



WHY WOMEN RUN? MOTIVATIONS FOR RUNNING IN A HALF-MARATHON AMONG FEMALE LOCAL RUNNERS AND SPORT TOURISTS

Abstract – The purpose of the study was to examine the motivations to participate in a half-marathon among women – local runners and sport-tourists – and also to evaluate the differences between these two groups of respondents. Most of the research concerns motivation to run among men. With the increase in the popularity of mass running events, the question what encourages women to engage in physical activity, especially outside their everyday place of residence, becomes very important now. The sample comprised 214 women that participated in the 6th Poznan Half Mara-thon in Poland. To evaluate the motivation to participate in the half-marathon event, a self-constructed questionnaire was used. Results indicated that local runners and sport-tourists have similar forms of motivation and similar meanings to the event participation with some significance differences. A socio-demographic profile of a half-marathon female participant was also examined. In general, the findings of the present study provide an understanding of motivation to participate in a half-marathon event in different women groups. Current research on the motivation of the running event participants was aimed at determining how meaningful some aspects are. These aspects were not only a willingness to stay fit, healthy, and slim, but also to build social relationships and look for the experiences and emotions that come with recreational sport. These results might be useful for sport managers and city government to analyze consumer behavior and utilize the results in the strategic planning, marketing and implementation of physical culture in connection with massive sport events organizations.

Keywords: Motives of participation in a running event; runners; half marathon; women in sport; mass running events.

POR QUE AS MULHERES CORREM? MOTIVAÇÕES PARA CORRER UMA MEIA-MARATONA ENTRE CORREDORAS LOCAIS DO SEXO FEMININO E TURISTAS ESPORTISTAS

Resumo - O objetivo do estudo foi examinar as motivações para participar de uma meia maratona entre mulheres - corredoras locais e turistas esportistas - e também para avaliar as diferenças entre esses dois grupos de entrevistados. A maior parte da pesquisa diz respeito à motivação para correr entre os homens. Com o aumento da popularidade dos eventos de corrida em massa, a questão que incentiva as mulheres a se envolverem em atividades físicas, especialmente fora de seu local de residência, torna-se muito importante. A amostra foi composta por 214 mulheres que participaram da 6ª Meia Maratona de Poznan na Polônia. Para avaliar a motivação para participar do evento de meia maratona, utilizou-se um questionário autoconstruído. Os resultados indicaram que as corredoras locais e as turistas esportistas têm formas semelhantes de motivação e significados semelhantes para a participação no evento, com algumas diferenças significativas. Também foi examinado o perfil sociodemográfico de uma meia maratona do sexo feminino. Em geral, os resultados do presente estudo fornecem uma compreensão da motivação para participar de um evento de meia maratona em diferentes grupos de mulheres. A pesquisa atual sobre a motivação dos participantes do evento de corrida teve como objetivo determinar quão alguns aspectos são significativos. Esses aspectos não foram apenas uma disposição para se manter em forma, saudável e magra, mas também para construir relacionamentos sociais e buscar as experiências e emoções que acompanham o esporte recreativo. Esses resultados podem ser úteis para os gestores esportivos e o governo da cidade para analisar o comportamento do consumidor e utilizar os resultados no planejamento estratégico, marketing e implementação da cultura física em conexão com grandes organizações de eventos esportivos.

Palavras-chave: Motivos de participação em um evento de corrida; corredoras; meia-maratona; mulheres no esporte; eventos de corrida em massa.

¿POR QUÉ CORREN LAS MUJERES? MOTIVACIONES PARA CORRER UNA MEDIA MARATÓN ENTRE CORREDORAS LOCALES DEL SEXO FEMENINO Y TURISTAS DEPORTIVAS

Resumen - El objetivo del estudio fue examinar las motivaciones para participar en una media maratón entre mujeres (corredoras locales y turistas deportivos) y también evaluar las diferencias entre estos dos grupos de encuestados. La mayor parte de la investigación se refiere a la motivación para correr entre hombres. Con la creciente popularidad de los eventos de carreras masivas, el tema que alienta a las mujeres a realizar actividades físicas especialmente fuera de su lugar de residencia, se vuelve muy importante. La muestra consistió en 214 mujeres que participaron en la sexta media maratón de Poznan en Polonia. Para evaluar la motivación para participar en el evento de media maratón, se utilizó un cuestionario autoconstruido. Los resultados indicaron que las corredoras locales y las deportistas turísticas tienen formas similares de motivación y significados similares para participar en el evento, con algunas diferencias significativas. También se examinó el perfil sociodemográfico de una media maratón femenina. En general, los resultados del presente estudio proporcionan una comprensión de la motivación para participar en un evento de media maratón en diferentes grupos de mujeres. La investigación actual sobre la motivación de los participantes del evento de carrera tuvo como objetivo determinar cuán significativos son algunos aspectos. Estos aspectos no solo fueron la disposición a mantenerse en forma, saludable y delgada, sino también a construir relaciones sociales y perseguir las experiencias y emociones que acompañan al deporte recreativo. Estos resultados pueden ser útiles para los gerentes deportivos y el gobierno de la ciudad para analizar el comportamiento del consumidor y utilizar los resultados en la planificación estratégica, el marketing y la implementación de la cultura física en relación con las grandes organizaciones de eventos deportivos.

Palabras-clave: Razones para participar en un evento de carrera; corredoras; media maratón; mujeres en el deporte; eventos de carreras masivas.

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Introduction

A social and cultural transformations in the economically highly developed countries, in particular within a scope of a value system and a lifestyle, have a significant impact on a nature of needs and motivations of the tourist travels. An increasing level of wealth and resources of free time causes that more and more people can travel, discover individually the world, develop their hobby interests, including these connected with sport. The tourists set out for a travel in order to discover, break away for everyday life and first of all to experience something extraordinary. Nowadays these needs are satisfied, among others, by the sport tourism – now one of the most quickly developing branches of the tourism industry.

Sport tourism is an important part of the travel industry, drawing thousands of travelers and fans to various competitions and championships. Running events are sport tourism attractions taking place in many cities around the globe. Marathons and half marathons in Europe are now extremely popular among many tourists¹. In the last 30 years (since the great success of the Olympic Games in Los Angeles and Barcelona), many cities, regions, and countries have implemented strategies to systematically organize great sports events, and have allocated human and financial resources to attract elite mega-sports events. Countries are fighting for the right to organize the largest and most expensive sporting events in the world. As a result of the difficult race to win the competition, many cities and regions are turning to smaller sporting events in the field of non-elite sport, like running (that do not require expensive infrastructure) or to heritage sporting events^{2,3,4}. Running events are especially popular among tourists, because running does not require specialized skills, unlike the case of unusual sports. Many running enthusiasts have the opportunity to travel to incredible places and run through picturesque locations full of interesting attractions, such as: the Athens Marathon, marathons in Lisbon, Goteborg and Oslo, the Warsaw Marathon, the International Marathon of Peace in Kosice, the Swiss City Marathon in Lucerne, the Volkswagen Marathon in Prague, the Crete Half Marathon, half marathons in Geneva, Bucharest, Copenhagen, and Poznan, the Wizz Air Half Marathon in Budapest and The BMW Berlin Marathon (in which almost 50,000 people participated last year). In Poland, running and participation in mass running events such as marathons and half marathons have become very popular as well. The number of organized events and their

participants has grown noticeably since 2000. More than 15 large marathons are held in Poland each year. This number only accounts for those events in which the participants are counted in thousands. Poznan is an example of a city with a very wide offer of sports events. More than 500 events at various levels are organized annually in the city and the Great Poland region, which puts Poznan among the leaders of running events nationally. The Poznan Half Marathon is one of the most important running events in the field of mass sport in Poland, in which both amateur and professional athletes can participate. According to the report *Physical Activity of Poles*⁵, there are 62% of Poles who are physically active. Poles most often ride a bicycle (31%) and run (29%). 7% of the Polish society that runs is taking part in massive running events.

The dynamic growth of mass running sport events is a result of different factors. We may highlight the search for strong emotions and experiences, among others (as we live in an experience-centered society, see G. Schulze⁶ theory), which are brought to us through sporting rivalry and the possibility of making social relationships (the need to feel unity during such events) in a period of time where we live in a society of individuals⁷. People taking up sports and recreational activity more frequently feel the need to increase their loads and enhance their efficiency, participate in situations posing an opportunity to verify their own accomplishments, constantly check back, and achieve a high level of stimulation. Such a phenomenon, which is defined as the search for sensations – sensation seeking⁸ – can nowadays be one of the most important factors influencing the choice and effectiveness of various forms of sports and recreational activity. According to the outlined direction of developmental changes in contemporary sports and recreational activity – from recreation to excitement – participants are increasingly looking for extreme excitement related to self-improvement and competition, and, above all, experiencing exciting and intentionally controlled risk⁹. J. Stempień¹⁰ notices that active participation in running events is also a middle-class distinctive feature – a form of display of social status, prestige, and even snobbery. We should also take into consideration an economic factor: running events contribute to financial movement and profit and might contribute to build a positive image of cities and regions in the eyes of potential sport tourists.

Researchers, health professionals have all sought to explore the reasons why some people are physically active, whereas others are not. Motives of participation in

physical activity are highly complex and motivation is a key factor that influences individuals' initiation and maintenance of behavior. Motivation affects physical activity participation and it is a critical factor in exercise adherence. There is worldwide concern about low levels of physical activity among a large proportion of the population. Physical inactivity is one of the leading risk factors for global mortality. Physical activity can reduce the risk for cardiovascular diseases, overweight, falls, obesity, diabetes type II, depression, perceived stress, and fractures. The most important benefits of regular physical activity include reduced prevalence of many diseases, as well as a decrease in mortality. Indeed, individuals of all ages can gain an array of physical, psychological, social, and emotional benefits from physical activity. On the other hand, inactivity is associated with higher all-cause mortality, coronary artery disease, stroke, and hypertension. While, habitual physical activity can improve other factors including mental health, social contacts, self-confidence, healthy aging, quality of life. Physical inactivity is a primary cause of most chronic diseases, where the body rapidly badly adapts to insufficient physical activity and, if continued, results in substantial decrease in both quantity and quality years of life. Increasing levels of physical activity to meet current guidelines during adulthood is a public health priority and physical activity recommendations have been designed by public health professional organizations.

Female participation in sport increased in the twentieth century, especially in the last quarter-century, reflecting changes in modern societies that emphasized gender parity. Although the level of participation and performance still varies greatly by country and by sport, women's sports are widely accepted throughout the world today. The International Olympic Committee was founded more than a century ago to harness the power of sport at the service of humanity. Traditionally, women were not allowed to participate in the Olympic Games, which were exclusively for men. Times have changed, and the IOC has played an important role in establishing a positive trend to enhance women's participation in sport. Over the last 20 years, the IOC has been advocating for the participation of women at all levels to enhance the presence of women in sport. Actually, International Olympic Committee strives to promote women's participation in sports activities and in the Olympic Games. The goal of gender equality is enshrined in the Olympic Charter, which compels the IOC to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels. Sport, whether

competition sport or sport for all, has become a social force with a major impact on the structure of society and the condition of women. Sport belongs to all human beings. It is important to women and men as sport provides opportunities to learn, to experiences success, teamwork and moments of excellence. We observe more and more women choosing to take up sport. An important milestone has been set within Olympic Agenda 2020. Recommendation 11 compels the IOC to work with the International Federations to achieve 50 per cent female participation in the Olympic Games and to stimulate women's participation and involvement in sport by creating more participation opportunities at the Olympic Games. Never have so many female Olympians taken part in the Olympic and Youth Olympic Games as today. The most remarkable increase in women's participation has taken place within the last two decades. In London in 2012, women competed in all the sports on the Olympic programme for the first time, and the Rio 2016 Games set a new record for women's participation in the Olympic Games. In Rio, gender equality was also for the first-time part of the Olympic social legacies. That is why it is so important to study the motives of women participation in sport, including non-elite sport.

The popularity of running events is undoubtedly influenced by the policy of health promotion and the development of the ideology of healthism. A trend of healthism, which can be described as an opposite to a passive attitude towards health, has been developing for a few decades now. It is related to focusing on health that constitutes a basis for defining and reaching one's well-being. An individual may achieve that through a lifestyle change. Those that oppose to this trend, frequently call it a health cult or even a health obsession; it may be referred to as an ideology of treating a body as a symbol indicating one's health condition. For those people that adopt this ideology, (good) health is not only a mean that enables life, but a goal itself. Such an understanding of health influences changes in the role of medicine, which not only just cures, but also takes a preventive approach, through education and control testing. The term healthism was coined in the 1980s in the US. R. Crawford¹¹ used it for the first time in 1980. He described an ideology which was an important aspect in the new health awareness of the American Society in the 1970s. That awareness was shaping in the American culture alongside with the growth of the popularity of the sport, which was reflected by individual efforts to look after one's health, numerous health-

promoting campaigns, providing an increasing health-related information in the media, such as the advertisement of products consumed for health reasons, etc.¹². In the last few years, the ideology of healthism has been developing in Poland, too. This trend is particularly visible in mass running events, in which Poles participate eagerly. The scale of this social phenomenon is surely an unusual occurrence on many levels, as a number of interdisciplinary factors should be taken into account. Taking care of one's physical (and mental) well-being is undoubtedly an important reason for participating in mass sport events in Poland, especially since the concept of sport for all has been lately strongly promoted in media. Moreover, the postmodernism in sport might indicate individuals are tired of the repeated success of professional athletes and watching sport events as spectators because they all seem similar. Individuals are migrating from passive sport consumers to active sport consumption which translates in a sporty lifestyle.

It is important to recognize the motivation of women's participation in mass running events and check the differences between the local runners and sport tourists. It is also important to recognize the socio-demographic profile of participant of half-marathons. No differences in motivation among local runners and sport tourists have been examined so far. Gibson, Attle and Yiannakis¹³ investigated the women participation in sport tourism in general, not focusing on running tourism. According to Ross's research¹⁴, young men with higher education, who are professionally active, are the most active participants of running events in the USA. Roberts¹⁵ also indicates that sporting tourists are most often educated men in a good economic situation. This is due to the greater participation of men in sport in general, and the need to incur high financial costs to participate in some sports events. Ogles and Masters¹⁶ indicate that in their study about running motivations during Midwestern Marathon only 250 women took part (and more than 1000 men). Most of the research concerns motivation to run among men. Particularly little data concerns the motivation of women in ultramarathons¹⁷. Ogles Masters and Richardson¹⁸ investigated differences in motivations for running between women and men. Among the most common motifs of running among women, researchers mention social needs and concern for appearance and physical condition, while men are more likely to compete and achieve success. With the increase in the popularity of sports tourism, including running tourism, the

question then becomes important as it encourages women to engage in physical activity outside their everyday place of residence. The research on the motivation of the running event participants aimed at determining how meaningful some aspects are. These aspects were not only a willingness to stay fit, healthy and slim, but also to build social relationships and to look for experiences and strong emotions that come with recreational sport.

Aims of Study

Evaluate the motivations to participate in a half-marathon among two groups of women: local runners and sport-tourists.

Participants and Method

Participants

Data was collected during the 6th Poznan Half Marathon. A sample of women (N=214): local runners (from Poznan city, N=71) and sport-tourists (N=143) participated in the event voluntarily and completed a questionnaire. The majority of respondents (41.6%) were between ages of 19-25 and 40.7% - 26-35. While only 10.7% were between 36-50 years old, 4.2% - 51-70 and 2.8% - less than 18 years old. Participants represented different educational levels, the majority had a higher education (49.5%), the remainder had a secondary education (26.2%) and an incomplete higher education as well (21.0%). Most of the participants came from urban areas, like cities above 500 thousand residents (41.6%) and from cities with 10-100 thousand residents (22.4%), but also from rural areas (22.0%). 34.1% of respondents had a status of a student and 54.2% – status of a professionally active person. The sample was selected in such a way as to ensure good representation of the obtained results. Simple random sampling, which is a draw without return, was used. Information on the expected number of participants was used to determine the sample size. Calculations were used for the sample size for the finite population. It was assumed that the maximum error of estimation (e) at 95% confidence level did not exceed 4%.

Method

A self-constructed questionnaire was used for the study. The division of Freyer and Gross¹⁹, who distinguished four types of orientation among the motives of participation in sporting events, was the basis for the development of the author's questionnaire survey of motives for participation in running events. Authors¹⁹ have distinguished four main types of orientation among motives for participation in sports events: a) social orientation, oriented to the relation of visitors to one another; b) experience orientation, oriented to strong emotional experiences, most often positive, in the form of, for example, relaxation, which is a kind of compensation for the hardships of everyday life; c) specific sport discipline orientation, referring to the sporting events itself and their specificity/discipline; d) result orientation, triggered by the need to identify successfully, and in the case of failure, compassion and solidarity. The results concerning a different type of motives consist of more than 100% because, in each group of motives, participants could tick more than one answer (maximum 3 answers).

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics (percentages, means and standard deviations) were calculated for all variables. For the differences between responses of local runners and sport-tourists, a Chi-square test was used. Statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$. All statistical analyses were conducted using Statistica Software 10.0 (StatSoft Inc., 2011).

Results

Table 1. presents the first group of motives (Group A), the social orientation and the second group of motives (Group B), the experience orientation. The most important motive from the first group of motives, both for local runners and for sport-tourists, was "a desire to feel unity and integration with other people" (54.9% and 49.7%, respectively). On the second place was the need of participation in subculture of runners (28.2% - local runners and 30.1% - sport tourists). In this group of motives, we didn't find statistically significant differences between groups.

In the second group of motives (Group B), the statistically significant difference between these two groups of respondents was found in three responds. The desire to experience strong emotions was more important for sport tourists (77.6%) than for local

runners (43.7%) – for them the most important motives were the desire to have fun (67.6%) and to feel the extraordinary mood of the event (64.8%).

Table 1. Motives for social orientation and for experience orientation

Groups of motives	Local runners (n = 71)		Sport-tourists (n = 143)		P
	n	%	n	%	
<i>Group A</i>					
<i>Motives for social orientation</i>					
Desire to feel unity and integration with other people	39	54,9	71	49,7	0.4669
Desire to feel equality during the race	16	22,5	36	25,2	0.6716
The prevailing fashion - participation in sports events is fashionable	9	12,7	29	20,3	0.1705
Desire to win recognition in the eyes of others	15	21,1	37	25,9	0.4458
Participation in subculture of runners	20	28,2	43	30,1	0.7739
<i>Group B</i>					
<i>Motives for experience orientation</i>					
Desire to experience strong emotions	31	43,7	111	77,6	0.0000
Desire to feel the extraordinary mood of the whole event	46	64,8	61	42,7	0.0023
Have fun	48	67,6	72	50,3	0.0166
Desire to enjoy leisure / entertainment	22	30,1	34	23,8	0.2586
Desire to express joy, e.g. because of winning/success	13	18,3	22	15,4	0.5859
Desire to break away from everyday life	20	28,2	38	26,6	0.8047
It attracts me to the attractiveness of the city in which the event takes place	0	0,0	12	8,4	0.0120

Table 2 presents the percentage of motives for specific sport discipline orientation (Group C), for the result orientation (Group D) and for other motives (Group E). The most frequently indicate response in the Group C, was “a desire to develop passion” for local runners (76.1%) and for sport-tourists as well (67.1%). In this group of motives, we didn’t find statistically significant differences between groups.

The most important motive from Group D for both groups was “a desire to check myself” (for local runners – 85.9% and for sport-tourists – 72.0%). We have reported the statistically significant difference in this answer – it was more important for local runners (≤ 0.05). The desire to check myself was more important than fight with others and the desire to win.

In the last group of motives (Group E), the most important were “a desire to maintain good physical/health condition” for local runners (78.9%) and also for sport-tourists (81.8%). No significant difference between responses of the participant was found.

Table 2. Motives for specific sport discipline orientation, for the result orientation and other motives

Groups of motives	Local runners (n = 71)		Sport-tourists (n = 143)		p
	n	%	n	%	
<i>Group C</i>					
<i>Motives for specific sport discipline orientation (running)</i>					
Desire to develop passion	54	76.1	96	67.1	0.1795
I'm attracted by the attractiveness of the sports part of the half-marathon	15	21.1	35	24.5	0.5857
It attracts me to the attractiveness of a rich program of accompanying events	6	8.5	20	14.0	0.2432
<i>Group D</i>					
<i>Motives for the result orientation</i>					
Desire to check myself	61	85.9	103	72.0	0.0238
Desire to achieve the goal set	46	64.8	76	53.1	0.1053
Desire to participate in sports rivalry	28	39.4	47	32.9	0.3429
Desire to win	1	1.4	3	2.1	0.7259
The high (international) rank of this sporting event	0	0.0	5	3.5	0.1109
<i>Group E</i>					
<i>Other motives</i>					

Desire to maintain good physical / health condition 56 78.9 117 81.8 0.6063

Respondents were also asked which group of motives was the most important for them:

Table 3. The importance of groups of motives

Groups of motives	Local runners (n=71)		Sport-tourists (n = 143)		<i>P</i>
	n	%	n	%	
GROUP A – SOCIAL ORIENTATION	14	19.7	48	33.6	0.0355
GROUP B – EXPERIENCE ORIENTATION	28	39.4	63	44.1	0.5198
GROUP C – SPECIFIC SPORT DISCIPLINE ORIENTATION	7	9.9	16	11.2	0.7675
GROUP D – RESULT ORIENTATION	32	45.1	47	32.9	0.0815
GROUP E – HEALTH AND PHYSICAL CONDITION ORIENTATION	11	15.5	27	18.9	0.5414

Table 3 presents the percentage of the groups of motives for both groups of women. The most important group of motives for local runners was Group D (result orientation), while for sport tourists – Group B (experience orientation). The significant difference between responses of the participant was found in Group A (social orientation). Motives from this group were more important for sport tourists. These results clearly show that sport lovers travel for mass running events in search of strong emotions and build social relationships while local runners participate in local events because are concentrated on result orientation, but more often on fighting themselves than on sporting rivalry. It is also interesting that the motives related to health care and physical condition, although often indicated by the respondents (78.9%, 81.8%), were very low in importance (15.5%, 18.9%). These motives and motives connected with specific sport discipline orientation were the least important groups. The popularity of sports tourism, in this case the marathon tourism can be explained by the fact that it is a

manifestation of a society that is focused on experiencing strong emotions, also during travel. In addition, mass sports events become a postmodern form of participation in social life – they allow to feel part of the community of runners. The need for affiliation is now extremely important in Western societies, which currently do not create many possibilities for collectivist behavior, as in Eastern societies.

Discussion

The most important motives for all participants were: the desire to feel unity and integration with other people was the most important in the group of motives for the social orientation; the desire to experience strong emotions and to have fun in the group of motives for the experience orientation; the desire to develop passion in the group of motives for specific sport discipline orientation; the desire to check myself in the group of motives for result orientation; and the desire to maintain good physical/health condition in the other group of motives. The most important motives for local runners were these connected with result orientation, while for sport tourists – with social orientation. Moreover, motive to win with the others wasn't that important, like motive to fight with oneself weaknesses. In addition, the sport-tourists were seeking for more powerful emotions and relations with other runners and fans more often than local participants. According to this, sport-tourism provides more opportunities to gain emotional experiences than sport in familiar spaces. Additionally, socio-psychological motives are more important than the motive of health or physical fitness. Surprisingly, the least important group of motives for women were motives for specific discipline (running) orientation. This means that running in mass events is the way to achieve not only sporting goals – socio-psychological functions are especially important for the runners.

We note the following limitation and strength of our study: a strength is a number of women investigated, while a limitation is the self-reporting nature of the surveys. Definitely, these results could provide some guidelines for sport managers to set and arrange future sport running events. But most importantly, to understand the motives among women to participate in a non-elite sport.

Conclusion

The paper provides data which may be useful for support marketing events like half-marathons. The motives for the result orientation (i.e. desire to challenge myself, desire to achieve the goal, desire to compete, desire to win and the high rank of the sport event) are the most important for local runners. For sport tourist the most important was sensation seeking orientation and motives connected with positive mood effects. The least important group of motives for all women were specific discipline orientation and health and physical condition orientation. To sum up, the findings indicate that local runners and sport-tourists have similar forms of motives and give similar meanings to event participation with some differences.

The popularity of marathons and half marathons fulfills a number of important socio-cultural functions in the postmodern world. The most important include enabling sports tourists to build a sense of connection and integration with other people, thanks to which sports events become a postmodern form of participation in social life. Sporting events also satisfy the desire to experience strong emotions, a need that is at the top of the hierarchy of postmodern human needs.

The article constitutes a conceptualisation of the sport event tourism in the dimension of social and psychological interactions which reveal and demonstrate its creative layers and contemporary meaning which has already gone deeply beyond functions of only meeting a need of leisure, entertainment, care for health and physical condition.

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