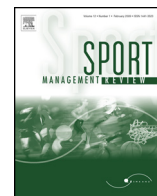




ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Sport Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/smr

Exploring the impact of social networking sites on running involvement, running behavior, and social life satisfaction

Joseph E. Mahan III^a, Won Jae Seo^{b,*}, Jeremy S. Jordan^a, Daniel Funk^a^a Temple University, United States^b Eulji University, South Korea

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 6 September 2013

Received in revised form 22 February 2014

Accepted 22 February 2014

Available online 1 April 2014

Keywords:

Social networking sites

Running

Involvement

ABSTRACT

Social networking sites (SNS) are often shown to be influential in developing activity engagement as well as psychological well-being, but empirical evidence is scarce as to their effectiveness in a sport context. The current study examined the potential for SNS use to mediate the effects of physical activity involvement on (1) the level of regular exercise behavior, and (2) social life satisfaction. Results of an online survey ($n = 3476$) indicated that the influence of running involvement on both running behavior and social life satisfaction are partially mediated by use of running-related SNS. This general finding is reflective of the effects of social media in a specific sport context. Thus, this study demonstrates the theoretical potential for running-related social media to serve as an engagement platform that can augment the influence of involvement on the physical and mental benefits of participation in running.

© 2014 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Due to ever-evolving advances in communication technology, social media have become exceedingly popular (Acar, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Of social media platforms, social networking sites (SNS) appear to be among the most widely adopted. The result has been a dramatic increase in the number of users, many of whom have integrated SNS into their daily practices (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Indeed, 64% (174 million) of Internet users in North America reported using Facebook during the last quarter of 2011; Twitter (39%; 105 million) and LinkedIn (15%; 40 million) also demonstrated high levels of popularity (Internet World Stats, 2012).

Some scholars have put forth that new media forms have the capacity to reshape the lives of individuals in such areas as work, social relationships, and leisure (e.g., Leung & Lee, 2005). Extant research found that social media—especially SNS—have the potential to foster user engagement in certain activities such as politics, music, shopping, and entertainment (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Other studies have indicated that the use of SNS has a positive effect on psychological well-being, including overall life satisfaction as well as satisfaction in specific domains (e.g., social life) (Leung & Lee, 2005; Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). While the SNS phenomenon has drawn attention from academics and practitioners alike, there is still much unknown as to its potential role in certain aspects of life such as physical activity.

* Corresponding author at: Eulji University, 553 Sanseong-Daero, Sujeong-Gu, Seongnam-Si, Gyeonggi-Do 461-713, South Korea. Tel.: +82 31 740 7106 7. E-mail address: wonjaeseo@eulji.ac.kr (W.J. Seo).

Physical activity has been shown to be influential in increasing physical and mental health benefits (Funk, Jordan, Ridinger, & Kaplanidou, 2011; Penedo & Dahn, 2005). In light of the global concern about the health implications of physical inactivity (Penedo & Dahn, 2005), intervention methods of improving frequency and intensity of exercise behavior have garnered increased attention by scholars (Axelsen & Robinson, 2009; Funk et al., 2011; Penedo & Dahn, 2005). Moreover, there is empirical evidence indicating that physical activity involvement is a key construct that predicts both regular exercise behavior (Funk et al., 2011) and well-being (Penedo & Dahn, 2005).

Life satisfaction is also considered as an important index reflective of quality of life and has been explored extensively by scholars (e.g., Leung & Lee, 2005; Leung, Cheung, & Liu, 2011; Lloyd & Auld, 2002). In particular, research has shown leisure behavior—including physical activity—to directly benefit perceived quality of life (Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Penedo & Dahn, 2005). There is also evidence in the literature pointing to the value social connections have in increasing well-being (Leung et al., 2011). Further, the role of new media vis-à-vis both leisure behavior and quality of life has begun to be examined (e.g., Leung & Lee, 2005).

Scholarly research appears to suggest that SNS can play dual roles; that of a behavioral outcome resulting from involvement as well as a catalyst responsible for driving other activity-related behavior. For example, studies in marketing communications have shown that activity involvement induces SNS use by facilitating such communication behaviors as seeking information and sharing experiences (Dwyer, 2007; Hung & Li, 2007; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Others have indicated that SNS use can lead to increased engagement in an activity as well as improved life satisfaction (e.g., Valenzuela et al., 2009). These demonstrated relationships can support the notion of a mediating role of SNS. That is, exploration of SNS use in this context could aid in understanding how physical activity involvement influences salient health and mental benefits (i.e., running engagement and social life satisfaction).

Scholars have recognized the potential utility of employing mediators in the study of media effects (Holbert & Stephenson, 2003). Despite the pervasiveness of social media in practice (Mahan, 2011), the sport management literature does not include systematic investigation of the mediating capabilities of SNS. Extending the premise put forth by Holbert and Stephenson (2003) into a sport management context, the authors of the current study propose that certain SNS could serve to clarify the potential mediating mechanism that underlies the following relationships: (1) between physical activity involvement and the level of regular exercise behavior and (2) between physical activity involvement and social life satisfaction. Understanding the mediating role of social media could provide practical implications regarding how to use social media as tools to promote physical and psychological well-being as well as how to develop marketing communication strategies for maximizing these benefits.

The current investigation focuses on the context of running for the purposes of exploring the potential mediating role of SNS use. To this end, a partial mediation model (see Fig. 1) is put forward; that is, we propose that an individual's use of SNS related to running will serve to augment the nature of the relationships between running involvement, running behavior (i.e., miles run per week), and social life satisfaction. In line with Baron and Kenny's (1986) three-step approach, direct effects of running involvement on running behavior (H1) and social life satisfaction (H2) will be examined first, followed by a test of running involvement's direct effect on SNS use (H3). The third step will test direct effects of SNS use on running behavior (H4) as well as social life satisfaction (H6). The final two hypotheses comprise the propositions that SNS use will partially mediate the effect of running involvement on running behavior (H5) and social life satisfaction (H7).

Given that SNS represent online communities which can be characterized as having two distinct functions (i.e., informational and social; Dwyer, 2007), the research hypotheses draw upon theories in media (information) richness (Daft & Lengel, 1986) and social capital, each of which has been utilized by scholars to explain certain outcomes (i.e., decision-making and social life satisfaction) related to SNS use across a variety of contexts (e.g., Pfeil, Arjan, & Zaphiris, 2009; Ramirez & Burgoon, 2004; Steinfeld, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008).

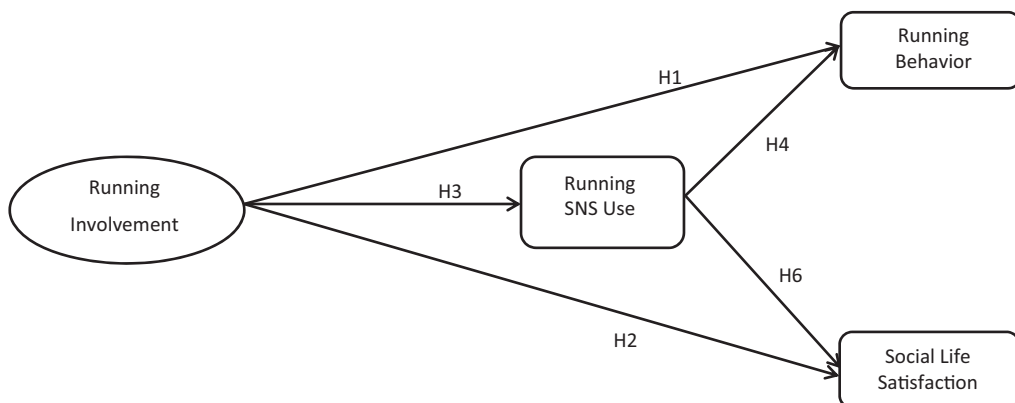


Fig. 1. Hypothetical model.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/140859>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/140859>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)