

CONSTRAINTS AND FACILITATORS OF SPORT PARTICIPATION IN QATAR: PERCEPTIONS OF OOREDOO MARATHON PARTICIPANTS

KEVIN FILO,*  [MILLICENT KENNELLY](#),†  [AND RANA SOBH‡](#) 

*Griffith Business School, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

†Griffith University, Department of Tourism, Sport and Hotel Management,
Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

‡Qatar University, Department of Marketing, Doha, Qatar

The Qatari government has increasingly supported education of Qatar residents on the importance of physical activity, along with developing and improving sport infrastructure, and bidding for and hosting a collection of sport events. Despite these efforts, a number of challenges inherent to Qatar may hinder participation among the country's residents. The current research examines constraints to physical activity described by participants in a sport event in Qatar, along with factors that facilitated their participation. Semistructured interviews were conducted with Qatari residents who had participated in the Ooredoo Marathon ($N = 22$), the largest participatory sport event in Doha, Qatar that targets individuals of all running abilities. Four constraints (social life, reluctance to walk, lack of time and competing priorities, and expectations for women) along with three facilitators (technology, peer and familial support, and government support) emerged from these interviews. The findings provide implications for sport and event managers to promote the social aspects of sport event participation in Qatar, as well as heightening awareness of sport focused technology.

Key words: Participatory sport events; Sport event participation; Physical activity; Constraints; Facilitators

Introduction

Participation in physical activity and sport events provides an array of social, psychological, and physiological benefits to individuals. Overwhelming evidence supporting the benefits of physical activity (e.g., Warburton & Bredin, 2017)

has led to heavy investment by governments in developing sport, leisure, and event infrastructure, and attracting major sport events (Frawley & Cush, 2011). Qatar is spending an increasing amount of money on hosting major sport events, with high profile examples including the 2019 International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World

Championships and the 2022 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Men's World Cup. Qatar's involvement in such international sport events aims to garner recognition on the global stage (Rolim Silva, 2014). Concomitantly, Qatar's recent investment of US\$2.8 billion in sports infrastructure also aims to support grassroots participation in sport and physical activity (National Tourism Council, 2020). Along these lines, Qatar's National Vision 2030 (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008) encompasses "fostering participation in a wide variety of cultural and sport activities" among Qatari youth (p. 16). Qatar's National Development Strategy (NDS) (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2011) prioritizes enhancing the physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being of individuals through sports and culture. The NDS specifically includes educating the public on the importance of active living, increasing the number of opportunities available to participate in sport, and ensuring that adequate facilities are accessible for sport participation (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2011).

Despite these strategic intentions, Qatar has encountered several challenges to its aspiration to deliver both elite and community-level sport opportunities. For example, after it was announced Qatar would host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, accusations emerged concerning the means via which Qatar won the bid (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2018). Brannagan and Rookwood (2016) raised further questions about Qatar's suitability for hosting elite sport events due to factors such as corruption, human rights concerns, and safety fears. Such accusations and scrutiny have translated into negative media coverage for Qatar across multiple international outlets and have potentially damaged the country's international image (Samuel-Azran et al., 2016). Also, participation in sport events and physical activity in Qatar can be limited by requirements for dress, gender segregation, and attitudes towards physical activity (Harkness et al., 2018). Furthermore, the high temperatures experienced in Qatar have been found to decrease physical activity (Saeed Al-Mohannadi & Ghaith Al-Kuwari, 2015). Nonetheless, Qatari sport officials have communicated that the investment in sport events and sport infrastructure is a mechanism to create a healthier country and confront national health issues (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015).

The current research represents exploratory work investigating the factors that may impact participation in physical activity and participating in sport events in Qatar. Specifically, this research explores perspectives of sport event participants on factors that constrain physical activity in Qatar, along with factors that may facilitate participation. Semistructured interviews ($N = 22$) were conducted with Qataris who had participated in the Ooredoo Marathon in Doha, Qatar. The Ooredoo Marathon is the largest participatory sport event in Qatar, and targets individuals of all running abilities with a diverse offering of courses. Interviewees discussed their own participation in physical activity and sport events, along with factors that Qataris need to overcome to get involved and continue participating in physical activity and sport events. One nuance of this study, which draws on the perspectives of participants in an endurance event, is that although such events are "one-off," time-bound, and location-specific occurrences (Getz, 2008), participants may spend many weeks preparing and building their fitness through regular physical activity. In this sense, their experiences of preparatory physical activity in their day-to-day context can connect inseparably with and influence their experiences of participation in an event (Lamont et al., 2012), such as the Ooredoo Marathon.

Two leisure concepts underpin the theoretical framing for this examination: constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987) and facilitators (Raymore, 2002). Patterson and Getz (2013) emphasized the "considerable potential for leisure studies . . . to contribute to the advancement of event studies" (p. 227), including through applying constraints theory to event research. Constraints represent intrapersonal, interpersonal, or structural barriers that influence or inhibit an individual's preferences for, or participation in, a leisure activity (Crawford et al., 1991), such as running and physically training to participate in a sport event such as the Ooredoo Marathon. However, the absence of constraints does not necessarily guarantee participation (Raymore, 2002). This observation led Raymore (2002) to introduce the concept of facilitators, or factors that concomitantly "enable or promote the formation of leisure preferences" and "encourage or enhance participation" (p. 39). The following research questions are advanced:

Research Question 1: What constraints to participating in physical activity do Qataris experience?

Research Question 2: What facilitators of participation in physical activity do Qataris experience?

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Despite the known benefits of physical activity (Warburton & Bredin, 2017), many people are not active enough. Consequently, researchers have sought to identify what barriers, or constraints, influence individuals' preferences for and/or participation in different forms of physical activity (e.g., Alexandris & Carroll, 1997). Crawford and Godbey's (1987) hierarchical model of leisure constraints, which suggested individuals must sequentially overcome intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural barriers to their leisure participation, has been widely used (i.e., Goodsell & Harris, 2011; Rice et al., 2018). Despite widespread acceptance of the model, some of its core propositions have been challenged, leading Godbey et al. (2010) to caution "against a rigid interpretation of the sequential hierarchy proposition" (p. 117). Instead, they argue that the constructs of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints, described below, are "appropriate and useful" (p. 129) in interpreting leisure experiences, and therefore promote the model as "a useful heuristic framework for systematic investigations of constraints," and for the identification of constraint items that are unique to specific contexts (Godbey et al., 2010, p. 115). Hence, Crawford and Godbey's (1987) constraints are utilized to frame this research into factors that may impact, and specifically constrain, participation in leisure time physical activity and sport events in Qatar.

Intrapersonal constraints, or "individual psychological states and attributes" such as stress, religiosity, prior socialization into a leisure activity, and "subjective evaluations of the appropriateness . . . [of] leisure activities," can influence leisure preferences (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 122). Interpersonal constraints pertain to the influence of relationships between individuals on leisure preferences and participation. Interpersonal constraints could include barriers arising due to an individual's interactions

with their spouse or their inability to find companions with whom to participate. Structural constraints are barriers that intervene between leisure preference and participation, such as "family life-cycle stage, family financial resources, season, climate, the scheduling of work time, availability of opportunity (and knowledge of such availability), and reference group attitudes concerning the appropriateness of certain activities" (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 124).

Commonly identified constraints to involvement in physical activity include a lack of time, competing priorities such as family and/or work commitments and domestic responsibilities, a lack of finances, physical discomfort, injury, or disability, a lack of skill, confidence, or fitness, and a lack of access to suitable infrastructure (i.e., Alexandris & Carroll, 1997; Lamont et al., 2012). In addition, authors such as Rice et al. (2018) have highlighted the potentially constraining effect of cultural norms experienced by groups that are underrepresented in leisure research. In their research into African American endurance runners, Rice et al. (2018) noted that limited exposure to running was a constraint to preference formation and participation, as was the influence of cultural norms that did not necessarily prioritize health and fitness within the African American community.

Studies (e.g., Lamont et al., 2012; Rice et al., 2018) have illustrated that participation in leisure is possible despite constraints. Hence, constraint negotiation has emerged as a line of inquiry (e.g., Kennelly et al., 2013; McQuarrie & Jackson, 1996). Individuals may utilize cognitive and/or behavioral strategies to negotiate the barriers they encounter (Jackson & Rucks, 1995) and to enable ongoing leisure participation. Cognitive constraint negotiation strategies aim to reduce cognitive dissonance by, for example, framing challenging situations as temporary and focusing on the future (e.g., on a time when leisure activities may continue at a desired level) or focusing on positives (e.g., the rewards of work may make compromising leisure worthwhile) (Kennelly et al., 2013). Behavioral constraint negotiation strategies involve observable changes in leisure or nonleisure behaviors such as delaying or reducing (but still continuing) leisure participation to manage nonleisure priorities or rescheduling nonleisure commitments to fit leisure in (Jackson & Rucks, 1995; Kennelly et al., 2013).

However, even when constraints are negotiated, it is acknowledged that the presence of constraints may influence an individual's preferences for an activity, and ability to participate in that activity at their desired frequency or level (Crawford et al., 1991). Further constraints change over time and depend largely on the individual, including their cultural background and social network (Godbey et al., 2010), making constraint negotiation an ongoing process (Kennelly et al., 2013). Further, as noted, the absence of constraints does not necessarily guarantee participation (Raymore, 2002), leading Raymore (2002) to suggest that examining leisure participation through the lens of constraints alone was akin to adopting a "glass half empty" stance and presented an incomplete understanding. Hence, an exploration of facilitators is necessary for a more holistic picture.

Leisure Facilitators

In order to promote a holistic understanding of participation in leisure, Raymore (2002) proposed that alongside constraints, researchers should consider intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural "facilitators." Facilitators are the resources at an individual's disposal that enable the formation of leisure preferences and encourage their participation. Raymore (2002) adapted Crawford et al.'s (1991) constraints model to explain the role of facilitators. Intrapersonal facilitators are individual characteristics and beliefs that enable the formation of leisure preferences and encourage participation (i.e., personal values, social competence) (Kim et al., 2011). Interpersonal facilitators are individuals and groups that enable the formation of leisure preferences and participation (i.e., social networks, family, or role models), while structural facilitators are "social and physical institutions, organizations, or belief systems of a society that operate external to an individual to enable or promote" (Raymore, 2002, p. 43) leisure preference formation and participation. Examples of structural facilitators include accessible facilities, socioeconomic status, wellness, a conducive climate, and media (Kim et al., 2011). Raymore (2002) cautioned that facilitators should not be considered the "opposite of constraints" (p. 40). Instead, facilitators and constraints are distinct concepts and complementary factors

that influence leisure participation. This assertion was supported by Kim et al. (2011) who developed a scale of facilitators building on Raymore's initial theorizations.

Raymore's model of leisure facilitators has not gained the same level of attention as the leisure constraints model posited by Crawford et al. (1991). Indeed, both Raymore (2002) and Samdahl and Jekubovich (1997) have expressed the view that the constraints paradigm has become so engrained in leisure research that it has been hard to adopt alternative explanations of leisure participation. Leisure literature hints that facilitators are just as important as constraints or constraint negotiation to understanding participation. For example, Goodsell and Harris (2011) described how an individual's spouse and children could both constrain their involvement in marathon running and act as critical enablers through support. Alternatively, Hubbard and Mannell (2001) espoused the view that although leisure facilitators and constraint negotiation are different:

It is likely that many of the resources and strategies that are used to negotiate constraints are also general factors that can facilitate participation whether constraints are encountered or not (e.g., having friends with whom to do things or being a person who likes to learn new skills). (p. 160)

As the purpose of this research is to understand factors that impact participation in physical activity and sport events in Qatar, Raymore's (2002) concept of facilitators was also used in our theoretical framing.

Hence, this research explores constraints and facilitators of physical activity and sport event participation in Qatar, a context that is not widely covered in the existing literature. In an examination of female athletic participation, Harkness (2012) described how leisure in Qatar "remains understudied," despite it being one of the Middle East's "burgeoning superpowers" (p. 2163). Much of our understanding of leisure participation has emerged from research on Western populations or in Western contexts (Ito et al., 2014), and there is potential for more to be done in understanding how constraints and facilitators influence preferences for and participation in leisure time physical activity and sport events.

The Context of Qatar and Research in Non-Western Contexts

Qatar is situated on the Arab Gulf Peninsula and has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world due to its large reserves of natural gas. The majority of Qataris are of Arab Bedouin origins, which means that conforming to group norms and patriarchal values is of utmost importance. There is an ethos of privacy among Qataris partly due to the requirement of physical modesty for men and women in Islam, but also because of Bedouin norms. Privacy underpins gender relationships and spatial segregation within the domestic and public domains such as public schools and hospitals. This segregation is institutionalized to various degrees to accommodate women's need for gender privacy (Sobh & Belk, 2011). It also translates to traditional dress requirements for both men and women. Failing to adhere to this dress code in public is subject to social criticism and can jeopardize the reputation of the family and clan (Sobh et al., 2014). Further, taking part in mixed gender sport events is not culturally acceptable, which requires gender-segregated events or spaces within these events, as is the situation for the Ooredoo Marathon.

These contextual factors are significant to understanding leisure time physical activity and sport event experiences in Qatar. Indeed, Ito et al. (2014) claimed "our current understanding of leisure in non-Western countries is extremely limited" (p. 227). They conducted a systematic review of research examining leisure in non-Western contexts and including cross-cultural/national comparisons. They found that of 1,891 articles, only 77 (or 4.1%) examined leisure in a non-Western context or involved a cross-cultural/national comparison. Of the 77 articles that met their criteria, only 9 (or 6.3%) considered the issue of leisure constraints, and none were identified as focusing on leisure facilitators. They concluded that although interest in leisure in non-Western contexts has increased, there is still a disproportionate emphasis on studying the leisure experiences of around 10% of the world's population.

Among the non-Western contexts/nations covered, China and Japan dominated, leaving scope to develop understanding of leisure participation in the Arab world. Further, Ito et al. (2014) found that Western researchers still account for more than half the article authorships in this space. In research

pertaining to women's physical activity participation in Qatar, Harkness et al. (2018) argued that Western scholars may struggle to fairly evaluate "insider culture" (p. 11). Hence, Ito et al. (2014) advocated for the "importance of collaborations between Western and non-Western researchers" (p. 233), as is the case with this research.

Ito et al. (2014) also recommended, "more non-Western and cross-cultural/national leisure research be conducted specifically on health and wellness, physical activity and inactivity, and subjective well-being and quality of life" (p. 236). Their primary justification for the need for more research on non-Western physical activity participation is to challenge assumptions that access to, and experiences of, such leisure are universal. Mirsafian's (2016) comparison of perceived constraints to physical activity involvement among Iranian and Hungarian university students lead to the conclusion that "constraints are mostly rooted in the culture of each society" (p. 203). Reinforcing this, Chick (1998) concluded that dominant cultural values can dictate leisure activity. Cultural norms, political agendas, and geography may represent such factors in the case of Qatar. This can include influence from the individualist versus collectivist tendencies of a society (Chick et al., 2015). The relative importance of money in society has also been highlighted to impact constraints in non-Western cultures (Dong & Chick, 2012). Hence, a contribution of our research is to extend understandings of leisure time physical activity and sport event participation constraints and facilitators into new cultural contexts. This contribution responds to calls for further investigation of constraints and facilitators in underinvestigated cultural populations (e.g., Ito et al., 2018). The research questions addressed to make this contribution are restated here:

Research Question 1: What constraints to participating in physical activity do Qataris experience?

Research Question 2: What facilitators of participation in physical activity do Qataris experience?

Methodology

The Ooredoo Marathon

The Ooredoo Marathon is the largest participatory sport event in Qatar. The number of

participants in the 2017 marathon was 1,700, out of which 38% were females (R. Zeinal, personal communication, October 16, 2018). The marathon included participants from 87 nationalities, with a majority being expatriates residing in Qatar (83%). The event began in 2013 and offers four courses for runners: a full marathon, half-marathon, 10 km and 5 km route, along with a 1 km and 3 km fun run for children.

The Ooredoo Marathon was launched as a mechanism to bring the community together, promote healthier lifestyles, and give to various charitable causes. In line with the event's marketing slogan—"United We Run"—the Ooredoo Marathon is open to runners of all levels and capabilities; however, prizes are awarded to the top runners across a variety of categories based upon age and gender. The Ooredoo Marathon was selected as the context for the current research as the event represents the largest participatory sport event in the country, as well as for its inclusive nature and mission to inspire Qatar's communities to get fit.

Participants

Semistructured interviews were conducted with participants in the 2017 Ooredoo Marathon in the 6 months following the event. The interviews took place between January 2017 and June 2017. Semistructured interviews were deemed appropriate as this method is suitable for exploratory research and provides flexibility in the line of questioning and in scheduling (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). In addition, in their abovementioned systematic review, Ito et al. (2014) found that the dominant methodological approach used in research on leisure participation in non-Western contexts was surveys, which the authors noted were typically incapable of eliciting "thick description."

The gender split was equal: 11 males and 11 females, and the interviewees ranged in age from 21 to 51 years. Interviewees had participated in the event between one and four times, and had completed a range of different course distances, with the highest proportion having completed the 10 km run ($n = 8$). Nearly all interviewees ($n = 20$) were

Table 1
Interviewee Gender, Age, Number of Years Participating in the Ooredoo Marathon, and Course Completed

Name	Age	Gender	No. of Years in Ooredoo Marathon	Course Completed
Abdulrahman	48	M	3	Half Marathon
Ameen	32	M	2	5 km
Yehya	24	M	2	10 km
Kamal	25	M	3	Full marathon
Omar	27	M	1	Half marathon
Hamad	30	M	1	10 km
Khaled	25	M	3	Full marathon
Nouf	21	F	2	10 km
Lina	29	F	3	10 km
Mishal	51	M	3	Half marathon
Shaikha	22	F	2	10 km
Nassir	25	M	1	5 km
Moza	40	F	2	5 km
Maryam	30	F	4	10 km
Abdulaziz	28	M	1	Full
Haya	24	F	2	10 km
Alanoud	30	F	2	5 km
Salma	32	F	2	5 km
Fatima	30	F	1	Half marathon
Saoud	25	M	2	10 km
Jawaher	25	F	1	Half marathon
Muneera	26	F	2	5 km

Qatari, with one individual born in the US and one interviewee born in Egypt. Both non-Qataris were of Arab descent and had been living in Doha for over 20 years. Table 1 provides the age, gender, number of years having participated in the event, and the course completed for each interviewee.

Procedures

A partnership was in place between the Ooredoo Marathon event management team and one of the universities involved in this research project. The event management team sent out an email to registered participants following the event, inviting individuals to take part in interviews. Effort was made to recruit a sample of Qatari interviewees to capture constraints to participation in physical activity and sport events from a local perspective. Convenience sampling was utilized for pragmatic reasons, specifically overcoming participant recruitment issues (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Given the minority status of Qataris in their country (less than 20% of the overall population of Qatar) and their low participation rate in the event (17% in the 2017 Ooredoo Marathon), the research team experienced challenges with participant recruitment, hence the 6-month window in which the interviews occurred.

Each interview was conducted in person in Doha at a location that was agreed upon by the interviewee and interviewer, with an emphasis on convenience for the interviewee (e.g., café, university, the interviewee's place of work). A researcher trained in qualitative data collection methods conducted the interviews. After participants provided consent to conduct and record the interview, they were asked to introduce themselves and provide some background information about their participation in the marathon. Participants talked about a number of topics such as their reasons for participating in the marathon, their perceptions about the event and being physically active in general, their experiences with the event, along with its perceived impact on different aspects of their life.

Interviews were conducted in Arabic or English based on participants' preference and lasted between 20 and 30 min. A third-party transcription service transcribed and translated the audio-recorded interviews. One of the bilingual researchers involved in this project checked the Arabic and translated

transcripts for cultural relevance and equivalency in meaning in line with the process suggested by Su and Parham (2002). After 22 interviews were completed, the researchers believed that data saturation had been reached as similar themes emerged within the interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Member checks were in place as interviewees were provided with the opportunity to receive a summary document with the emerging themes, definitions, and representative quotations in both English and Arabic at the conclusion of the interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Materials

An interview guide was developed by the research team. The interview guide consisted of the following sections. First, a collection of demographic questions were asked, along with the number of years the interviewee had participated in the event and the course she/he had completed in 2017. Second, participants were asked how they got involved in the event, along with a question concerning their preparation for the event. Third, the benefits that participants obtained as a result of participation in the event specifically, and physical activity in general, were discussed. Fourth, interviewees were asked about the barriers that Qataris are confronted with in participating in physical activity and sport events. Example questions from the interview guide include: "Do you have any sport event habits with your friends?" and "Did you experience any positive emotions during the Ooredoo Marathon?" The interview guide was informed by previous research on the outcomes of sport event participation (Filo & Coghlan, 2016) as well as constraints to leisure participation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).

Data Analysis

The transcriptions delivered by the third-party transcription service were reviewed by the research team for translation accuracy and readability. From there, the transcriptions were analyzed thematically in six phases, with one member of the research team leading this process: (1) getting familiar with the data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In getting familiar with the data (step

1), the lead analyzer repeatedly read through each interview transcription, with a focus on constraints and facilitators (e.g., Raymore, 2002). This process generated a broad list of initial codes for constraints and facilitators (step 2). For example, interviewee discussion of the factors that prevented or constrained themselves or other Qataris from participating in physical activity generally, and sport events in particular, were coded as constraints. Commentary from interviewees concerning the resources, relationships, and occurrences that assisted them in being able to participate and be active were coded as facilitators. The codes were generated via a hybrid approach that was both inductive and deductive in nature, which allowed new ideas to emerge while guided by preexisting concepts (Denis et al., 2001).

Once these codes were reviewed and analyzed further, seven themes were identified (step 3), of which four represented constraints, while three were facilitators. The seven themes identified, along with representative quotations from the original transcriptions, were then reviewed by the entire research team (step 4). The research team discussed the suitability of the themes and the representativeness of corresponding quotations until agreement was reached. This discussion facilitated intercoder agreement (Carey et al., 1996).

Next, the research team finalized the labels, and developed an operational definition for each of the themes (step 5), while the transcripts were reviewed again for any additional representative quotations. The results are reported in the next section (step 6) and the quotations are presented narratively to illustrate each theme. The four themes encompassing constraints were: lack of time and competing priorities, social life, reluctance to walk, and expectations for women. As will become evident in the below narrative, these constraint themes are interrelated. Meanwhile, the three themes that illustrated facilitators were: technology, peer and familial support, and government support. Pseudonyms are used in place of each interviewee's real name.

Results

Constraints

Lack of Time and Competing Priorities. This theme captures a common constraint to physical

activity participation mentioned by interviewees: a lack of time and the subsequent challenge of managing competing priorities. Interviewees described having no time for physical activity due to busy schedules filled with other priorities. Fatima described Qatari's lack of time and competing priorities with the following:

We have different responsibilities, different habits and traditions . . . we have work, then come back to have heavy meal and sleep, not much time for sports and then we stay with the family for the rest of the day.

When asked why she was not able to participate in physically active leisure as much as she wanted to, Haya replied:

The time. I am an employee, I have home, husband and kids, I may not have time to include sports in my schedule.

This response was restated rather simply and succinctly by Kamal:

We have work and no time.

Social Life. Interviewees described having an eventful and often luxurious social life as a factor that prevented Qataris from participating in physical activity and sport events, resulting in the theme, social life. For example, Yehya commented:

at night you find many things to do, you will gather with friends, you will have an outing.

Hamad summarized the social life for a Qatari as follows:

Comforted, luxury, outings, weekend travels, always busy having fun, eating, go to sleep 3-4am on weekends.

Haya reinforced this:

Because their [Qataris] daily routine is as follows: They finish work, rest and then they go out with friends, go to the cinema, or go eating and so on. . . . I know that there are people participating but our life routine is full of social commitments.

Muneera spoke to the luxury associated with Qatari's social life as something that fostered laziness:

Maybe our habits and traditions, maybe bad habits like being lazy, some others have much luxury [in their lives] . . . being lazy, gatherings in coffee shops.

The social life described by the interviewees involved dining out, which could involve eating unhealthy food, and this was advanced as a further deterrent for leisure participation. For example, Alanoud commented:

We as Arabs, we have many dining invitations, everyday . . . you know such unhealthy habits and [eating] unhealthy food all the time.

Omar echoed this sentiment:

Outings with friends must include dinner and sweets, restaurants.

The social life, and the constant going out that comes with it, was summed up by Lina:

Many restaurants, people being mad for restaurants. If my friend discovers new restaurant, we should all go. . . . So we become lazy to do that [physical activity and event participation].

Reluctance to Walk. Throughout the interviews, Ooredoo Marathon participants mentioned that Qataris do not like to walk and prefer to drive their cars, and this was a starting point for a lack of physical activity and event participation that was also linked with Qatar's high temperatures. Ameen outlined this notion with the following:

You know Qatar is wealthy country, luxurious people, they are not used to walking for long distances, everything is available, ready and close . . . only go to by car in 5 minutes.

Shaikha provided the following summary of Qatari people:

We don't walk . . . we park cars in front of the target place, don't like going out in hot weather. We don't like exerting effort. . . . Our habits are to not walk.

Yehya referenced the climate as a contributing factor to his reluctance to walk and be active:

Weather is a main factor . . . you are motivated to go for any sport now and find weather is too hot, you delay 'til night, at night you find many things to do.

Expectations for Women. The final constraint highlighted by interviewees was expectations for women. This constraint theme captures interviewee comments related to societal expectations for females within Qatar that prevent women from participating in physical activity and sport events and was detailed by both male and female interviewees. Moza mentioned that household responsibilities, as well as dress requirements for females, were a constraining factor:

For us as females, we are stressed, working and home needs, children, cooking. As for doing sports we don't, as we need to wear dress and such things prevents moving.

Alanoud provided a similar description from the male perspective:

For females, maybe she is a housewife and busy at home, coming from work and have a rest, then stay with her family . . . habits here control lifestyle.

Haya spoke to traditions in Qatar that prevented females from participating in physical activity and sport events:

Our tradition does not allow anyone to go [participate in physical activity], there are many Qatari guys participating but the tradition doesn't allow girls. Because we are not allowed to wear anything or walk anywhere.

Family was referenced as an entity that places expectations on females that constrain participation. Salma relayed the following:

Some families, they don't allow their females to do sports, maybe [women are] also not allowed by their brothers, their husbands . . . like my father, my sister wanted to go and walk in Kurneesh, he refused.

The expectations for females impacting participation included a lack of suitable facilities for females. Nouf stated:

For females, some girls like sports but gyms for girls are very small and very expensive 3000–4000AED or 5000AED per month.

Fatima elaborated further on societal expectations and discussed how it is shameful for females to be physically active:

Here it is shameful to go and walk outside alone. That's for girls. Also our custom Arab clothes don't allow us to move freely, cannot dry my sweat, cannot feel comfortable, the same for drinking water. My dress is uncomfortable for me to do sport.

Facilitators

Technology. The first facilitator described by the Ooredoo Marathon participants related to technology, specifically to how social media, mobile applications, and smart technology provided them with awareness, education, and training programs to facilitate participation in physical activity and sport events. Sport watches were highlighted as an important tool for monitoring and improving upon physical activity. Mishal said:

I have a Fitbit watch, it keeps track of the heart rate monitor and the number of steps, it has a good app, it has a Fitbit app, it is low maintenance and it is easy to manipulate.

Yehya shared a similar sentiment:

The sport watch from Apple or Galaxy, it is very good . . . it calculates steps, heartbeats, calories.

The importance of the data provided by a sport watch was referenced by Nassir:

The sport watch, it is very important, it calculates steps, time, calories plus some applications including recommendations, diets . . . YouTube videos to search for correct exercises and healthy meals.

In addition to sports watches, online videos also facilitated participation. Nouf indicated that a specific YouTube personality was critical:

I have Tiffany, she is a trainer on YouTube, she is very helpful in sports . . . her weight was 300–400 pounds, then she lost her weight and became an effective model. She uploads videos for beginners

then advanced. . . she is helpful for many people for many things, some exercises for chest and bench, arms and back. She has videos to break the routine, fat burning, comprehensive . . . different things, so you don't get bored of only one exercise.

In line with the above quote, social media was described as a facilitator. Alanoud elaborated:

Social media is the source I get the most exercises from. Mostly Instagram as it became an encyclopedia, there are simple and easy exercises that can be done at home.

Haya noted that Instagram provided valuable content, along with YouTube:

Also in Instagram, there are many people. For example, people who were overweight and lost it and now they are giving tips to people on how to lose weight, also the doctors. . . On the YouTube I see the whole video on how to work out on my muscles.

Peer and Familial Support. This theme captures interviewee comments about the importance of peer and familial support to their participation in physical activity. Ooredoo Marathon participants outlined how there were individuals in their network who provided heightened awareness, encouragement, or companionship, which translated into physical activity and sport event participation. A collection of interviewees described how participating in the event allowed them to realize that they were unfit while also observing individuals who were fit. These realizations then led them to increase their physical activity. Yehya relayed the story of his first Ooredoo Marathon:

It was in the first marathon, my fitness was zero then . . . someone passed beside me when I was about to stop to motivate me . . . then we became friends, we go out for walk on weekends.

Haya indicated that her husband made comments about her fitness, and this served to encourage her to participate in the event, which, in turn, led to heightened awareness, followed by increased participation:

For me, my husband and his comments like “you have gained weight, you are not doing anything”

and so on. When the marathon came, he encouraged me to go and there he told me “See people and how they are taking care of their health and we are not moving,” and since then I put the issue on top of my mind.

Groups participating in leisure and sport were positioned as a form of peer support. Abdulrahman spoke of a running group:

In Qatar petroleum we have this [group called] QP runners, they encourage you every week to meet each other and join this kind of activities, so you see the government, the community and the employer is encouraging you to move and they give you the support.

The importance of peer support was demonstrated by the following comment from Maryam:

You can say I am always ready to go for some kind of physical activities but I need to have a kind of partner to participate.

Government Support. The final facilitator noted by Ooredoo Marathon participants was government support. Interviewees referred to a trend towards broader support from institutions within Qatar leading to increased participation in physical activity, as well as increased sport event opportunities. For example, Hamad made reference to increased government involvement in the promotion of sport and facility provision:

Walking and running are open, the government affords everything, facilities, service.

Abdulrahman described the government’s involvement in sport as a reflection of increased openness to sport:

Qatar’s government promotes activities like sports, community related activity . . . it is a good community, it encourages you to be more open and express yourself in a good way.

Finally, Mishal pointed to the increase in hosting sport events as part of the government’s commitment to promoting physical activity:

Qatar seems to be moving in the right direction in that [organizing sport events].

Discussion

The current exploratory research investigated constraints to participation in physical activity and sport events, along with factors that facilitate participation in Qatar. Research question 1 asked: what constraints to participation in physical activity do Qataris experience? Interviewees highlighted four constraints: lack of time and competing priorities, social life, reluctance to walk, and expectations for women. Lack of time is a frequently cited constraint across a variety of contexts (e.g., Alexandris & Carroll, 1997; Crawford & Godbey, 1987). The three remaining constraints reinforce Mirsafian’s (2016) assertion that “constraints are mostly rooted in the culture of each society” (p. 203). For example, the reluctance to walk in Qatar reflects both the challenging climate, as well as the reverence held for the automobile within Qatari society. In Qatar, cars are considered a means of status expression, especially by locals (Sobh & Aouni, 2016). Further, both male and female interviewees described the constraining social expectations and cultural norms that limit women’s participation in physical activity and sport events. Addressing these limitations is challenging as in countries where the population is largely of Arab Bedouin origins like Qatar, privacy and gender segregation are considered anchors for identity (Sobh & Belk, 2011).

The constraints identified within the current investigation were largely structural and interpersonal (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Goodsell & Harris, 2011). However, constraints such as social life as well as expectations for women arguably reflect both intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions, as these were impacted by interactions with others, as well as engrained attitudes towards physical activity and its appropriateness as an option for women. Interviewee comments implied that cultural norms within Qatari society may challenge the formation of a preference for, as well as participation in, physical activity and sport events (Crawford et al., 1991). As noted, these constraints reflect the significance of conforming to group norms and patriarchal values in Qatari society (Sobh & Belk, 2011). In addition, these findings are consistent with Qatari sport participation statistics and trends (Harkness et al., 2018).

Research question 2 asked: What facilitators of participation in physical activity do Qataris

experience? Three facilitators were uncovered: technology, peer and familial support, and government support. Similar to the constraints unearthed, the facilitators that emerged were predominantly interpersonal and structural: “technology” and “government support” reflect the influence of institutions, while “peer and familial support” underscores the importance of relationships and networks (Crawford et al., 1991; Raymore, 2002). The facilitators identified signify that, irrespective of constraints, individuals could find factors around them that enabled their participation. Adopting Raymore’s (2002) concept of facilitators enabled us to illustrate that participation in physical activity and sport events in Qatar is more than just a consequence of overcoming constraints.

The interviewee’s descriptions of constraints suggest that physical activity is not prioritized in Qataris’ lifestyles, despite the growing attention it is receiving in government policy and attempts to raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity and event participation. Since social media transcends geographic boundaries (Shilbury et al., 2014), individuals with an interest in physical activity may turn to global platforms such as social media and fitness applications for information on the best approaches to getting active, as well as to derive motivation. Consistent with past research (i.e., Lamont et al., 2012), the data also highlighted how for interviewees it was important to find people with a similar interest in physical activity, or who were supportive of their endeavors. The emergence of social life as a constraint, along with technology and peer and familial support as facilitators, further illustrates how members of an individual’s network can both constrain or enable participation in physical activity and sport events (Goodsell & Harris, 2011).

Finally, these data suggest that the Qatari government’s strategic interest and investment in sport events and physical activity has been noticed by citizens through acknowledgment of government support. However, Harkness et al. (2018) cautioned against noncritical “echoing” (p. 9) of government messaging around the growing opportunities for women to engage in physical activity. They reiterated that there remain many institutionalized and internalized barriers to women’s participation in sport in Qatar. There is still ground to cover in

alleviating constraints to women’s participation in physical activity and sport events, yet some changes are evident. The fact that government interventions were mentioned by interviewees intimates that the Qatari government’s policy efforts may play a role in promoting awareness of the importance of physical activity, and perhaps in starting to normalize physical activity and sport event participation as viable leisure choices.

The findings of the current research contribute to theory in a number of ways. First, the current research demonstrates that participation in physical activity and sport events is influenced by both constraining and facilitating factors (Raymore, 2002). Constraints may impede participation in a leisure activity, but the absence of constraints does not necessarily equate to participation (Raymore, 2002). Individuals may concurrently be impelled to participate through the presence of enabling factors, irrespective of what constraints are encountered. Interviewees described sources of encouragement that empowered their preference for, and participation in, physical activity and sport events. Our findings support the suggestion that exploration of facilitators, alongside constraints, allows for a more nuanced understanding of leisure participation (Raymore, 2002). Although Raymore’s (2002) concept of “leisure facilitators” has not garnered the same level of academic attention as Crawford and Godbey’s (1987) constraints model, we suggest it provides an equally useful “heuristic framework” for examining leisure participation.

Second, the current research responded to calls for more non-Western leisure research (Ito et al., 2014) aimed at understanding heterogeneity in leisure access and experiences. Qatar presents a context wherein increasing governmental resources are being directed at sport events and physical activity (National Tourism Council, 2020), yet where there are concomitantly extensive challenges posed by the environment (Brannagan & Rockwood, 2016) and cultural values (Sobh & Belk, 2011). The emergence of lack of time and competing priorities as a constraint, and peer and familial support as a facilitator illustrates that some constraints and facilitators transcend geography (Chick et al., 2015; Dong & Chick, 2012). Factors such as reluctance to walk, expectations for women, along with the unique way that the influence of technology and government support

were described demonstrate that culture can be central to individuals' experiences of leisure constraints and facilitators (Mirsafian, 2016). Reluctance to walk and expectations for women as constraints described by interviewees further demonstrate the demands of a specific society impacting leisure participation (Chick, 1998). The similarities and distinctions uncovered within this non-Western context suggest further cross-cultural comparison among new populations is warranted (Ito et al., 2018).

Managerial Implications

As outlined at the start of this article, the Qatar Government is currently investing heavily in increasing awareness of the importance of physical activity, as well as in associated infrastructure, events, and services. Within this broad milieu, the current research suggests a number of potential strategies that sport event managers in Qatar may consider. First, event managers could work to heighten consumer awareness of smart technologies, mobile applications, and social media that could facilitate event training and/or increased physical activity more broadly. It was evident from the interviews that interviewees were dependent on technology as a resource to acquire knowledge about physical activity and event training. Research has demonstrated that health behavior applications can be valuable for providing information to users (Dennison et al., 2013). It is acknowledged that technology may have a negative impact on physical activity levels for some individuals due to the sedentary behavior often inherent in its use (Rouse & Biddle, 2010). Challenges may also exist with regard to perceptions of social undesirability among consumers of health behavior applications. These perceptions are based, in part, on concerns about the legitimacy of information provided since these applications are often created by third parties who may not necessarily be health experts (Dennison et al., 2013). However, the promotion of physical activity via mobile technologies has been found to be effective in middle- and upper-income countries (Pratt et al., 2012). Ensuring that the information provided through these applications is from qualified sources that reflect best practices is important.

Interviewees also indicated that the applications and tools that they were using came from

outside of Qatar. Existing research has suggested that there is a need to overcome a tendency towards a "one size fits all" approach to developing technologies promoting physical activity (Curry et al., 2012). Hence, culture needs to be accounted for by event and activity managers in leveraging these tools. Opportunity may exist for the development of an application that is specific to Qatar and that reflects the nuances of the Qatari culture and physical environment. The development of such a mobile application could support the Qatar government's existing investment in sport events, by helping Qataris identify options to engage in physical activity leisure and prepare for events, as well as to assist in finding suitable partners with whom to participate. Collaboration between the Qatari government and technology developers can reflect the coordinated effort between government and relevant stakeholders that is necessary to enable sustained physical activity outcomes from events (Reis et al., 2017). Event organizers such as the Ooredoo Marathon management team could integrate such an application into their promotion strategies to heighten awareness of their event and additional physical activity opportunities.

Next, the importance of peer and familial support in facilitating physical activity underscores the importance of having someone with whom to be active and participate in events. Research has demonstrated that individuals who are committed to being physically active are influenced by friends on how to spend their time, and suggestions for adopting promotions allowing individuals to bring a friend or family member to events and facilities have been advanced accordingly (Granzin & Olsen, 1989). Managers for events such as the Ooredoo Marathon should consider offering discounts to individuals registering for the first time who are willing to bring along another first-time participant. Individuals who bring a friend to participate can support one another throughout the training and completion of the event, as well as sustained activity following the event. Fostering a supportive social environment can work towards harnessing connections created during the event experience to lead to individuals being more physically active (Potwarka et al., 2016). This is even more crucial for female participants as exercising with peers would help them face social stigma.

To increase women's participation in physical activity and sport events, event marketing communication strategies that mirror Nike's recent campaign to promote their new product, Pro Hijab—a sports attire for covered women, can be used. The campaign focused on empowering covered women to exercise in public, while acknowledging the cultural barriers they face. Nike's advertisement begins with an Arabic women's voice saying, "What will they say about you? Maybe they'll say you exceeded all expectations" (Banks, 2017). Similar messages can be crafted within event marketing in order to appeal to prospective participants. Alternatively, women-only events can be organized. The "Women on Wheels" day was the first ladies-only cycling day organized in Qatar in 2016 by Losail Circuit Sports. In this event, women were able to run, cycle, and walk with full privacy. The venue was also secured by female security guards and female medical help. The goal of the event was to promote healthy lifestyles among Qatari women while accommodating their need for privacy.

Limitations and Future Directions

A number of limitations of the current exploratory research are recognized and addressing these limitations while building upon our findings introduces opportunities for future research. First, selection bias was an issue for our sample. The interviews were conducted with individuals who had participated in the Ooredoo Marathon. Hence, these individuals were already active and predisposed to value physical activity and sport event participation, which may not be representative of sentiments within the broader population. Quantitative data can be collected, sampling from both active and inactive populations across a variety of contexts. Scales could be developed based on the themes uncovered within the current exploratory work. Such future research could enhance understanding of how constraints and facilitators interact to promote leisure time physical activity preferences and event participation or nonparticipation in events. Panel data could be utilized to obtain more diverse samples.

Second, the interviews involved our sample of active individuals describing their general perceptions of constraints to participation in Qatar, rather than speaking specifically about the constraints

they had experienced. For example, several male interviewees identified expectations of women as a constraint, although this was obviously not a constraint they described from their lived experience. Future research could move beyond the perspectives of individual participants to obtain insights from additional stakeholders. Event managers, sport club managers, and leisure managers could be interviewed to explore the constraints that these entities feel obstruct participation, as well as the role that facilitators play in interacting with constraints. These interviews could include assessment of management strategy that has been put in place to address constraints and promote facilitators.

Third, our sample was drawn from participants in Qatar's largest participatory event and there is scope to broaden our investigation to encompass a wider array of events. Nonetheless, the current research represents an important starting point in an underresearched context (i.e., Qatar). Learning from the experiences of event participants provides a basis for future improvement in event design and promotion (Ramsbottom et al., 2018). Further, Patterson and Getz (2013) recommended that application of leisure theory to event research could shed light on how "event designers suggest, constraint or facilitate desired experiences" (p. 238). Hence, future studies could collect longitudinal data from event participants to track the enabling influence of facilitators. This longitudinal data should be collected across multiple phases before and after the event to determine if changes in leisure participation are sustained. It is hoped that this exploratory work serves as a starting point for future investigation in physical activity and sport event participation in Qatar and other non-Western contexts.

Acknowledgment

This publication was made possible by a grant from the Qatar National Research Fund under the National Priority Program award number NPRP9-172-5-021. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Qatar National Research Fund.

ORCID

Kevin Filo:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6442-3166>

Millicent Kennelly: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8890-9849>

Rana Sobh: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2048-8088>

References

- Alexandris, K., & Carroll, B. (1997). An analysis of leisure constraints based on different recreational sport participation levels: Results from a study in Greece. *Leisure Sciences, 19*(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490409709512236>
- Banks, B. (2017, March 11). *Why Nike's 'Pro Hijab' is more than just politics*. <https://fortune.com/2017/03/11/nike-sports-hijab/>
- Brannagan, P. M., & Giulianotti, R. (2015). Soft power and soft disempowerment: Qatar, global sport and football's 2022 World Cup finals. *Leisure Studies, 34*(6), 703–719. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2014.964291>
- Brannagan, P. M., & Giulianotti, R. (2018). The soft power-soft disempowerment nexus: the case of Qatar. *International Affairs, 94*(5), 1139–1157. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iyy125>
- Brannagan, P. M., & Rookwood, J. (2016). Sports mega-events, soft power and soft disempowerment: International supporters' perspectives on Qatar's acquisition of the 2022 FIFA World Cup finals. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 8*(2), 173–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2016.1150868>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Carey, J. W., Morgan, M., & Oxtoby, M. J. (1996). Inter-coder agreement in analysis of responses to open-ended interview questions: Examples from tuberculosis research. *CAM Journal, 8*(3), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X96008003101>
- Chick, G. (1998). Leisure and culture: Issues for an anthropology of leisure. *Leisure Sciences, 20*, 111–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490409809512269>
- Chick, G., Hsu, Y. C., Yeh, C. K., & Hsieh, C. M. (2015). Informant-provided leisure constraints in six Taiwanese cities. *Journal of Leisure Research, 47*(4), 501–512. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Garry-Chick/publication/282740554_Informant-Provided_Leisure_Constraints_in_Six_Taiwanese_Cities/links/568ecd5e08ae78cc05160c74/Informant-Provided-Leisure-Constraints-in-Six-Taiwanese-Cities.pdf
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage.
- Crawford, D. W., & Godbey, G. (1987). Reconceptualizing barriers to family leisure. *Leisure Sciences, 9*(2), 119–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490408709512151>
- Crawford, D. W., Jackson, E. L., & Godbey, G. (1991). A hierarchical model of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences, 13*(4), 309–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490409109513147>
- Crouch, M., & McKenzie, H. (2006). The logic of small samples in interview-based qualitative research. *Social Science Information, 45*(4), 483–499. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018406069584>
- Curry, N. R., Crone, D., James, D., & Gidlow, C. (2012). Factors influencing participation in outdoor physical activity promotion schemes: The case of South Staffordshire, England. *Leisure Studies, 31*(4), 447–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2011.600322>
- Denis, J.-L., Lamothe, L., & Langley, A. (2001). The dynamics of collective leadership and strategic change in pluralistic organizations. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*(4), 809–837. <https://doi.org/10.5465/3069417>
- Dennison, L., Morrison, L., Conway, G., & Yardley, L. (2013). Opportunities and challenges for smartphone applications in supporting health behavior change: Qualitative study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research, 15*(4). <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.2583>
- Dong, E., & Chick, G. (2012). Leisure constraints in six Chinese cities. *Leisure Sciences, 34*(5), 17–435. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2012.714702>
- Filo, K., & Coghlan, A. (2016). Exploring the positive psychology domains of well-being activated through charity sport event experiences. *Event Management, 20*(2), 181–199. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599516X14610017108701>
- Frawley, S., & Cush, A. (2011). Major sport events and participation legacy: The case of the 2003 Rugby World Cup. *Managing Leisure, 16*(1), 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13606719.2011.532605>
- General Secretariat for Development Planning. (2008). *Qatar National Development Strategy 2011–2016: Towards Qatar National Vision 2030*. Gulf Publishing and Printing Company. https://www.psa.gov.qa/en/nds1/Documents/Downloads/NDS_EN_0.pdf
- Getz, D. (2008). Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research. *Tourism Management, 29*(3), 403–428. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.07.017>
- Godbey, G., Crawford, D. W., & Shen, X. S. (2010). Assessing hierarchical leisure constraints theory after two decades. *Journal of Leisure Research, 42*(1), 111–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2010.11950197>
- Goodsell, T. L., & Harris, B. D. (2011). Family life and marathon running: Constraint, cooperation and gender in a leisure activity. *Journal of Leisure Research, 43*(1), 80–109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2011.11950227>
- Granzin, K. L., & Olsen, J. E. (1989). Identifying those ready to make a voluntary commitment to fitness. *Journal of Sport Management, 3*(2), 116–128.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- Harkness, G. (2012). Out of bounds: Cultural barriers to female sports participation in Qatar. *The International Journal of the History of Sport, 29*(15), 2162–2183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2012.721595>

- Harkness, G., Quiroz, E., & Gomez, K. (2018). Sports and Qatar's empowered woman narrative. *Sociology Compass*, 12(11). <http://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12631>
- Hubbard, J., & Mannell, R. C. (2001). Testing competing models of leisure constraint negotiation process in a corporate employee recreation setting. *Leisure Sciences*, 23(3), 145–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014904001316896846>
- Ito, E., Kono, S., & Walker, G. J. (2018). Development of cross-culturally informed leisure-time physical activity constraint and constraint negotiation typologies: The case of Japanese and Euro-Canadian adults. *Leisure Sciences*, 42(5–6), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2018.1446064>
- Ito, E., Walker, G. J., & Liang, H. (2014). A systematic review of non-Western and cross cultural/national leisure research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 46(2), 226–239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2014.11950322>
- Jackson, E. L., & Rucks, V. C. (1995). Negotiation of leisure constraints by junior-high and high-school students: An exploratory study. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 27(1), 85–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.1995.11969978>
- Kennelly, M., Moyle, B., & Lamont, M. (2013). Constraint negotiation in serious leisure: A study of amateur triathletes. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 45(4), 466–484. <https://doi.org/10.18666/jlr-2013-v45-i4-3895>
- Kim, B., Heo, J., Chun, S., & Lee, Y. (2011). Construction and initial validation of the leisure facilitator scale. *Leisure/Loisir*, 35(4), 391–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2011.648402>
- Lamont, M., Kennelly, M., & Wilson, E. (2012). Competing priorities as constraints in event travel careers. *Tourism Management*, 33(5), 1068–1079. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.12.005>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- McQuarrie, F., & Jackson, E. (1996). Connection between negotiation of leisure constraints and serious leisure: An exploratory study of adult amateur ice skaters. *Loisir et Société/Society and Leisure*, 19(2), 459–483. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.1996.10715528>
- Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics. (2011). *Qatar Second National Development Strategy 2018–2022*. Gulf Publishing and Printing Company. <https://www.psa.gov.qa/en/knowledge/Documents/NDS2Final.pdf>
- Mirsafian, H. (2016). Perceived constraints to physical activity and sport: A cross cultural study between Iranian and Hungarian university students. *World Leisure Journal*, 58(3), 193–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2016.1143390>
- National Tourism Council. (2020). *The future of tourism*. <https://www.visitqatar.qa/en/about-qatar-national-tourism-council>
- Patterson, I., & Getz, D. (2013). At the nexus of leisure and event studies. *Event Management*, 17(3), 227–240. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599513X13708863377836>
- Potwarka, L. R., Tepylo, H., Fortune, D., & Mair, H. (2016). Launching off but falling fast: Experiences of becoming more physically active in response to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. *Event Management*, 20(3), 297–312. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599516X14640225219155>
- Pratt, M., Sarmiento, O. L., Montes, F., Ogilvie, D., Marcus, B. H., Perez, L. G., & Brownson, R. C. for the Lancet Physical Activity Series Working Group. (2012). The implications of megatrends in information and communication technology and transportation for changes in global physical activity. *The Lancet*, 380(9838), 282–293. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(12\)60736-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60736-3)
- Ramsbottom, O., Michopoulou, E., & Azara, I. (2018). Guest introduction: Making sense of event experiences. *Event Management*, 22(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599517X15111988553946>
- Raymore, L. (2002). Facilitators to leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 34(1), 37–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2002.11949959>
- Reis, A. C., Frawley, S., Hodgetts, D., Thomson, A., & Hughes, K. (2017). Sport participation legacy and the Olympic Games: The case of Sydney 2000, London 2012, and Rio 2016. *Event Management*, 21(2), 139–158. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599517X14878772869568>
- Rice, J. A., Hambrick, M. E., & Aicher, T. J. (2018). A qualitative investigation of sport activity participation and constraint negotiation among African American endurance runners. *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, 41(1), 64–87. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2036192897?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>
- Rolim Silva, L. H. (2014). The establishment of the Qatar National Olympic Committee: Building the national sport identity. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 31(3), 306–319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2013.878136>
- Rouse, P. C., & Biddle, S. J. (2010). An ecological momentary assessment of the physical activity and sedentary behaviour patterns of university students. *Health Education Journal*, 69(1), 116–125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0017896910363145>
- Saeed Al-Mohannadi, A., & Ghaith Al-Kuwari, M. (2015). The effect of weather conditions on the seasonal variation of physical activity. *Aspetar Sports Medicine Journal*, 4(1), 1–4. <https://www.aspetar.com/journal/viewarticle.aspx?id=234#.YHb4Lz8pBPY>
- Samdahl, D. M., & Jekubovich, N. J. (1997). A critique of leisure constraints: Comparative analyses and understandings. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 29(4), 430–452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.1997.11949807>
- Samuel-Azran, T., Yarchi, M., Galily, Y., & Tamir, I. (2016). Promoting terror or sport? The case of Qatar's international image. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60(9), 1101–1115. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764216632841>
- Shilbury, D., Quick, S., Westerbeek, H., Funk, D. C., & Karg, A. (2014). *Strategic sport marketing*. Allen & Unwin.
- Sobh, R., & Aouni, B. (2016, November). Consumers' preferences modelling for rail transportation in Qatar. Paper presented at *INFORMS Annual Meeting 2016*, Nashville, USA.

- Sobh, R., & Belk, R. (2011). Domains of privacy and hospitality in Arab Gulf homes. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 2(2), 125–137. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831111139848>
- Sobh, R., Belk, R., & Gressel, J. (2014). Mimicry and modernity in the Middle East: Fashion invisibility and young women of the Arab Gulf. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 17(4), 392–412. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2013.865166>
- Su, C.-T., & Parham, L. D. (2002). Generating a valid questionnaire translation for cross-cultural use. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 56(5), 581–585. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.56.5.581>
- Warburton, D. E., & Bredin, S. (2017). Health benefits of physical activity: A systematic review of current systematic reviews. *Current Opinions in Cardiology*, 32(5), 541–556. <https://doi.org/10.1097/HCO.0000000000000437>