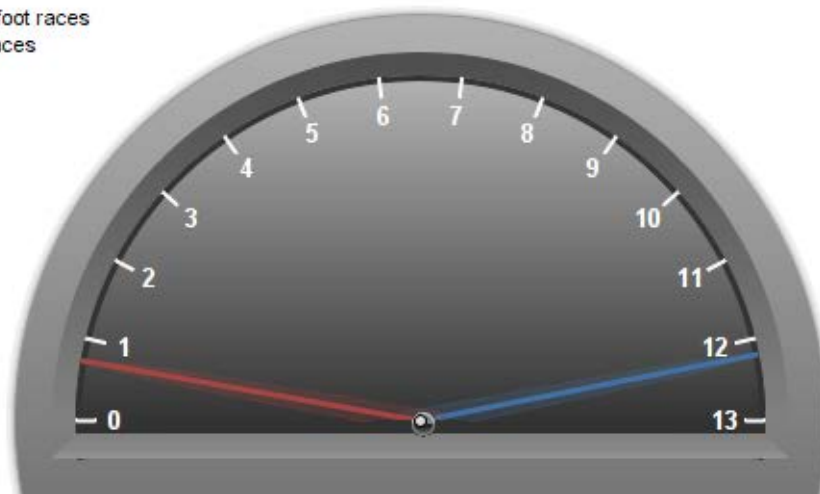
It is important to clarify that the standard deviation within survey question 13 is so high as a result of certain traditional foot racers running drastically more traditional foot races than their peers. Particular traditional foot racers selected they plan on running as many as 50 traditional road races this year, but this is not the response of an average traditional foot racer.

Survey question 14 analyzed the frequency of traditional foot race participants and obstacle race participants the previous year in regards to both traditional foot races and obstacle races:

Traditional Foot Race Participant Responses:

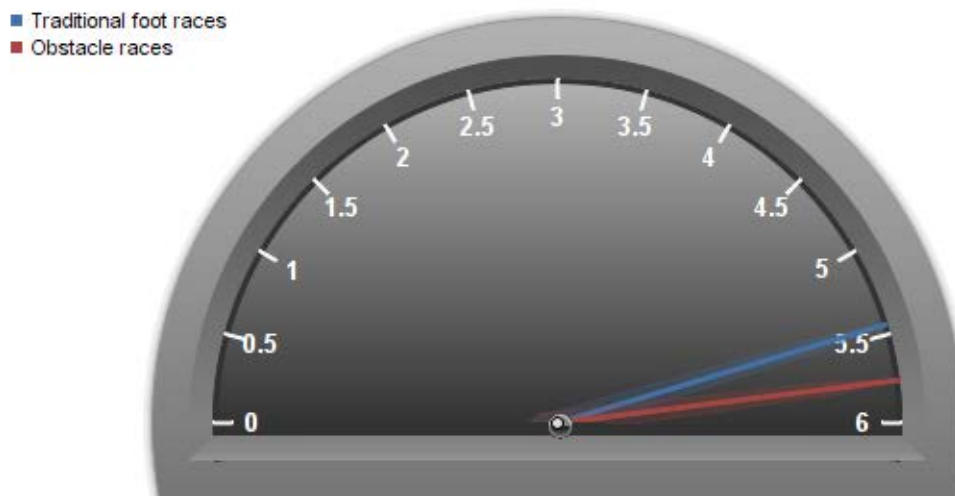
#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
1	Traditional foot races	0.00	50.00	12.20	10.26	92
2	Obstacle races	0.00	6.00	0.73	1.25	55

■ Traditional foot races
■ Obstacle races



Obstacle Race Participant Responses:

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
1	Traditional foot races	0.00	43.00	5.44	6.81	88
2	Obstacle races	0.00	38.00	5.76	6.81	92



Survey question 14 demonstrates that traditional foot race participants ran an average of 12 traditional foot races last year and 1 obstacle race.

Obstacle race participants ran an average of 5 traditional races and 5 obstacle races last year.

It appears that traditional foot race participants have remained fairly consistent with the number of races they ran both last year and this year. Obstacle race participants have decided to run more of both traditional foot races and obstacle races this year than last year.

It is important to clarify that the standard deviation within survey question 14 is so high as a result of certain traditional foot racers running drastically more traditional foot races than their peers. Particular traditional foot racers selected they ran as many as 50 traditional road races last year, but this is not the response of an average traditional foot racer.

Chapter Five: Conclusions & Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter will summarize the topic studied and research performed, as well as delve into the conclusions drawn from the findings examined in Chapter 4. A mixed-methods study was undertaken to examine how to best execute, manage and promote both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing in the 21st century. To address this question five research questions were established and answered through the data gathered from the mixed-methods study's interviews and survey collection. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn from this data and are presented below.

Conclusions

Conclusions from this study are as follows, analyzed according to the research questions studied:

1.
 - a. What is the demographic background of traditional foot race participants.

Survey questions 1 through 6 provided information on the demographic background of traditional foot race participants that was supported by expert interviews. As seen in survey question 1, it was found that a majority of traditional foot race participants are between 35 and 44 years of age. Expert interviews supported this finding and additionally explained another finding, why individuals over 55 only run traditional road races and not obstacle races. As Bernier discussed, the 35-44 age group,

“tends to continue racing as they age” and as Haber and Wamback mentioned, obstacle racing tends to be more physically demanding which would deter an older age bracket from obstacle racing.

Survey question 2 demonstrated that more females are inclined to run traditional obstacle races. It is important to note that the survey results may be skewed due to the demographic that completed the survey. However, expert interviews also reinforced the fact that experts in traditional foot racing believe that there are more women participants than men.

Survey questions 3 and 4 showed household makeup of traditional foot race participants. Most traditional foot racers come from households with 2-4 occupants and no children.

Survey question 5 demonstrated that most traditional foot race participants are educated and have either a Bachelor’s degree or a Master’s degree.

As seen in survey question 6, the typical traditional road racer makes an income anywhere from \$50,000 to \$150,000. Expert interviewees support this, noting that most participants tend to be affluent middle to upper class individuals.

b. What is the demographic background of obstacle race participants?

The demographic background of obstacle race participants was determined through survey questions 1 – 6 and supported by expert interviews. Survey question 1 showed that most obstacle racers are between the ages of 35 and 44. It is important to note that more individuals between

the ages of 18 and 34 are also willing to run obstacle races than traditional road races, and Dagnello's interview supports the 25-34 age bracket of that range.

As seen in survey question 2, more females were inclined to run obstacle races than men. It is important to consider that this may have been skewed by the demographics of survey participants. Dagnello noted that initially, he believed that more men raced obstacle course races than women, but now he has observed the number of women participants rising.

Survey questions 3 and 4 explained the composition of obstacle course racer households. Most obstacle racers are from households with 2-4 occupants and no children.

Survey question 5 demonstrated that most obstacle race participants have a Bachelor's degree. They are also more likely than traditional foot racers to not have a college degree.

As seen in survey question 6, obstacle race participants are more likely to make an income between \$50,000 and \$99,999.

2.

a. What are traditional foot race participant's feelings toward traditional foot races and obstacle races?

Survey question 7 and expert interviews showed that most traditional foot race participants view traditional road races as their favorite type of racing, and obstacle racing as their least favorite type of racing. According to Bernier, traditional road racers see traditional road races as a chance to help

out a charity, compete, and as a personal challenge. Meanwhile, expert interviews explained that traditional road racers see obstacle races as a fad that is too physically demanding or messy, with a high entrance fee and less supply. Wamback did note that there are some traditional road racers that enjoy obstacle racing.

b. What are obstacle race participant's feelings toward traditional foot races and obstacle races?

Survey question 7 and expert interviews demonstrated that most obstacle race participants enjoy traditional road racing to some extent, but do not consider it their favorite type of race. Expert interviews noted that most obstacle race participants see traditional road racing as boring. Meanwhile, obstacle racers strongly consider obstacle racing is their most favorite type of race. Expert interviews show that this is a combination of obstacle races being viewed as fun or a competitive outlet for obstacle racers.

3.

a. What are the drivers of behavior for traditional foot race participants when it comes to traditional foot races and obstacle races?

As seen in survey question 9, traditional foot race participants are driven to race traditional foot races by the fun element of traditional foot racing, as well as social media, competition, camaraderie, and stress relief. Expert interviews placed an added emphasis on the competition element, and Bernier mentioned the additional factor of charity to consider as a motivator. I believe the experts place more emphasis on competition than the

survey results because the individuals surveyed are a sample of traditional foot racers that take traditional foot racing extremely seriously. There is another segment of traditional foot racers who may not consider traditional foot racing as competitive as the individuals interviewed explained. However, these individuals were not interviewed because this mindset would have had the potential to correlate to less experience, and therefore knowledge base, on traditional foot racing.

Survey question 10 showed that traditional foot race participants are not motivated by reality television, social media, competition, camaraderie, the fun element, or stress relief to run obstacle races. Traditional foot race participants are extremely unlikely to race obstacle races at all.

b. What are the drivers of behavior for obstacle race participants when it comes to traditional foot races and obstacle races?

As seen in survey question 9, obstacle racers are motivated by the fun element, social media, competition, camaraderie, and stress relief to run traditional races.

Survey question 10 showed that obstacle racers are strongly influenced by camaraderie, the fun factor, stress relief, and competition to run obstacle races. They are also somewhat influenced by social media.

4.

a. What is the frequency of engagement traditional foot race participants have in traditional foot racing and obstacle racing?

Traditional foot race participants run, on average, 12-13 traditional road races a year according to survey questions 13 and 14. Traditional foot race participants also do not engage in obstacle racing according to survey questions 13 and 14.

b. What is the frequency of engagement obstacle race participants have in traditional foot racing and obstacle racing?

According to survey questions 13 and 14, last year obstacle racers run an average of 5-6 traditional road races a year. Obstacle racers have increased their participation in obstacle races from 5 obstacle races last year to 9 obstacle races this year.

It is important to note that, when looking at both race categories, it appears that obstacle racers are presently more active overall with an expected total of 15 races this year, compared to an expected 13 races this year for traditional road racers.

5.

a. When given the choice, with whom do traditional foot race participants race traditional foot races and obstacle races?

Traditional foot race participants are most likely to run a traditional foot race alone, according to survey question 11. If they are not running alone, then survey question 11 and expert interviews show that traditional foot racers are likely to run with friends.

Survey question 12 showed that traditional foot race participants are very unlikely to run obstacle races whether they are alone, part of a team, with family, with friends, or with their significant other.

- b. When given the choice, with whom do obstacle race participants race traditional foot races and obstacle races?

According to survey question 11, obstacle race participants race traditional foot races if they are with friends or part of a team. Survey question 12 showed that the same applies for obstacle races, and expert interviews added in co-workers are another group with whom to consider obstacle racers running obstacle races.

Overall, traditional foot racers and obstacle racers have both similarities and differences. The primary similarity between both groups is that individuals without children tend to gravitate towards both kinds of races. I believe this is a result of the time commitment both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing requires. Several hours are needed each week in order to train to be in a strong enough cardiovascular condition to compete. This training is often too rigorous for a child to accompany the adult, and therefore means that these several hours require an alternate source of childcare. Race days also require an extensive amount of free time during which the child needs a secondary source of childcare.

Differences between traditional foot racing and obstacle racing are more numerous. Traditional foot racers tend to be older, more affluent, and run for

personal development. Obstacle racers appear to be younger, less affluent, and more driven by social factors; such as camaraderie and running with a team.

Recommendations

What follows are my recommendations regarding marketing strategy in regards to promoting, executing, and managing traditional foot racing and obstacle racing in the 21st century. These recommendations are intended for future race organizers to guide them in promoting the most successful event.

Traditional Foot Racing

Product Development

I have no product development recommendations concerning the traditional foot racing industry. After reviewing the data collected, I decided that traditional foot racing has such a rich history that the market has existed long enough for the market to become saturated. This means there is already a lot of competition by great brands in place. There are a plethora of traditional foot racing products to date including, but not limited to: shoes, gear belts, apparel, accessories, music players, watches, running logs, magazines, cookbooks, novels, energy snacks, and a variety of traditional foot races in and of themselves. Due to the fact that product development has already been done, and it is done well, there are no new recommendations to present at this moment. I would instead recommend exploring the obstacle racing market in terms of product development because it is a newer, and less crowded market.

Pricing

Traditional foot racers often are well-educated individuals making a considerable income between \$50,000-\$150,000. In expert interviews it was noted that traditional foot racers are strongly against higher entrance fees. Therefore, there is potential to generate more revenue from traditional foot racers as long as it is not through raising the entrance fee. One suggestion to do so would be to increase the number of vendors at a finish line selling high quality goods. Many traditional foot races already have a few vendors, and increasing this number as well as quality would be a way to increase revenue from traditional foot racers. As an added source of income, these additional vendors could be charged a table fee for being allowed to sell their merchandise at the event. It would need to be strongly emphasized through advertising and communications, such as pre-race reminder e-mails, that these vendors are going to be at the event however, so that racers know to bring money with them to the event.

Place

According to the literature review, it was found that the western half of the United States is the most actively involved region in North America for any type of active behavior, including traditional foot racing (“America’s 15 Most Active Cities”). Therefore, this region would be the most profitable area to host a traditional foot race.

Promotion

A recommendation for promotion would be to advertise traditional foot races to obstacle racers as a way to stay in shape for obstacle races. The survey indicated that obstacle racers are actually running traditional foot races, and they do not have a negative connotation of traditional foot racing as a whole. It would be important to advertise to obstacle racers through obstacle racing mediums and not through traditional foot racing materials. Traditional foot racers do not want to feel that obstacle racers are encroaching on their territory, and obstacle racers are not prone to be looking at traditional foot racing materials, such as Runners World magazine.

Obstacle racers are open-minded and do tend to run a few traditional road races a year. Therefore, by using techniques to advertise strictly to obstacle racers, such as a flyer at an obstacle race event promoting staying in shape for their next obstacle course race would have potential to increase the revenue generated from these individuals who are already participating on a very basic level. Obstacle racers are more active overall, and therefore may be intrigued to use traditional road races as a source of added competition in what would normally be their cardio conditioning training.

Elements to use when marketing towards traditional foot racers include the fun element, social media, camaraderie, competition, and stress relief, as found in Chapter 4. Print or digital advertisements showcasing how much fun traditional foot races are, or how these events promote camaraderie, competitive, and stress relief would be ideal ways to capitalize upon this suggestion. Increasing social media

usage to form bonds with traditional foot racers would be a great way to build upon traditional foot racer's camaraderie emphasis, as well as ensure that traditional foot racers have traditional foot racing on their mind for more hours of the day.

Other promotional aspects include shifting promotions to target educated individuals and not using television as a promotional tool. Advertisements can use a higher vocabulary and a more detailed layout, as these individuals would prefer to not have their intelligence insulted. Reality television does not influence these individuals at all, and therefore would not be an effective means of promotion.

Another recommendation would be to advertise to the 55+ age demographic, as there is little competition within the athletic industry targeting this age group. However, traditional foot racing is an event that this age demographic would still be able to compete in at their age. Especially with the option of walking the race being available.

Lastly, it is beneficial to be aware that traditional foot racers are extremely proud of the competitive nature of traditional foot races and do not want this tarnished. A suggestion on this behalf would be to not move towards the modern day trend of giving all finishers a medal. Traditional foot racers would respond most positively to the standard first, second, and third place prizes as it preserves the integrity of traditional foot racing.

There is also a whole new sector of traditional foot races appearing where certain tactics, such as themes and costumes, are added to the race to draw attention and interest. Yet, there are still traditional foot racers who enjoy running without these added elements. An opportunity to promote how the race is a

standard, competitive foot race, no added elements incorporated, would be another promotional technique to reach these traditional foot racers finding it harder to sign up for traditional foot races that do not have a theme incorporated.

Obstacle Racing

Product Development

Obstacle racers were found to be more active overall in terms of the number of races, both traditional foot races and obstacle races, in which they are participating. This number has risen over the past year and there is no signal that this progress will slow in the near future. Therefore, it is recommended that race directors focus more on series races.

One driver of propensity for obstacle racers is competition. Series races provide an excellent outlook for obstacle race participant's competitive nature, as well as capitalizing on their overall higher race participation level when compared to traditional foot racers. Obstacle racers are young, single, early career professionals who are the least likely to be encumbered by family obligations. This can be seen through the findings showing that obstacle race participants often do not have children.

Therefore, obstacle racers have the flexibility to compete in multiple events in various locations, which is perfect for a series event. An example of this concept being successfully implemented would be Spartan Race's Trifecta Series ("Spartan Trifecta Tribe"). The Spartan Trifecta encourages Spartan obstacle course racers to

run all three of the classic distances the Spartan Race company offers: Sprint, Super, and Beast (“Spartan Trifecta Tribe”).

If runners are able to complete all three distances they receive an extra medal and Spartan Race posts their name on a list of finishers on Spartanrace.com (“Spartan Trifecta Tribe”). There is still unlimited opportunity for other race director’s to capitalize on this trend and succeed as a result of the demographic running obstacle races.

A second recommendation is to begin an obstacle race magazine. Traditional foot racing has several successful magazines in existence, including: *Runner’s World*, *Men’s Running*, *Women’s Running*, *Northwest Runner*, and *Running Times* to name a few (“Running Magazines”). Obstacle racing has no magazines in print to date, and rather has a sparse number of online equivalents such as DirtinyourSkirt.com (“Dirt in your Skirt”) and *Obstacle Racer Magazine* (“Obstacle Racer Magazine”).

Traditional foot racing’s market is large enough to support multiple print magazines, and considering the obstacle racing market is growing, it appears there is an opportunity within this market to create an obstacle racing magazine. I believe that such a magazine would help build a sense of community among obstacle racers, thus capitalizing on the camaraderie about which that the survey showed obstacle racers are passionate.

Third, it is recommended to provide more women-oriented products, such as female apparel and accessories, due to the gender split. It appears that more females are competing in obstacle races than men currently, which makes this a viable opportunity for race directors to capitalize upon. Offering a wider variety of female

apparel and accessories would satisfy the current market attending obstacle races. It is important to realize that these women may be insulted if these products are too feminine. As discussed in the literature review, Hill mentioned that women competing in these races have the mentality that they are tough and strong. Therefore providing a selection of overly feminine clothing and supporting products may not sell as well as apparel that emphasizes how the women are strong and capable.

Pricing

Entrance fees for obstacle races are currently considered on the higher end of the price spectrum. It is recommended to continue charging higher prices and not to lower the price level, as the obstacle racing market is a market that has a larger amount of discretionary income than other markets. The average obstacle course racer is a young, single, professional with limited obligations. Therefore, as seen in survey question 6, these individuals are making an income around \$50,000 and \$99,999 and do not have to support a family with that income yet. As a result, the obstacle racing market has more disposable income. In this case, obstacle racers are able to use that disposable income to compete in obstacle races. Lowering entrance fees would minimize the profit margin a race director would make. In addition, lower entrance fees could have the effect of changing the demographic of the average obstacle racer today. Entrance fees are considered high, but appear to be sustainable.

Place

As discussed in Time Magazine's article, "America's 15 Most Active Cities," it was found that the western half of the United States near the Rocky Mountains is the most actively involved region in North America for any type of fitness activity ("America's 15 Most Active Cities"). Therefore, this region would be the most profitable area to host an obstacle race.

A suggestion to capitalize upon the competitive persona of obstacle racers, as well as utilize the series recommendation made earlier, would be to incorporate a travel challenge into the obstacle racing industry. Considering, on average, the obstacle race market is not tied down by family obligations, they are free to travel. A 5 regions challenge, or even a more drastic 50 states challenge, would be the perfect way to obtain revenue from these factors.

An example of a travel challenge that young, active singles are currently participating in includes adventure cycling tours ("Guided Tours"). Adventure cycling tours are when individuals pay to spend the day cycling through new, scenic territory, and then either camp or stay the night in a hotel before cycling to a new destination the next day ("Guided Tours"). These tours are often ranked according to ability levels so that beginners to experts alike can all enjoy a tour at their ability level ("Guided Tours"). Adventure cycling tours have been both successful and popular, so it would not be a unreasonable assumption to predict that a traveling obstacle race challenge could also be well received by obstacle racers and succeed.

Promotion

When promoting obstacle course racing events, the two best marketing strategies appear to be emphasizing the fun factor and the camaraderie. The fun factor was the most prevalent response in the survey questions, and camaraderie was the most common response in the expert interviews. Other strategies would include placing emphasis on stress relief and the competitive aspects of the event. These elements could easily be portrayed through print and digital advertising. It is important to note that when promoting to obstacle racers, these individuals are often not college educated and they are not swayed by television advertisements.

Another marketing strategy would be to target families. Although the most common demographic racing obstacle races are single individuals, the second most common group of obstacle course racers are from large households of four or even five people. This means those households have two or three children. Placing more emphasis on, or creating more children's challenges, along the lines of Extreme Field Day For Kids ("Obstacle Race for Kids") or Spartan Kids ("Obstacle Course Racing Just for Kids"), would therefore be something in which these families may be interested. Currently, the central demographic for obstacle races appears to be young, single professionals. It appears that there is a potential market of older, family-orientated runners that is not currently being attended to through obstacle races. Considering how the survey showed the social nature of obstacle racing, steering the focus away from solely professionals to incorporate family-centric obstacle racing elements could potentially generate additional revenue for obstacle races.

Incorporating a way for parents to interact with their children as the children compete in their event would be a great way to capitalize on this finding as well. Services such as certified childcare while parents race would be another provision to consider offering participants. Promotion can be catered to how these elements make obstacle course racing a great and fun bonding experience that will bring a family closer together.

Promotion can also build upon the previous recommendation of series events. The team that wins a series can be highlighted in promotional materials to convey that it is possible to complete a series event, as well as to serve as a source of motivation and a spark for the obstacle course racer's competitive nature.

Lastly, although there is an abundance of obstacle course related social media, such as Tough Mudder's Facebook Page or ("Tough Mudder") Spartan Race's Instagram Page ("Spartan Race"), when obstacle racers were surveyed they claimed social media only influenced them somewhat. This was not as strong an influence as the strongly instrumental fun factor element, for example. To increase social media's effectiveness, incorporating more ways to get prospects more actively involved on social media would be beneficial. Including one-day only promotional codes on social media sources, increasing the number of contests (such as best race photo contest), and quickly responding to participant's comments would all be ways to increase social media's influence.

Both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing have varied and colorful cultures full of opportunity for race directors to capitalize upon for their events.

Evidence supports marketing to these diverse groups separately, but the overriding theme for both events is that both traditional foot racing and obstacle racing are here to stay. I look forward to seeing you out on the course!

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Appendix A

Expert interview Guides

Traditional Foot Racer Expert interview Guide:

Expert interview Guide

Name:

1. Please summarize your experience with traditional foot racing.
2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of traditional foot race participants?
3. How do you believe traditional foot racers view traditional foot races?
4. How do you believe traditional foot racers view obstacle racing?
5. What do you believe motivates traditional foot racers to run traditional foot races?
6. How often do you believe traditional foot racers will race in a given year?
7. With whom do you believe traditional foot racers will race traditional foot racers with, and why?

Obstacle Racer Expert interview Guide:

Expert interview Guide

Name:

1. Please summarize your experience with obstacle racing.
2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of obstacle race participants?
3. How do you believe obstacle racers view obstacle racing?
4. How do you believe obstacle racers view traditional foot racing?
5. What do you believe motivates obstacle racers to run obstacle races?
6. How often do you believe obstacle racers will race in a given year?
7. With whom do you believe obstacle racers will race obstacle races with, and why?

Appendix B

Expert interview Responses

Traditional Foot Racers

Name: Alan Bernier



1. Please summarize your experience with traditional foot racing.

I have been running and racing for 22 years. I started in high school and college, running traditional track and cross-country races through school sports teams. It was a great way to stay fit and also a social outlet to spend time with friends. After college, I continued to participate in these types of races, and I added up to 20 road races per year as well. I enjoy it for the competitive aspect, as well as for the motivational aspect - races get me to train consistently so I can perform my best in competitions. It is fun to win cash and other prizes for doing what I enjoy. Beyond my personal participation in traditional

foot races, I have also helped to coach athletes as well as coordinate, oversee, and manage traditional foot racing events of all sizes.

2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of traditional foot race participants?

In my experience, there is usually a variation in the demographic backgrounds of traditional foot race participants. The participants can be classified by age, gender, social class, and familial status. The most common age for traditional foot race participants is in the 30-50 year old range. This group of people tends to continue racing as they age, but not a lot of new participants join the sport after their late 40s. By and large, most events have a majority of female participants - anywhere from 50-70 percent, depending on the distance. Full-length marathons are the only event where males still outnumber females. Most participants come from middle to upper-middle class households, where the combination of wanting a physically fit lifestyle, disposable income, and free time makes traditional foot racing events appealing to this demographic category. Finally, events are popular with single people, married people, and families with children. Some shorter charity events are more family-friendly, but many longer races such as 10Ks, half marathons and marathons are more appealing to individuals that don't have children to take care of on race day. (Note: Real demographic data can be found online, at websites such as <http://www.runningusa.org/state-of-sport-2013-part-III?returnTo=annual-reports> The opinions that I provided were not influenced at all by these statistics. I didn't edit my response or even look up the stats until after I typed this answer out.)

3. How do you believe traditional foot racers view traditional foot races?

I believe traditional foot racers see their sport in three ways. First, many races are billed as fund-raisers for charities. This attracts the majority of participants to the hundreds of events nation-wide that are held every weekend. Second, there is a small proportion of participants that are looking for competition. Especially in shorter races, 5-10% of people are trying to get the most out of their abilities and are looking to run as fast as they can. Third, some people approach races as a personal challenge to themselves. Whether they are trying to achieve a fitness goal or overcome a mental obstacle, some people enter events simply to see if they can finish.

4. How do you believe traditional foot racers view obstacle racing?

I feel that traditional foot racers are noticing that obstacle racing is becoming an increasingly popular alternative to traditional foot races. Some people firmly believe that this is a fad that will pass. Others see it as being too physically demanding or messy to be interested. Finally, some see the higher entry fees and lower supply of races and choose to stick with more traditional events.

5. What do you believe motivates traditional foot racers to run traditional foot races?

See the answer to question three above. Charity, competition, and personal challenges motivate traditional foot racers to participate.

6. How often do you believe traditional foot racers will race in a given year?

I believe that the average participant will compete in three to five events per year. Many competitive runners will do twice this amount or more, and some people will only do their local "hometown" event once a year for tradition.

7. With whom do you believe traditional foot racers will race traditional foot racers with, and why?

Traditional foot racers tend to participate in events on their own. Training for running events, especially for longer-distance events, is typically done alone or in small groups. Some people participate in order to meet new friends or local people with similarly fit lifestyles. Some people go to a race in a new area as a reason to travel and see a new (or old favorite) route. Some people will bring a friend, training partner, spouse, or their family/children, but this is not as common as one might think. Obviously, community charity events will attract a number of participants from the same social groups. Family fun runs, especially on holidays like Thanksgiving, the 4th of July, or Christmas will more effectively draw people in groups.

Name: Nich Haber



1. Please summarize your experience with traditional foot racing.

I started running in a class at my gym and got hooked after watching the 2001 New York City Marathon. I signed up the following year and was accepted in the lottery. This started my training. Training for a marathon changed how I organized my life. My social scene became who I ran with. I've enjoyed it ever since.

2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of traditional foot race participants?

In New York City, everyone ran. Outside of the city, it seems whiter, a little bit older, more female and definitely more affluent

3. How do you believe traditional foot racers view traditional foot races?

It's all about personal bests. It's a way to test yourself and measure your ability against other races and know where you stand with your fitness.

4. How do you believe traditional foot racers view obstacle racing?

Like going to the circus. Probably fun, but it's not a real sport. 5k, 10k & Marathon are traditional Olympic events.

5. What do you believe motivates traditional foot racers to run traditional foot races?

Competition – against yourself and against other people. Folks you know and you don't know.

6. How often do you believe traditional foot racers will race in a given year?

6-12 times

7. With whom do you believe traditional foot racers will race traditional foot racers with, and why?

Friends – folks on a club, or from their gym or folks they've just run with for a long time and then versus everyone else.

Name: Kim Breivogel Wamback



1. Please summarize your experience with traditional foot racing.

I have been a traditional foot racer for 13 years now. I have competed in anywhere from 5k's to marathons. I have not done an ultra marathon yet and not sure I have any desire to do so. I am not fast I am a mid-pack foot racer.

2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of traditional foot race participants?

I think the demographic background ranges. I feel that the more expensive races get a higher client for their demographic. For instance, it only takes a pair of sneakers to be a runner so the people you see on the streets are of various backgrounds and ethnicity. I feel the more prestigious races you tend to see more

upper middle class runners. But I think this is hard to gage. Some races are so expensive from a financial demographic it may deter people from racing.

3. How do you believe traditional foot racers view traditional foot races?

I think this is a personal preference. From experience the more a traditional foot race has to offer in terms of amenities the better turn out. It is more attractive to the runner more bang for their buck.

4. How do you believe traditional foot racers view obstacle racing?

I have many friends who are traditional foot racers and love obstacle racing. They feel it is a good change of pace and allows for different muscle usage. Me personally I would rather be a traditional foot racer. I am not a huge fan of obstacle racing. I lack upper body strength. But they are fun.

5. What do you believe motivates traditional foot racers to run traditional foot races?

The sense of accomplishment. I think setting a goal and being able to achieve that goal is a huge motivating factor. I also believe the camaraderie and friendships play a huge factor in motivation. Having friends to run with and build relationships.

6. How often do you believe traditional foot racers will race in a given year?

I think anywhere from 10-20 races a year

7. With whom do you believe traditional foot racers will race traditional foot races with, and why?

As stated above friends that sense of doing something together. For the more competitive racers what I call "elite" will run against their competitors to continuously get better. Competitors are their motivation.

Obstacle Racers

Name: Kevin Roy



1. Please summarize your experience with obstacle racing.

I started with my first race in the spring of 2011; it was the VT Tough Mudder. I was immediately hooked, I then became involved with the Spartan Races, which for me were more my style. Competing in the 3 mile, the 8 mile, the 12 mile and my favorite one the 30 mile Spartan races is not only what I do for fun but I have made a life of training people for these races!!

2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of obstacle race participants?

Everyone from all walks of life seems to be coming out to OCR's. I find that the average person is doing OCR's for the fun of it and they use their next OCR as motivation to stay on track with their fitness and training. A small group of elite athletes are trying to push the sport to higher levels and compete for money and professional ranking.

3. How do you believe obstacle racers view obstacle racing?

First and foremost FUN! To many people the view is different most are in it for the fun and the personal challenges. Some view OCR as a serious competition with professional ranking.

4. How do you believe obstacle racers view traditional foot racing?

Boring, and not nearly as fun as OCR's.

5. What do you believe motivates obstacle racers to run obstacle races?

The unknown challenges that await are a great motivator for people to stay on track with their fitness and also keep them coming back for more OCR's.

6. How often do you believe obstacle racers will race in a given year?

The average person will probably do 4-6 races a year. Although there are many diehards that will race on most weekends throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

7. With whom do you believe obstacle racers will race obstacle races with, and why?

Most are racing with friends, family, and co-workers. Some are racing with teams for competition and some are racing with teams for charity fundraising like MS, diabetes,

and cancer... The personal reasons may differ, but the main reason people seek out race partners and teams is for support and friendship.

Name: Danny Hall



1. Please summarize your experience with obstacle racing.

I am on the elite obstacle racing team at the gym Unleashed. I would say I'm fairly new to obstacle course racing compared to some other elite obstacle course racing athletes though.

2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of obstacle race participants?

All backgrounds compete.

3. How do you believe obstacle racers view obstacle racing?

For the competitive ones, it's a way of life - you train extremely hard for a small season. You have to make sacrifices to be competitive.

4. How do you believe obstacle racers view traditional foot racing?

With foot racing it's all legs and endurance. Obstacle course racing takes all-

around strength, endurance and mental toughness. You do not have secured footing like road racers.

5. What do you believe motivates obstacle racers to run obstacle races?

The challenge and the unknown.

6. How often do you believe obstacle racers will race in a given year?

For your “just for fun” runners, maybe 2-3 races. For your elite runners, anywhere from 10-30 races.

7. With whom do you believe obstacle racers will race obstacle races with, and why?

Elite racers will race on their own or with the team. Other racers do it with friends or family.

Name: Anthony Dagnello



1. Please summarize your experience with obstacle racing.

I have been participating in obstacle racing for the past 3 years. My two chosen organizations have been Tough Mudder and Spartan race.

Tough Mudder = 3

Spartan Race = 7 (4 sprint, 1 super, 2 beast)

2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of obstacle race participants?

Mid 20's to Late 30's educated white males & females. More men than woman. However, the number of women, African American and Hispanic's participating in obstacle racing has increased every year.

3. How do you believe obstacle racers view obstacle racing?

Challenging, fun way to be in nature, train and participate in a physical activity with friends.

4. How do you believe obstacle racers view traditional foot racing?

Boring.

5. What do you believe motivates obstacle racers to run obstacle races?

Something new, challenging, fun way to be in nature, train and participate in a physical activity with friends. The combination of activity required, the primal aspect of crawling, climbing, getting dirty. The camaraderie among participants on the course.

6. How often do you believe obstacle racers will race in a given year?

Depends on the organization the individual is drawn to as the ethos towards the event can be very different.

If a racer is drawn to organizations such as Tough Mudder, Super Hero Scramble, Warrior Dash, 1-2 per year

If a racer is drawn to organizations such as Spartan race, Civilian Military Combine, 3-5 per year

7. With whom do you believe obstacle racers will race obstacle races with, and why?

Friends. The camaraderie of participating in something challenging and overcoming those challenges together.

Name: Janine Calise



1. Please summarize your experience with obstacle racing.

Where I have only competed in a handful of Obstacle Races, I coach many in training for them. It is very rewarding to witness the huge improvements people make in their abilities. It is extremely rewarding and it's loved because there is always an element of surprise as to what's coming up for the next obstacle.

2. What have you observed to be the demographic background of obstacle race participants?

Most of the participants I've trained are typically from late 20's to late 50's.

3. How do you believe obstacle racers view obstacle racing?

There are the "regular" people like myself, that love that feeling of

accomplishment. Breaking out of their ordinary comfort zone and doing something exciting and self-rewarding. Then there are the hard-core athletes that want to have and achieve the ultimate mental toughness to keep going no matter what.

4. How do you believe obstacle racers view traditional foot racing?

I think many have a high regard for it and many have been runners, some for their whole life. But compared to obstacle racing, it would simply bore them once they have become addicted to the obstacle world.

5. What do you believe motivates obstacle racers to run obstacle races?

The challenge to complete it. It's fun, no course is ever really the same, and there's a huge feeling of accomplishment that is amazing.

6. How often do you believe obstacle racers will race in a given year?

Once they have done a couple they are hooked, I would guess approximately 8 in a year on average.

7. With whom do you believe obstacle racers will race obstacle races with, and why?

Friends, family, work associates and other athletes. It's great for team building and bonding.