



## AGE-RELATED MOTIVES IN MASS RUNNING EVENTS PARTICIPATION

**Abstract** – To determine the age-related motivations for participating in a half marathon among four age categories of respondents: up to 25 years old (n=238), 26-35 years old (n=228), 36-50 years old (n=69), and 51-70 years old (n=25) was the main goal of the study. A self-constructed questionnaire was used for the study (N=560) during the 6th Poznan Half Marathon (one of the most important running events in Poland). The basis for the development of the author's questionnaire survey of motives for participation in running events was the division of Freyer and Gross (2002). The research instrument was validated before the examined event (during the 5th Poznan Half Marathon). The main findings of the presented research were strictly connected with the motive to maintain physical condition and health. This motive was important for all the surveyed age groups of runners and reported by 82.1% (460) of the respondents. It was also the most important for the oldest age group: runners aged 51-70 (96% reported this motivation as being the most important). The most significant difference between young and older runners is that young people are more often focused on results, while older people are more focused on contact with other people, with social aspects being more important to them. They also pay more attention to the attractiveness of the city in which they run. But the young think about achieving a sports result, experiencing intense emotions, and achieving recognition in the eyes of others.

**Keywords:** Half marathon; running; sport tourism; motivation; sporting events.

## MOTIVOS RELACIONADOS COM A IDADE NA PARTICIPAÇÃO EM EVENTOS DE CORRIDA

**Resumo** - Determinar as motivações relacionadas à idade para participar de meia maratona em quatro categorias de idade dos entrevistados: até 25 anos (n=238), 26-35 anos (n=228), 36-50 anos (n=69) e 51-70 anos (n=25) foi o principal objetivo do estudo. Um questionário autoconstruído foi utilizado para o estudo (N=560) durante a 6ª Meia Maratona de Poznan (um dos mais importantes eventos de corrida na Polônia). A base para o desenvolvimento do questionário sobre os motivos para a participação em eventos de corrida foi a divisão de Freyer e Gross (2002). O instrumento de pesquisa foi validado antes do evento examinado (durante a 5ª Meia Maratona de Poznan). Os principais achados dessa pesquisa foram estritamente relacionados com o motivo para manter a condição física e a saúde. O motivo foi importante para todos os grupos etários pesquisados e relatados por 82,1% (460) dos entrevistados. Foi também o mais importante para a faixa etária mais idosa: corredores com idades entre 51 e 70 anos (96% relataram essa motivação como sendo a mais importante). A diferença mais significativa entre corredores jovens e mais velhos é que os jovens são mais frequentemente focados em resultados, enquanto os mais velhos são mais focados no contato com outras pessoas, sendo os aspectos sociais mais importantes para eles. Eles também prestam mais atenção à atratividade da cidade em que eles correm. Enquanto os jovens pensam em alcançar um resultado esportivo, sentir emoções intensas e conquistar reconhecimento aos olhos dos outros.

**Palavras-chave:** Meia-maratona; corrida; turismo esportivo; motivação; eventos esportivos.

## MOTIVOS RELACIONADOS CON LA EDAD EN LA PARTICIPACIÓN EN EVENTOS DE CARRERA

**Resumen** - Determinar las motivaciones relacionadas con la edad para participar de media maratón en cuatro categorías de edad de los entrevistados: hasta 25 años (n = 238), 26-35 años (n = 228), 36-50 años (n = 69) y 51- 70 años (n = 25) fue el principal objetivo del estudio. Un cuestionario autoconstruido fue utilizado para el estudio (N = 560) durante la Sexta Maratón de Poznan (uno de los más importantes eventos de carrera en Polonia). La base para el desarrollo del cuestionario sobre los motivos para la participación en eventos de carrera fue la división de Freyer y Gross (2002). El instrumento de investigación fue validado antes del evento examinado (durante la 5ª Media Maratón de Poznan). Los principales hallazgos de esta investigación fueron estrictamente relacionados con el motivo para mantener la condición física y la salud. El motivo fue importante para todos los grupos de edad investigados y reportados por el 82,1% (460) de los entrevistados. Fue también el más importante para el grupo de edad más viejo: corredores con edades entre 51 y 70 años (96% relataron esa motivación como la más importante). La diferencia más significativa entre corredores jóvenes y mayores es que los jóvenes se centran más en resultados, mientras que los más viejos están más enfocados en el contacto con otras personas, siendo los aspectos sociales más importantes para ellos. También prestan más atención al atractivo de la ciudad en la que corren. Mientras los jóvenes piensan en alcanzar un resultado deportivo, sentir emociones intensas y conquistar reconocimiento a los ojos de los demás.

**Palabras-clave:** Medio maratón; carrera; turismo deportivo; motivación; eventos deportivos.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.30937/2526-6314.v2n1.id42>

## Introduction

Running is an extremely popular discipline that is practiced worldwide<sup>1</sup>, and the marathon (42.195 km) and half marathon (21.975 km) are the running races with some of the highest participation rates. The reasons for their popularity are found in the fact that running is one of the cheapest (without specialized equipment) sports to participate in and can be practiced everywhere. It is not only popular to run, but also to participate in amateur running events. Over the past few decades, participation in running events has significantly increased, with hundreds of marathons and half marathons in the whole world. Some of them attracts more than 40,000 participants<sup>2</sup>. In the United States, the number of marathon participants in 2012 was 500,000, compared to 350,000 in 2000, 290,000 in 1995, and 150,000 in 1980<sup>3</sup>. In 2013, 3,900 marathon events were organized around the world, and 1.6 million people took part in them<sup>4</sup>. In 2014, at least one marathon was organized in the capital of each of the European Union member states (with the exception of Nicosia). The number of participants of these 27 events was almost 244,000 people<sup>5</sup>. According to Lepers and Cattagni<sup>6</sup>, the increase in participation in running events has overall been due to the boom in amateur middle-aged and master endurance runners. This refers to data from the Marathon in New York, where the number of men participants aged over 40 increased threefold from the 80s to the years 2000-2009, while the number of women increased seven times in the same period<sup>6</sup>. Tanaka and Seals<sup>7</sup> wrote that the greater presence of champions in the marathon was not only connected with massive participation but also with an impressive improvement in sports performance. Athletes over 70 years of age have exceeded the winning time at the first Olympic Games held in Athens<sup>7</sup>.

To meet the challenging psychophysiological demands of a marathon, one should have optimal levels of aerobic capacity, anaerobic threshold, and motivation<sup>8</sup>. In addition, performance in marathon running depends on the ability to appropriately expend energy to prevent premature fatigue prior to the completion of the event<sup>9,10</sup>. The long distance of the race puts high physical demands on the runner. Successfully completing a marathon requires regular, adequate and endurance training and a healthy lifestyle that is appropriately compatible with the effort. It has been shown that marathon runners are typically free from unfavorable habits and negative factors such as smoking, a lack of physical activity, or the poor diet connected with obesity<sup>11,13</sup>.

The aging population is more interested in understanding changes in the body and how individual health changes with age<sup>14</sup>. Since many of the age-related changes in physiological

functional capacity are connected to a sedentary lifestyle and lack of training, many researchers have paid attention to the effects of aging on endurance performance in runners. Some of them have surveyed master athletes<sup>7,15,16</sup>. Other researchers, Leyk et al.<sup>17</sup> and Wright and Perricelli<sup>18</sup>, have tried to recognize age-related changes in marathon and half marathon participation. Lepers and Cattagni surveyed elite senior athletes and older athletes who participated in marathons and half marathons<sup>6</sup>. Although it is obvious that the physical capacity of senior athletes and runners is reduced with age, there is much debate about the actual relationship between performance and age<sup>6,19,20</sup>. Most of the runners began running to improve their physical fitness. Taking on a personal challenge was the main reason for attempting a marathon. Summers et al. conducted a study based on a survey of middle-aged non-elite runners who were attempting their first marathon, determining their profile (middle-aged, non-elite runners)<sup>21</sup>. The research was conducted to evaluate motives for attempting a marathon, the observed results from running, and the runners' experiences while running a marathon. The results of Summers' research showed that running the marathon was a positive experience, evoking a feeling of deep personal awareness and satisfaction. Obtained information related to the concept of "positive addiction" and the cognitive strategies exercised while running<sup>21</sup>.

In Poland, the amount of organized events and their amateur and recreational participants has grown systematically since 2000. For example, 518 running events were organized in 2003, while in 2013 there was a significant increase in the organization such a kind of events<sup>22</sup>. Waśkowski reported that the number of participants at the 12 largest running events in Poland increased six-fold from 2011 to 2013<sup>23,24</sup>. In 2013 there were 2,700 such events throughout the country<sup>22</sup>. Stempień researched the origins of the trend of running in Poland<sup>5,22,25</sup>. Almost half of the respondents who participated in a marathon reported that a desire to take care of their health or a desire to lose weight (or both of these desires simultaneously) motivated them to start running. The results of a survey conducted by Waśkowski showed that the desire to start running lies primarily in the desire to improve physical condition. The next important motives were to reduce body weight or to battle an addiction. The collected data indicate that people who have just decided to practice this amateur sport treat running as a simple means of taking care of their own health, fitness, and figure. But when they get involved in this training, caring for the body is replaced by motivations related to developing and testing the capabilities of the body (improving results, competing with other runners)<sup>23,25</sup>. However, the popularization of running, active and

systematic participation in running events is complex and multifaceted. Its most important components relate to health care and physical and mental health. People run because it makes them feel better on a daily basis. They want to become amateur athletes and take on the challenges of a sporty lifestyle. Health and the desire to live longer is not the most typical reason for running. There is a mood elevating, quality-of-life benefit that comes from being a regular exerciser. The sense of joy resulting from an active lifestyle are conditioned not only by the course of motivational processes, but also by the level of satisfaction of psychological needs that are a prerequisite for achieving satisfaction from one's own physical activity. Interestingly, the literature studies have shown that in Poland no one has previously researched motives for running based on the age of participants. In United States, Ogles and Masters<sup>26</sup> investigated older and younger adult male marathon runners. They checked the participative motives and training habits used to prepare for running marathon between adults aged  $\geq 50$  and younger adults at the age of 20-28. For example, older adults were motivated by a general health orientation while younger surveyed adults by personal goal achievements<sup>27</sup>. These studies became an inspiration to check the motives for participation in the half-marathon in Poland, depending on the age of the participants. According to the authors of the presented research, the observed trend of running in Poland is not only the result of a desire to improve one's health and figure. We believe that there must be other factors behind it: social and psychological factors. We used a questionnaire that allowed us to explore a wide range of motives and measure the motives for running and participate in mass sporting events. The basis to carry out this research was the division of Freyer and Gross<sup>27</sup>, who distinguished four general types of orientation among the motives for participation in sporting events<sup>28,29</sup>: (a) social orientation, which is focused on the relationships of visitors to each other; (b) sensation-seeking orientation, which is most often concerning positive experiences, in the form of, for example, relaxation, which is a kind of compensation for the hardships of everyday life; (c) factual orientation/sports discipline orientation, referring to the sports events themselves and their specificity – in this case, to the specificity of running; and (d) result orientation, which is triggered by the need to identify with success, and in the case of failure, by the need to show sympathy and solidarity. This classification was the basis for the development of the author's questionnaire survey of motives for participation in running events and was used during the 6th Poznan Half Marathon, validated before the examined event (during the 5th Poznan Half Marathon). The presented research is provided to recognize the age-related motivations for participating in the half marathon among four age categories

of respondents, and also to evaluate the differences between them and determine how their participation in the running event had an impact on their mental health. The impulse to verify these differences was based on the respondents' varying ages, lifestyles, needs, and motivations for participating in the sport. Moreover, the research area, Poland and the city of Poznan, was also an inspiration because more than 500 running events are organized annually in the Greater Poland region. The city is the leader of mass running events all around Poland.

### **Aims of the Study**

The main goal of the study was to recognize the motives for participation in a mass running event. The second aim was to examine the motivations for participating in a half marathon among four age categories of respondents (up to 25 years old, 26-35 years old, 36-50 years old, and 51-70 years old), and also to evaluate the differences between them. The motives for participation in the sports event were examined in accordance with the four basic types of orientation – social orientation, experience orientation, factual orientation, and result orientation.

### **Materials and Methods**

Poznan is a city with a population of over 500,000 that offers a wide range of sports events. The Poznan Half Marathon is one of the biggest and one of the most important running events in the city and in the whole country. The main goal of the study was to recognize the age-related motivations for participating in a half marathon among four age categories of respondents: up to 25 years old (n=238), 26-35 years old (n=228), 36-50 years old (n=69), and 51-70 years old (n=25). The division of Freyer and Gross<sup>27</sup> was the basis for the development of the author's, self-constructed questionnaire survey of motives for participation in running events. These research instrument was used for the study (N=560) during the 6th Poznan Half Marathon. The questionnaire, validated before the examined event (during the 5th Poznan Half Marathon) had 25 questions divided in two parts: focused on socio-demographic variables and focused on the motives for participating in sporting events. The third part of the questionnaire was designed for people who were residents of Poznan, and the last part was designed for sports tourists. For the aim of the study, proved to be useful

the first and the second part of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were personally filled in during the conversation with the runners<sup>28,29\*</sup>.

## Results

A sample of 560 runners participated in the event voluntarily and completed the questionnaire: 346 male respondents and 214 female respondents. The participants (n=560) were mainly 26-35 years old (40.7% – 228) and 19-25 years old (40.2% – 225). There were also smaller groups of people 36-50 years old (n=69, 12.3%) and 51-70 years old (n=25, 4.5%). Among the surveyed participants, people with higher education constituted the vast majority, at 47.8% (268), while 28.4% (159) possessed secondary education and 19.1% (107) were people with incomplete higher education. A greater percentage of them, 56.8% (318), were professionally active, while over 31.8% were students (178).

The results of the research presented below show the relevance of specific motives (Tab. 1). In Group A, the group of motives in the scope of social orientation, the most important motive for every surveyed person was the desire to feel unity and integration with other people. This was reported by 50.2% (281) of the surveyed runners. But the least important motive was the prevailing fashion for participation in sports events. It turns out that people do not run in marathons only because it is fashionable or because they feel social pressure to do so. They really enjoy the social benefits and integration with other people. Participation in a mass sports event meets their affiliate needs. What is interesting is that the importance of belonging to the subculture of runners decreases with age. For 33.6% (80) people up to 25 years old and 27.6% (63) of people 26-35 years old, this motive is important. It also turned out that people up to 25 years old care the most about gaining recognition in the eyes of others, as 27.3% (65) of them reported this motivation. It follows that for young people the most important motivation is the approval of the peer group. The sports subculture is also important for young people because they usually do not have a well-established social,

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\* The sample was selected in a way that ensured the best possible representativeness of the results obtained. The scheme of simple random sampling without replacement was used. In determining the number, evidence from the organizers on the expected number of participants of the event was used. In calculations, the formula for sample size for a finite population was used. The assumption was made that the maximum error of estimate (e) at a 95% confidence level should not exceed 4%. That is why research by means of the diagnostic survey method was conducted using a standardized interview technique. The results concerning different types of motives consisted of more than 100% because in each group of motives participants could tick more than one answer (with a maximum of three answers). Descriptive statistics (percentages, means, and standard deviations) were calculated for all of the variables. For the differences between responses, a Chi-square test was used. Statistical significance was set at  $p \leq 0.05$ . All of the statistical analyses were conducted using Statistica Software 10.0 (StatSoft Inc., Cracow, Poland 2011).

professional, and financial position. They also do not have many opportunities to emphasize their identity or social status. Therefore, such functions can be fulfilled by sport. The statistically significant difference between these four groups of respondents was found in the following motives: belonging to the subculture of runners and a desire to gain recognition in the eyes of others ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Looking at the details of interest distributions, it can be noticed that the “desire to gain recognition in the eyes of others” is a motive that is clearly more often indicated by the youngest group (27.3%) and is quite similar among the remaining age groups. In the case of “belonging to a subculture of runners”, we can observe a clear trend towards a drop in the percentage of indications along with the transition to the next, older age groups (which seems to be a natural phenomenon).

It turned out that in Group B, among motives in the scope of the experience orientation, the most important motive for every surveyed group was the desire to experience the intense emotions associated with participation in a half marathon and the desire to have good fun. But the unusual mood during the whole event was important for young people. The same young people need to express happiness resulting from their running success. They feel the need to share their emotions with others. The decision to participate in the event due to the attractiveness of the city in which the event takes place most often concerned the oldest respondents. Perhaps they were interested in the tourist attractions that Poznań offers and hoped to visit these during their free time. This is a valuable tip for the organizers of the half marathon and specialists in tourism. They can prepare a special tourist offer for this age category during running events organized in the city. A statistically significant difference was found in three motives: the desire to sense the unusual mood during the whole event; the desire to express happiness, e.g., resulting from winning/success; and the desire expressed in the statement “I am allured by the attractiveness of the city in which the event takes place” ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). And again, we can observe a clear trend towards a drop in the percentage of indications along with the transition to the next, older age groups.

Table 1. Motives within the division of Freyer and Gross (n=560)

THE DIVISION OF FREYER & GROSS – GROUPS OF MOTIVES	up to 25 years old (N=238)		26-35 years old (N=228)		36-50 years old (N=69)		51-70 years old (N=25)		Test
GROUP A. Motives within the scope of social orientation	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p
The desire to feel unity and integration with other people	123	51.7	113	49.6	31	44.9	14	56.0	0.7174
Belonging to the subculture of runners	80	33.6	63	27.6	13	18.8	4	16.0	0.0420
The desire to gain recognition in the eyes of others	65	27.3	38	16.7	14	20.3	5	20.0	0.0480
The desire to sense equality during the race	42	17.6	53	23.3	18	26.1	6	24.0	0.3251
Prevailing fashion – participation in sports events is currently fashionable	29	12.2	30	13.2	7	10.1	4	16.0	0.8634
GROUP B. Motives within the scope of experience orientation	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p
The desire to experience intense emotions associated with participation	163	68.5	146	64.0	41	59.4	15	60.0	0.4605
The desire to sense the unusual mood during the whole event	124	52.1	117	51.3	24	34.8	6	24.0	0.0043
The desire to have good fun	119	50.0	132	57.9	34	49.3	15	60.0	0.2768
The desire to have enjoyable leisure time/entertainment	70	29.4	56	24.6	21	30.4	2	8.0	0.0938
The desire to express happiness, e.g., resulting from winning/success	55	23.1	30	13.2	10	14.5	2	8.0	0.0167
The desire to get away from everyday life	52	21.8	45	19.7	16	23.2	6	24.0	0.8893
I am allured by the attractiveness of the city in which the event takes place	12	5.0	8	3.5	8	11.6	3	12.0	0.0329



GROUP C. Motives within the scope of factual orientation	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p
The desire to develop my passion (running)	178	74.8	169	74.1	43	62.3	7	28.0	0.0000
I am drawn by the attractiveness of the sports part of the half marathon	66	27.7	64	28.1	15	21.7	6	24.0	0.7337
I am drawn by the attractiveness of the extensive program of events accompanying the race	29	12.2	23	10.1	7	10.1	4	16.0	0.7611
GROUP D. Motives within the scope of result orientation	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p
The desire to test oneself	185	77.7	175	76.8	46	66.7	12	48.0	0.0038
The desire to achieve the avowed goal	157	66.0	134	58.8	35	50.7	9	36.0	0.0026
The desire to participate in a sports competition	95	39.9	87	38.2	26	37.7	8	32.0	0.9632
High (international) rank of this sports event	10	4.2	8	3.5	1	1.4	1	4.0	0.2260
The desire to win	8	3.4	3	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.5404
GROUP E. Other motives	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p
The desire to maintain physical condition and health	198	83.2	182	79.8	56	81.2	24	96.0	0.2277

The motives included in Group C, within the scope of factual orientation, showed that the most important for the three age categories of respondents (up to 25 years old – 74.8%, 26-35 years old – 74.1%, 35-50 years old – 62.3%), and the option with a statistically significant difference, is the desire to develop passion. The result in the oldest group of surveyed runners was at the level of 28%.

Among the motives from Group D (in terms of the result orientation), the most frequently indicated was the one concerning the desire to test oneself. This result is at a high level of all the indications of all groups of respondents but was less important for the oldest runners. This motive was statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). The motive associated with the desire to achieve the avowed goal was also highly rated and statistically significant – it was indicated by 60% (335) of the surveyed athletes, but only 36% of the oldest runners. Participation in a sports competition was at the average level of 37%. The desire to win was at a low level for people from two groups/in the age range of 36-70.

All of the surveyed age groups of runners indicated the following when asked about other motives for participation in the half marathon: the desire to maintain good physical condition and health. This motive was reported by 82.1% (460) of the respondents. However, what is most significant is that this motive was the most important for the oldest age group, people 51-70 years old (at a high level of 96%). No significant difference between the responses of the participants was found.

The respondents were also asked to indicate which group of motives was the most important for them (Table 2/Figure 1).

Table 2. Significance of particular groups of motives covered by the research

Significance of the group of motives	up to 25 years old (N=238)		26-35 years old (N=228)		36-50 years old (N=69)		51-70 years old (N=25)		Test
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p
<b>Group A</b> - Motives within the scope of social orientation	49	20.6	65	28.5	21	30.4	11	44.0	0.0260
<b>Group B</b> - Motives within the scope of experience orientation	82	34.5	93	40.8	25	36.2	11	44.0	0.4788

<b>Group C</b> - Motives within the scope of factual orientation	29	12.2	19	8.3	9	13.0	3	12.0	0.5080
<b>Group D</b> - Motives within the scope of result orientation	93	39.1	86	37.7	21	30.4	6	24.0	0.3110
<b>Group E</b> - Other (The desire to maintain physical condition and health)	46	19.3	44	19.3	20	29.0	5	20.0	0.3273

The biggest number of respondents were occupied by motive Group B, including, among others, the desire to experience the intense emotions associated with participation (211 indications, 37.7%). The second place of importance (206 indications, 36.8%), although not for the oldest group (51-70 years old), pointed to Group D, result orientation, triggered by the need to identify with success, and in the case of failure, showing sympathy and solidarity. Motivations belonging to this group include: the desire to test oneself, achieve a set goal, participate in a sports competition, win, and participate in a high-ranking event. These motivations were of the greatest importance for the group of the surveyed participants in the race.

These results correspond with Ogles and Masters research when older runners endorse different reasons for training and for actively participating in marathon than younger surveyed runners<sup>26</sup>. For the group of older participants of the research more important was maintaining a level of fitness, health, weights benefits – motives of general health orientation. The motive of affiliation with other runners was important for them too. The younger group of participants of the surveyed marathon runners more heavily endorsed the motives of personal goal of achievement as a reason for running<sup>26</sup>. This research show that young people look for opportunities to challenge themselves, especially in the area of sport, entertainment and leisure. This confirms the concept of Stebbins. Nowadays, many forms of active sports in the form of participation in sporting events have already entered into the trend and theory of “serious leisure”<sup>30-31</sup>. Ogles and Masters assumed that the sample of older runners began running later in life but some of them report running as a way of gaining recognition from friends or family<sup>26</sup>. This motive was also important for younger runners. The results of Ogles and Masters shows that participation in mass running event is a way of meeting other

runners and correspond with the presented research, carried out in Poznan. These results show that runners are also seeking opportunities to establish social relations.

The third-most important group of motives that was statistically significant was Group A, motives within the scope of social orientation (desire to feel unity and integration with other people, belonging to the subculture of runners, desire to gain recognition in the eyes of others, the desire to sense equality during the race, prevailing fashion – participation in sports events is currently fashionable). Social motives are also important for their marathon runners. We can observe a trend towards a drop in the percentage of indications along with the transition to the next, younger age groups. For the oldest group of respondents, motives within the scope of social orientation and motives within the scope of experience orientation are the most important. Therefore, running events help prevent loneliness. Perhaps everyday life is not stimulating enough; nonetheless, this is a surprising result. It would be rather expected that young people are looking for adrenaline. For young people, Group D, motives within the scope of result orientation, was most often indicated (respondents up to 25 years old). The desire to maintain physical condition and health is the most important for people aged 36-52 years old.

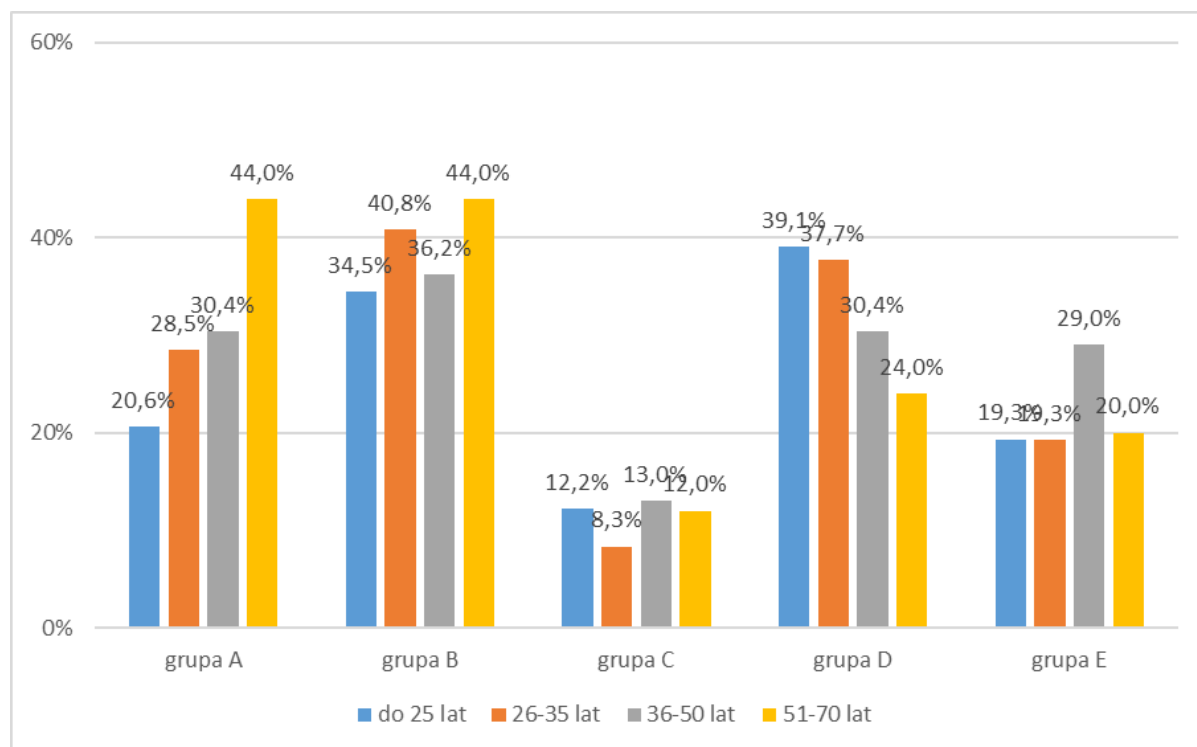


Figure 1. Significance of particular groups of motives covered by the research

The results confirm the theory of Zuckerman<sup>32</sup> who indicated the importance of experiencing the intense emotions associated with participation in a sports event (sensation-seeking theory). In this place, we may highlight Schulze's theory too, who claims that we live in an experience-centered society. Author added that people search for intense emotions and experiences, among other things, which are brought to us through sporting rivalry and the possibility of forming social relationships in a period of time. Zuckerman, the importance of experiencing strong emotions associated with participation in a sports event, describing as sensation-seeking but Schulze wrote that we live in an individualistic society that we need to experience emotions related to the mood of a given event and contact with other runners (and sports fans, tourists etc.). These aspects were not only a willingness to stay slim, fit and healthy, but also to build social relationships, look for emotions and new experiences that come with mass/recreational sport. Nowadays, this phenomenon can be one of the most important factors influencing the choice and effectiveness of serious leisure activities - various forms of sports and various forms of recreational activity. The results of the presented research outlined the direction of developmental changes in contemporary sports and serious leisure activity. This is the direction of developmental changes from recreation to excitement<sup>32,34</sup>. Participants are increasingly looking for the experience of strong emotions, extreme excitement related to competition, self-improvement and controlled risks. One of the most important factors influencing the choice of various forms of mass sports and recreational activities is the need to build social relationships<sup>35</sup>.

## **Discussion and Final Conclusions**

The main goal of the study was to recognize age-related motivations to participate in a half marathon among four age categories of respondents: up to 25 years old (n=238), 26-35 years old (n=228), 36-50 years old (n=69), and 51-70 years old (n=25). Running is commonly associated with health and a so-called healthy lifestyle. Mass sports events encourage people to undertake physical activity and lead them to be active. The health motivation leads people to take up running. The results of the National Census in 2014 in Poland showed that as many as 93% of runners train once a week or more (once a week – 11%, 2-3 times a week – 59%, four or more times a week – 23%). Of these 93%, almost half (44%) run at least 20 km on a weekly basis (including 13% who run more than 40 km)<sup>36</sup>. This requires quite a serious commitment

and changes in the sphere of the daily life of the individual (it should be remembered that a 10 km run takes the average runner about an hour, not counting warm-up, stretching exercises after training, etc.). The issue of the sports diet is also important. Waśkowski<sup>23,24</sup> showed that the monthly mileage of almost half (46%) of marathon runners exceeds 100 km, which, on average, would mean over 25 km per week. Running requires significant changes in the life of the individual. It requires dedicating the right amount of time to training and influences the after-treatment spheres of life (eating habits). Running, initially a specific instrument, a means to take care of one's own health and body, takes on additional qualities, providing (unexpected, as it seems) satisfaction connected with experiencing the capabilities of one's own body.

The main findings of the presented research were strictly connected with the following motive: the desire to maintain physical condition and health. This motive was important for all surveyed age groups of runners and reported by 82.1% (460) of the respondents. It was the most important for the oldest age group, people 51-70 years old (at a high level of 96%). Among motives in the scope of experience orientation, the most important motive for every surveyed group was the desire to experience strong emotions associated with participation in the half marathon. The desire to have good fun and experience the unusual mood during the whole event was especially important for young people. The same young people need to express happiness resulting from their running success. They feel the need to share their emotions with others. They really enjoy the social benefits and integration with other people and care the most about gaining recognition in the eyes of others. For young people, motives within the scope of result orientation were most often indicated (respondents up to 25 years old). This result is at a high level among all indications of all groups of respondents but was less important for the oldest runners. For the oldest group of respondents, social life, contact with people, and integration with them (motives within the scope of social orientation) were very important. Motives within the scope of factual orientation showed that the most important for the three age categories of respondents (up to 25 years old to 35-50 years old) was the desire to develop passion. Among the motives in terms of the result orientation, the most frequently indicated was the one concerning the desire to test oneself.

All of these statements show the importance of running in the lives of the examined people. This role requires a big commitment, spending time, attention, and above all, taking the sport of running, although it is for entertainment during one's free time, very seriously. Runners are proud of their running achievements: the ability to take on challenges previously defined as definitely too difficult and shaping oneself. Every success that is a positive experience (it can be, for example, a lifetime record at a distance of 10 km) becomes a step to another success (breaking that lifetime record), and all this is associated with increasing motivation to psychophysical loads, often exceeding the current possibilities<sup>37</sup>. People start running to lose weight, but after some time they feel an addiction related to constant self-affirmation. These runners are looking for satisfaction from participation in mass running events and contact with another people, which gives them a sense of control over their bodies, a strongly developed need for self-fulfillment. They need to feel unity and integration with another participants. However, the most significant difference between younger and older runners is that young people are more often focused on the result and older people are more focused on contact with other people, with social aspects being more important to them. They also pay more attention to the attractiveness of the city in which they run. But young runners think about achieving a sports result, experiencing intense emotions, and gaining recognition in the eyes of others.

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