'Understanding the power of social media through an examination of participants' behaviour on French charity sports events'

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Declaration

I, Constance Marle, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree of Diploma.

In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this dissertation. This work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signed:  

CONSTANCE MARLE

Date: 4th of January 2016
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Abstract

The world of communication has seen tremendous changes since social media appeared about 10 years ago.
When social media changed the businesses’ landscapes and communication strategies, it also changed the consumers and Internet users’ behaviours.
In fact, individuals are connected through these social media everywhere, every time and with everyone. It is the great power, yet threat, of social media.
On the other hand, France welcomes every year numerous charity sports events, which tend to find new ways of raising funds while entertaining participants.

This dissertation aims to investigate the efficacy of the social media strategies used by charity sports events’ organizers, in France, in order to offer the best playful and meaningful experiences to participants. This study focuses on the interactions between associations and participants through social media. It investigates the participants’ sharing behaviours on the digital sphere.
This dissertation first presents a literature review, analysing the different academic articles written by various authors regarding social media, and how it has impacted the sports fields, but also charity sport events, and the participants’ motivations towards these specific events.

Primary and secondary research have been done in order to highlight relevant findings. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been undertaken through a questionnaire and in-depths interviews.

The main finding of this research is the sharing dimension social media empower. In fact, the study highlighted that sharing content is multi-dimensional, bringing the social, psychological and marketing sides together.
It also revealed the importance of the interactions between the associations – charity sports events’ organizers on one side and participants on the other side, through social media.

Keywords: Social media, charity, charity sport event, sport event, interactions, participants, France
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NB / Charity sports events could be reduced at: CSE in the entire document
1. Introduction

1. Background

For the last ten years, social media have changed the way of communicating and sharing of individuals both in their personal and professional lives. In fact, their way of living is completely different now, mostly articulated around technological devices such as mobile phones, tablets, or laptops.

In France, a report from January 2015 carried out by WeAreSocial, a social media agency, indicates that over the 66.1 million people composing the French population, 55.4 million people are active Internet users with 30.0 million active social media accounts. In addition, the country counts 64.3 million mobile connections with 24.0 million active mobile social accounts, which means that digital users are as much active through social online media as they are on mobile devices. As a matter of fact, between personal computers (PC) and mobile phone, French social media users spend an average daily use of two hours. When looking at the top active social platforms, Facebook stays number one for the French users with 32%, then we can find Twitter (9%) & finally Instagram (4%).

On the other hand, according to a study conducted by Kurt Salmon - a global management consulting firm - and KantarSport - a team of media analysts and experts - in January 2014, the sports field represented 42.4 billion euros of annual contributions in France, including volunteering work (4 million volunteering sport participants). Furthermore, France counted 1.3 million actives associations in 2013 with 3 503 health associations and 29 483 sports associations that could have possibly organized a charity sports event (CSE). France has always hosted a sizeable number of sports events each year, from popular events such as the “Tour de France” across the country (cycling event) to smaller events like the “Triathlon des Roses” in Paris (triathlon event). The country has witnessed a rise in the number of these CSE and a diversification towards new ways of raising money for diverse causes. Those specific events have taken different shapes, for instance any kind of run or triathlon races in the case of running, in order to reach a wider audience running being considered as one of the most affordable sports.
In addition to that, a report from the French government announced that 48% of the French population was doing at least one regular physical activity a week in 2014. This figure points out the opportunity for charity sports events’ organizers to target potential participants.

2. Justification

Bringing these two topics together leads the research to connect social media & charity sports events.
A considerable amount of research has been done to understand the motivations of participants as well as the relationships between the sponsor brand, the event, and the communities. Among others, about ten different research articles presenting meaningful contributions to the field, can be found. Reading Dr. Kevin Filo, a deep understanding of the charity sport events’ effects - on participants - and of impacts - on brands – are highlighted thanks to his numerous articles on the topic, most notably the following article: “The antecedents and outcomes of attachment and sponsor image within charity sport events” (Journal of Sport Management, 2010).
Bridging sport psychology and social media, the article: “Integrating social media and new technologies into your practice as a sport psychology consultant” (Sport & Exercise Psychology Review, The British Psychological Society, 2014) by Stewart T. Cotterill and Rebecca Symes has served as an interesting starting point for the research.
Similarly, research conducted by Marieke Hendrike and Ed Peelen has contributed to the understanding of how participants tick vis-à-vis those events; “Personas in action: linking event participation motivation to charitable giving and sports” (International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, 2012).
What was a sort of catalyst of the reflection when the research had started was the fact that, despite the sizeable figure of approximately 8.5 million runners (French Athletics federation, 2014) that could be potential CSE participants, surprisingly little research had been done to analyze the power of social media with regards to French charity sports events.
By consequent, an interrogation arose: What is known about participants’ experiences on CSE through social media; more precisely: is the effectiveness of a CSE reinforced when using social media?
3. **Research Question, Objectives and Rationale**

Little is known about these two topics in tandem, this is the reason why the study was designed around the following research question: ‘What is the significance of social media in enhancing the participants’ experiences in the context of French charity sports events?’

In Today’s society, an event is hardly launched without a digital strategy. The aim of such strategies is to make people talk about it, eventually join it and share it. There are real inter-activities happening. Thus, the purpose of the study is to understand and highlight the use of social media in sharing the different French charity sports events’ experiences, but also to assess its role in their efficacy.

From the research question, a few research objectives ought to be highlighted. The first step would be to identify targeted social media as the most significant promotional tools for CSE. Then, the second step would be to determine how to trigger emotions to support these events, in other words, learning more about charity digital marketing strategies.

It is safe to say that these charity sports events will always leave participants impressions and emotions. Therefore, one could wonder what exactly participants are going through.

Overall, the prime aim of my academic enterprise is to examine different participants’ experiences thanks to social media chronologically.

Doing so, I intend to draw conclusions regarding the aforementioned statements, with the aim to evaluate the effectiveness of CSE in relation to social media.

- On the one hand, could these French specific events exist in an effectively manner without social medias?
- On the other hand, could French participants have the best playful and meaningful experience of a charity sports event, without being connected through social media?

By asking these questions, the study would try to demonstrate that French charity sports events could not exist in today’s 2015 world without being strongly connected to social media, in order to deliver the best experience(s) to the participants.
It feels as if useful findings could be drawn from this endeavor, notably for digital marketing strategies for future CSE.

This research will try to add to literature to help organizations to get a better understanding of social media’s power through their digital marketing strategies. It might enable them to adjust their communication and/or find new ways of reaching their targets and make participants involved.

By doing this, participants might get better CSE experiences. It may also allow them to compare their experiences and even get inspired by others.

4. **Background of the researcher**

Together these two topics appear to be an appreciable bridge between my studies of marketing and communication, my passion for sports, and my involvement in CSE as a volunteer, participant or as a spectator. In fact, I have been studying marketing and communication for now 5 years in France and abroad. I have earned a dual Bachelor (BSc) in Marketing at the University of California, Berkeley (Cal) and at the ISEG Marketing and Communication school in Paris. I am now on the edge to finish my Master's Degree with a semester at the Dublin Business School (Dublin, Ireland) and at the ISEG Marketing and Communication school (Paris, France). Sport has always been part of my life, it has taught me significantly, not only socially but also personally. In fact, if I look back, sport has always been there to help me socialize in every adventure that I have undertaken. Sport is more than a passion for me, and I think it’s the case for other people as well, it is lifestyle leitmotiv.

I do not know the origin of this inner impulsion, but I have always wanted to help people and been curious and inspired by people that use sport as a revival, to push themselves forward or to help others.

Thus, after five years of various internships, I decided to pursue a career in the sports industry. The current dissertation is a reflection of what I have been studying and doing over the past five years. In a nutshell, it is a hybrid between sports, marketing, and communication.
5. Limitations

The different stages of this dissertation have been carefully planned to meet the submission deadline, but also to have a smoother and more effective research process. (Appendix ‘dissertation plan details’ p.72).

Further, I have decided to test myself on the “Kolb’s Learning Styles” questionnaire to enhance my study skills, my learning preferences, and simply to render the all dissertation writing process easier.

From the results in appendices pp.73-74, one could argue that I am of a reflector, and of a theorist. If reflectors tend to make observations and listen to others before taking any decision, theorists really follow the logic on everything they undertake, they are perfectionists, and they tend to be detached to rational objectivity.

Being a hybrid of the two schools will help me to first conduct the interviews as a good listener, but also to make good observations towards their behaviors. Then, in a second time, the theorist side of me will attempt to analyze the findings in the best logical way.

Doing this study on my own was a real challenge. Of course, and thankfully, I was getting help and feedbacks from my tutor to help me rise the study at its best level. One of the aspects that scared me the most in doing this study was reviewing academic articles in a critical way. If coming to the Dublin Business School this year has taught me a bit of literature review methodology, it still remains as my number one weakness. Taking this lack into account also includes the language. In fact, writing in English was also a tall order!

As I was doing this study on my own, there were a few costing issues. The first one was time. I had been working full time since mid-August so I had to manage my schedule quite well in order to respect the actions plan and get enough data. As said previously, a dissertation plan details had been made in order to overcome this lack of time. But as a matter of fact, I was always readjusting it, trying to combine my everyday professional and personal tasks. Clearly, I found myself lost several times in what needed to be reviewed. Furthermore, four months was such a small amount of time to conduct a deep research and did not allow a lot of room for manoeuvre.
When doing interviews, I had to commute to different locations to meet participants. This was energy and time-consuming. Also, I had to use my own mobile phone to record the interviews which was not the ideal equipment that any professional researcher would require. Concerning the size of the population sample, even if I had a potential large sportive population access, people were not as easy as I thought to approach for a 5-8min questionnaire. Again here, it took time to contact the different people again and again. Of course, I wish I could have reached easily a higher number of people because quantitative researches could give better and stronger recommendations when their interpretations came from a substantial volume of collected data. Despite these conditions, having a smaller population and some interviews ready to be given, allowed me to properly conduct this study within the allotted time.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Literature Introduction

This chapter has been made with literature reviews of relevant academic articles and books that highlighted key points for the research. The articles found are written in English, mostly from English-spoken authors and mainly in an American context. This section will be organized in two themes starting with the highlight of the social medias’ growth, and their application to the sports field, as well as to charity sport events (strategies). It will then be an analysis of the motivations among the participants of CSE. These themes will help us understand and lead this research about the participants’ experiences through social media. In the end, conclusions will be formulated in order to evaluate the CSE’ effectiveness in relation to social media.

2.2 Social media tools application to the sports field

**Significant growth in the use of social media**

Social media are the new 21st Century’s tools and more particularly over the last 10 years since Facebook was created. These new devices have impacted individuals’ lives like never before, but how exactly do they interfere in their daily habits?

According to Elena Karahanna, Sean Xin Xu, and Nan (Andy) Zhang (2015), social media are so deeply rooted into individuals’ everyday lives that they are also changing the businesses’ landscapes and redefining the communication towards their customers. In fact, businesses had to adapt and integrate social media as part of their strategies. Indeed, as the authors highlighted, once the individuals’ motivations that drive social media use are pointed out, it will allow the development of new marketing channels.

But as we know, social media are the one tool that also allows Internet users to create and exchange UGC (User Generated Content) to the entire Internet platform. So not only it appears that a brand can change its way of communication to reach its target, but it is now also possible
for brands to be affected by customers through social media. Thus, brands can see social media as a great expansion opportunity but also as a threat and challenge of fulfilling its customers’ wants & needs in every way.

Again, it then becomes a bigger scope. It means that organizations, brands and / or associations have to deal with social media and include them as part of their communication strategies. However, what the authors did not point out in their study, is that once organizations adapt their communication to the digital world, they also need to be careful, because if one thing goes wrong, it can go viral. They need to adapt their image, their digital footprint and learn how to connect with their community(ies) not to harm them in any way. Actually, it gave birth to a new job, called ‘Community Manager’. A French study (Le Blog du Modérateur) put in light the number of 623 recorded community managers in 2015 in France.

This job has for mission to create a digital favourable environment for the brand, through social media, in order to engage, entertain and retain customers and potential followers. By creating games, contests, other digital actions & more important, conversation, it became easier to access their target. When starting a conversation, brands can gain a capacity for sympathy towards their followers. The more conversation they have, the more likely they are to retain and engage, keeping away the threats.

Furthermore, when taking a look at the individuals’ side and how they got affected by these new tools, Elena Karahanna, Sean Xin Xu, and Nan (Andy) Zhang underlined that social media can fulfill the five psychological needs assuming that each social media can satisfy one need. Those are the following: “customers can now have a virtual home online, they can build up their self-identity & expression themselves to others. Through social media and its interactions & creations, Internet users can experience different skills & attempt to build then maintain relationships with others.”

This is to moderate when, despite social media have helped changing the way people communicate, it remains a communication tool and cannot suffice to one’s personal nor professional life. Social media can become harmful when not used careful by organizations, and when needed. It can affect the followers in their sensibility.

It is unquestionable that there is a strong connection between social media and psychology, which will be discussed later on, in this chapter.
Social media applied to the sports field

According to Matthew Nicholson (2007), “the Internet has the capacity to bundle multiple media together in combinations to suit consumers, while mobile technologies have the potential to detach sport media consumption from the home, the traditional site of sport media”. Sport consumption has then moved from the home to everywhere a mobile device can be used thank to unlimited Internet plans & the development of social media such as Twitter which allows people to follow an event on live (Live Tweet). In fact, the sports field hasn’t been moved aside by social media, it has been really well impacted with new challenges and opportunities. As Stewart T. Cotterill & Rebecca Symes (2015) highlighted, a significant impact upon education and the way of sharing information has also come up. It is even more relevant for groups under the age of 25 which in theory and applied to the sports field, are the athletes of tomorrow. When using social media and sharing information, again applied to the sports field, an individual not only represent himself/herself as an athlete but also a team, a club, an organisation. According to the authors, because social media are so easy to use to share and synchronise information, they have become essential to support athletes, in their trainings for example.

Indeed as Matthew Nicholson (2007) underlined, “sport and the media are engaged in a co-dependent relationship, in which the media supports the infrastructure of professional sport: players; coaches; trainers; administrative staff; facilities; equipment; events; and travel.”

This is to moderate when it is liken to the athletes’ privacy and ethics issues. Sports fans can clearly feel closer than ever to their favourite sports persons through social media by following their Facebook, Instagram, etc…, accounts, and have access to their professional as well as private life stories which can, in the end, bring up some ethical questions (invasion of privacy and deception).

To encounter these ethical threats, Jo Williams and Susan J. Chinn (2010), highlighted the importance for sports marketers to “embrace these new tools, strategically manage their social media presence” in order to meet their relationship-marketing goals.

As the authors pointed out, when looking at requirements for participants in the relationship-marketing process, is that “organizations understand the importance of creating connections both online and off-line”.

Thus, it is essential for organizations in the sports industry to make an effort to tame social media both to control their content as well as to engage with their sports fans communities.
Implementing social media when launching a sport event

As the research is based on the study and analysis of social media, it will then focus on their implementation through sports events, knowing that not all events have the same objectives and same digital strategies. When implementing an event, some communication components are important, especially technology, management communication and audio visual categories, as highlighted by Guy Masterman (2009). As he said, “for event communications to be effective, there is a need for constant innovation and an effective use of greater range of techniques”.

When it comes to understanding the social media interactions between brands, sports clubs, teams and people, Jo Williams and Susan J.Chinn (2010) put the accents on the fact that “the sports organization seeks to use social media to achieve its relationship-marketing goals of brand building and customer loyalty”. Relationships between the sports field, the digital world and the fans communities have changed compared to the traditional marketing strategies that can be found in other activities such as in the food industry.

The authors also highlighted the relationship opportunities for organizations to interact with their fans through social media. In fact, they said that “social networks provide fans with a range of features that are built around opportunities for engagement and allow the team to boost fan loyalty, a key relationship-marketing goal”; it also supports communication such as “sharing opinions and reactions”.

Social media are thus engaging which means that they can be quite relevant promotional tools when launching a sport event. In fact, the whole point is sharing and making people involved. For that, Facebook is the number one tool that allows organisations to create sport events and invite people to join, share and talk about it. When launching the event on social media platform such as Facebook, the people joining the adventure will get all the required information for the event, plus some extra features and content from organisations. The point is to fill the joiners with enthusiasm, excitement, surprise.

According to Stefan Stieglitz and Linh Dang-Xuan (2013), there is a steady relationship between emotions and information diffusion through social media. Indeed, “sentiment occurring in social media content is associated with the user’s information sharing behaviour”. Moreover the authors described the emotional contagion that an event should carry through its process; “it is the influence of individual and the group-level communication
behaviour in terms of information, coordination and sharing” (2013). Thus, those events should be designed with contents that trigger emotions.

In fact, the study revealed that emotionally messages written on social media are more likely to be dissimulated that neutral ones. If sentiments in a tweet, it makes them spread more quickly through the network.

However their study was based on the analysis of the social media platform Twitter in a German political communication context, which makes it stray a bit from the point. Of course, political contexts have always aroused a lot of controversy with on-line and off-line traffic.

In short, social media should be included in the organization’s digital strategy especially when launching a sports event, as the academic articles emphasized the sports fans communities’ power of sharing and engagement. Digital content should be thought with carefully chosen words and emotions stimuli in order to be quickly spread and meet numerous interactions between both events’ organizers & participants. In fact, John Williams and Susan J. Chinn (2010) qualified emotions “as another source of content virality”.

2.3 Charity Sport Events

The participants ‘motives

A charity event may involve different parts, it can be a brand, a sports club, a team, an organisation or an association. It is mostly running, cycling or triathlon events that support a cause, some a bit more known than others such as the breast cancer cause represented through the pink colour usually during the whole month of October. But whatever the influence and size of the cause is, the point is to attract people, get them to be involved and to participate. Some communication sports events’ strategies find the solution in being empathic and by triggering emotions through emotional content, famous spokesperson, testimonies etc.

In addition, as Won (2009) underlined, “CSEs were found to be a successful fundraising tool in health care because (1) sport events are universally popular, (2) CSEs are spectator friendly, and (3) sport activities naturally represent health or a healthy lifestyle”.

To begin with, a study conducted by Filo, Funk and O’Brien (2010) highlighted the importance and the relationship existing between the sponsor image and the attachment of the CSE; “universal human experience that occurs throughout the lifecycle, which provides an
opportunity for both self-expression and connections to others”. In fact, the authors found out that “reciprocity is an important motivating factor”, which shows that, not only these events should use emotions, but they should entertain their public and give them amazing unique experiences. In that way, events’ organizers will make sure participant are going to better engage and start building a long-term relationship with their cause.

In another study conducted again by Filo, Funk and O’Brien (2009), some components were underlined in order to understand the motivations and the real attachment to a CSE. To conduct their study, a qualitative method was undertaken during the LIVESTRONG Challenge in the USA. The participants of this challenge could choose from 7 different races going from a 5-mile walk to a 100-mile cycling ride. The study did not take into account the different level of sport activities when giving the results.

Their findings revealed three different aspects of meaning for participants (of any kind of the 7 races). The first emotional provoked meaning was “camaraderie” which could be described as “the connection and relationships participants share through participation”. Then, the symbolic meaning, the “cause, self-expression, goals and inspiration provided by event participation”. And finally, the functional meaning of a CSE which results in “the sense of achievement and physical challenge”. These meanings embody the complexity of throwing a successful CSE combining social, marketing and psychological aspects.

**The charity sport events’ communities**

As we undertook a deeper understanding of the motivations and attachment of CSE in the previous theme, we learnt how complex it can be to manage to get people physically involved for a cause. Regardless of the sport effort provided, what other aspect(s) bring participants to take part of a CSE?

In a study conducted by Jules Woolf, Bob Heere and Matthew Walker (2013), it is asked whether the sense of community could be a strong aspect of the participants’ involvement. In fact, as the authors underlined, because most of the charity sport events are running and cycling events, they require physical preparation, and many participants gather to train in small groups. Here, they highlight the potential in giving rise to a sense of community, which actually can go beyond the charity sport event (before and after).
After using a mixed-method investigation (qualitative and quantitative methods) towards two types of participants (random participants & chosen fundraisers athletes) of an American half-triathlon, the authors concluded that the charity sport event had little effect on all participants’ relationship with the cause, whether they had a sense of community more or less developed. Thus, despite the fact that the sense of community is a real bond towards supporters and nonsupporters, it is not the finding number one in involving participants in the cause of a particular charity sport event. But, once it is established, it is a benefit for the event organizers that can then play, adjust and communicate to these communities.

Nevertheless, this study is to qualify when it was conducted in a certain context where the charity event was again linked with the LIVESTRONG association and included 2 types of participants; some triathletes well-trained against other random general participants. Thus, the event somehow appeared a bit distorted, where it seems to be all about performance and categorizing participants when it is supposed to be about spreading awareness & sharing experiences while doing the same effort for a specific cause.

Other authors commented on CSE’s participants ‘motives, such as the study undertaken by Marieke Hendriks and Ed Peelen (2013) that analysed how to approach some created personas with different formulated propositions based on their motivation regarding the cause and/or the actual sport activities.

By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, they wanted to highlight the segmentation & some characteristics that can be observed through these specific events, in order to leverage future participation.

Finally, their study showed that “the personal connection to the charitable cause, the aspect of community building and empowerment to be most important drivers to take part in a CSE”, including as well “spreading awareness and driving social change”. Thus, a lot of different motives can be found in the participants’ enrolment, knowing that some people combine several of them and some others are only interested in one.

However, their findings were based on a particular CSE (the Alpes d’Huèz cycling event) again related to the LIVESTRONG challenge’s study by Filo et al., (2007). Further research among these specific events would need to be done in order to show if their actions’ findings towards the constructed personas could be generalized or not.
Moreover, Kevin Filo, Mark D. Groza and Sheranne Fairley (2012), highlighted a complementary dimension which overall evokes the notion of “belief in making a difference”. The study that staged the LIVESTRONG Challenge again but using a different approach, the psychological continuum model, took four stages into account; which are the following: awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance.

By combining mixed methods, their study demonstrated that “belief in making a difference mediates the relationship between social and charity motives and attachment”. Meanwhile, those who market charity sports events should reinforce that belief in order for participants to get more involved and see a sustainable attachment in the end. Furthermore, the authors suggested for CSE’s improvements, to add “rituals, symbols and social media to assist in attracting and retaining participants”. Here is the first time where social media are seen as an engaging key factor before, and after these specific events.

While the study is quite relevant for my own research, the authors though did not separate the participants from the different levels of physical activity proposed on the CSE D-day, generalizing their findings to any participant of a CSE, when a 10-mile cycling ride participant may not have the same involvement and motives as a 100-mile cycling ride participant. As learnt earlier, segmentation and personas connections have been studied not to generalize one kind of CSE’s participant.

In addition to these motives, and according to a study conducted by Ruth Taylor and Tekle Shanka (2008), the overall satisfaction of a CSE is related to “participation history and intention to participate to future events”.

In fact, CSE’s participants do not have the same motivation depending on their previous experience(s), if so. Through a deeper investigation, it appeared that “repeat event participants were motivated by achievement, whereas first-time participants were motivated by involvement, status and socialisation.”

In conclusion, charity sport event should generate a sense of community among segmented participants’ groups and adapt to each of them in order to make them believe in making a difference through rituals, symbols and social media. These recommendations would help in attracting and retaining them to enhance their intention to participate to future events.
2.4 Conclusion

The world has seen a significant growth in the use of social media which allowed new opportunities and challenges for organizations and through specific events. Internet users and participants can live amazing unique experiences and give opinions and reactions through social media. In the sports field, it enabled sharing and interacting with either athletes, fans or events’ participants. It allowed these fans communities to different new interactions, all the time and everywhere thanks to social media. Thus, these communication tools are seen as engaging and essential for the sports industry. It also arose new issues, from an ethical point, concerning the data confidentiality, the privacy and deception. When using social media, reduced to “sharing”, sports organisations should be aware of the pros and cons beyond a Facebook post or a tweet. For this, a community manager should be in charge, controlling the different digital actions.

When looking at CSE, it is all about engaging and these specific events often find digital strategies in triggering emotions. In fact, the ‘emotional contagion’ is a usual process in the CSE context.

Strong relationships and / or interactions exist between brands’ image, cause, attachment of the event and communities. These are all the components that need to be taken under consideration for this study and the proposed research.
3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology Introduction

The aim of the research is to discover the significance of social media in the participants’ behaviours on French CSE. The research objectives are identifying the most relevant social media tools and understanding their application to CSE in France. Then, analysing the psychological emphasis that these CSE can bring in the participants’ mind while also understanding their unique experiences through social media. In the end, it would enable a list of relevant findings in order to evaluate the CSE’ effectiveness in relation to social media. As stated before, the hypothesis of the study is to demonstrate that charity sports events cannot result of an efficient and playful experience for participants without being taken over by social media.

A primary research will be made following the Research ‘Onion’ established by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). In order to achieve the project, it will go from choosing a research philosophy, to a research approach and strategy. Following these steps, the sampling population will be selected and the data for the research collected and analysed. This chapter also contains the ethical issues and limitations that were raised by this project.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), “the research philosophy you adopt contains important assumptions about the way in which you view the world. These assumptions will underpin your research strategy and the methods you choose as part of that strategy.” In other words, this part of the study is critical to explore it in the best way. To help creating a research design, the Research ‘Onion’; illustration created by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill in 2008, was used.

In fact this pattern reveals that there are several philosophies that can be applied to research. Actually, the three main philosophies in the Research ‘Onion’ are positivism, interpretivism and realism (Appendix ‘Research Onion’ p 75).

The first one, positivism is composed of three basic principles suggesting that the social world is viewed objectively, the research is value-free and the researcher is independent. There is no
subjectivity involved in the process, only observations of objective facts. Generally, what is observed will be trusted and lead to the production of credible data. Furthermore, if that philosophy is chosen, the emphasis should be on quantifiable observations to get a rather statistical analysis, supporting or rejecting the hypotheses.

On the other hand, interpretivism has different principles. In fact, this philosophy holds that the social world is made up subjectively by people. The researcher is driven by interests. Fundamental laws are no sufficient enough for interpretivists, they don’t believe in objective observations in comparison to positivism researchers. They give meanings to intentional behaviours and actions. They want to understand subjective realities and make relevant and useful explanations of their findings. To achieve that last statement, the interpretivism researchers have to adopt an empathetic stance in order to get a deeper understanding of the subjects and the people.

Last but not least, realism shares principles from the first two philosophies. In fact, it accepts that there is a reality independent of human beliefs and behaviours. But in order to understand that fact, it requires acknowledgement of the subjectivity inherent to humans. With this philosophy, macro and micro levels need to be analysed. Furthermore, there are two forms of realism that can contrast this philosophy. Direct realism is clearly a quick way of analysing the situation through your eyes; “what you see is what you get” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009) and critical realism, on the contrary, is using sensations to analyse the picture; what you feel is what you see, and sometimes it can be deceiving.

This dissertation’s research design, will be based, as previously mentioned, on the Research ‘Onion’ elaborated by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009).

As a reminder, this study is aimed to highlight the findings of the following research question: “what is the significance of social media in enhancing the participant’s experiences in the context of French charity sports events?”

This dissertation will use interpretivism, as the point is to make sense of how people interpret the social world and in particular the world of charity sport events. It will dig into the process of subjective interpretation, acknowledging the specific motivations and interests of the participants. Indeed, it will be an exploration of data and insights. In fact, the context will perhaps be complex and not driven by fundamental laws.

Furthermore, this dissertation will be driven by interest, as I have chosen the topic.
It will adopt an empathetic stance towards the interviewees in order to record their emotions & motivations towards the research topic. Again, as I would be the one interpretivism research it would be subjective.

3.2.2 Research Approach

In their work, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) assume that there are two different ways of approaching research: deduction and induction. The deduction approach implies a conclusion which is drawn from the different research statements. It follows a logic path, hypotheses can be tested, proven or refuted, with quantitatively measured facts. In another hand, the induction approach doesn’t rely on strong links between statements and conclusion. There are assumptions made on the past to predict the future. These inductive arguments can be seen as weaker. This approach gives an interpretation of the data, and it implies gaining an understanding of the statements.

As the authors relate, an inductive approach is more relevant when using the interpretivism philosophy. Indeed as I am not an expert and I would like to underline the participants’ behaviours, the study would be based on past charity sports events’ experiences in order to predict the future ones. The data will be interpreted trying to understand the different statements using the context in which the events take place. Thus, this dissertation will adopt an inductive approach. In fact, it will be about gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to charity sport events, especially in a French context. It will not focus on generalities towards the topic but more about giving an interpretation of the data collected and maybe induce a particular interest for further research. I will be part of the whole research process and play an active role in understanding the participants’ behaviours.

3.2.3 Research Strategy

The purpose of the research follows the next layers of the research onion (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2009). It involves research strategies, research choices and time horizons. When it comes to the research project, it is of extreme importance to think about the way the research question will be asked. In fact, there are three different ways: it could be descriptive, explanatory and/or exploratory answers.
If an exploratory study is conducted, and according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), there are three possibilities which are the following: A search of the literature; interviewing ‘experts’ in the subject; or conducting focus group interviews. The point is to “seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light” (Ibid).

On the other hand a descriptive research can be conducted using clear and detailed statements towards the research.

Finally, an explanatory study stands for a causal relationships establishment between variables. According to the authors (2009), you can focus on two different data analysis procedures which would be on numbers or words, which corresponds to quantitative or qualitative collection technique.

There are several research strategies elaborated by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) that can fit the different studies mentioned above.

Here are the strategies that can be applied to a research: an experiment, a survey, a case study, an action research, a grounded theory, an ethnography and an archival research.

Once the previous components are chosen, there are three research choices that can be applied to the research, which are mono-method, mixed-method and multi-method.

(Appendix ‘the different research choices’ p 76).

Through this dissertation, the point is to seek for new insights, to underline some charity sports events actions and understand the power of social media towards these specific events. This method has an advantage of being flexible and then adaptable to change. I will be willing to change my direction at any point of the process. This dissertation would then follow an exploratory research path. As the research question needs a various number of people’s experiences data but also some deeper points of view concerning the subject, a mixed-model research will be used, which will combine quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) highlight, by doing this method it can “take quantitative data and qualitatise it”, as well as it can “quantitise your qualitative data”, when analysing it. The point here will be to interpret the combined data of the participants’ behaviours.

According to Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989), it exists a few reasons why researchers should mix different methods in their studies. In fact, using mixed-methods permits to "examine the same dimension of a research problem" (Jick, 1979). In other words, this
“triangulation” allows the researcher to get deeper understanding and findings, exploring the problem in different ways. The complementarity of the research is needed and will justify why research will conduct both primary and secondary research. Primary research’s method will first be conducted through a quantitative data collection technique and then reinforce it with another qualitative data collection technique. These methods can either complement each other or contradict themselves which in any case will enhance the study.

The quantitative data will take shape of a survey through a questionnaire by email. It would be simple to send it, and as the responses are limited, the data will be reliable. In fact, data will be used to develop theory, how people consume the charity sports events but also social medias.

Then, the qualitative data would take the shape of individual depths interviews. Indeed, it will allow me to uncover greater depth of the participants ’insights. It would be easier to analyse the responses and to arrange meetings. By doing this, it is aimed to understand the feelings and sensations participants have towards these events. It might seem simple but there are loads of different reasons why people are attending these events. And it also aimed to understand and highlight the relation(s) they have, keep or reject with the charity associations (and how? Through social medias?) if we put the sports dimension aside after launching the sport event. By asking them these kind of questions, face-to-face, it can really help and change the communication strategy of some charity sports events, knowing if they are going the right direction or not. In that sense, the qualitative data collection findings will be decisive for that dissertation.

The time horizon of this research will be a cross-sectional study as it will learn from a particular phenomenon at a particular time and space. In fact, it would take place in only four months in France and as part of an academic course.
3.2.4 Sampling - Selecting Respondents

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), the sampling design process involve six steps, which are the following:

- Define the population
- Determine the sampling frame
- Select the sampling technique
- Determine the sample size
- Execute the sampling process
- Validate the sample

As the first step is to define the target population, it is needed to find those who possess the information that is needed, those who will help highlighting relevant findings for the study. There are four components of this design: the element, the sampling units, the extent and the time. Indeed, the elements and sampling units will be the respondents of the study, when the extend will be France. As the research will take place in Paris, it will be a chance to access a large community of sports’ events participants. In fact, as said before, France counts numerous runners and events each year, especially in the capital of the country. Combining these components for the research, the target population would be “Social media users and participants of charity sports events launched in France”.

The second phase is to determine the sampling frame, which is a representation of the elements of the target population. It takes shape of a set of directions and, in this particular case, it would be to start with the members listing of Parisian non-for-profit running associations such as “Adidas Boost Bastille”. This association regroups runners with different running levels, different backgrounds, sex and age. In fact, as a one-year member of this association, it will be easy and simple to get access to all members (300) which will be very helpful for depths interviews and it would be free. If the sampling population is not representative enough, I will try to get emails (questionnaire) and/ or interviews of participants directly on French future charity sports events.

The next phase is selecting the sampling technique which according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), can be either probability or non-probability. (Appendix ‘the sampling techniques’ p 76).

After testing myself on a sampling techniques diagram, (Appendix ‘Selecting a probability sample’, p 77), I figured out that a non-profitability sampling would be used, as it relies on
personal judgment and / or convenience; in that way, it could be decided which respondent can be included in the sample. In fact, not only French sportspersons that could correspond to a random selection of this population are targeted, but also those which have already participated to one or several CSE.

By using this method, there is a bias risk that can be caused, the fact that there is no really ‘way of determining the probability of selecting any particular element for inclusion in the sample’ and that I may not be able to reach the rest of the population through the study.

This research used a mix of a convenience and judgmental sampling procedures which involves “selecting haphazardly those cases that are easiest to obtain on your sample” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill – 2009), but also selecting respondents that would be wanted over some others. Indeed, the convenience sampling side was selected because people (runners) happened to be at the weekly run on a particular Wednesday evening, when the judgmental sampling side was selected by my own judgment of their population’s representation and based on relationships with some runners, participants of charity sports events. These techniques were the simplest, the most realistic and, as said earlier, easiest to access the sampling population, in order to do the research in only four months. Despite the advantage of the ease of sampling acquisition, it also implies again bias and influences. (Appendix ‘Non-probability sampling technique’ p77).

The sample size could be determined by using statistical techniques but as this research was limited in time and finance, it followed a less scientific method such as budget constraints sample size. It was excepted to get from the average 300 weekly runners at least 10 depths interviews and overall potential CSE participants more than 200 responses for the questionnaire. It came out that only 103 respondents could be reached for the questionnaire and 8 persons for the interviews, 6 of them being charity sports participants and the 2 others being associations organising a charity sport event in France, every year.

The execution of the sampling process is the last phase before validating or not the sample. This action took place in late October / beginning of November once the questionnaire were ready and the depths interviews programmed.
3.3 Data Collection Instruments

When doing this research, depths interviews and a questionnaire has been done in order to find relevant findings. In fact depths interviews were suitable to gather participants’ insights and behaviours, when the questionnaire gave feedback on the number of participants having the same behaviour.

The data collection for the quantitative research was administrated through a Google Doc questionnaire, which was then distributed online via email or social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. It was posted on my personal accounts but also on sports / running / charity sports events associations’ accounts in order to access a large amount of people. It was posted for three weeks every three days, to remind those who had not reply yet to get involved in the study. Some people were encouraged to share the questionnaire to others who would be interesting in participating. The same questions were asked to a large number of people to allow this research to gain distinctive findings. In fact, the questions attempted to draw their behaviours towards CSE through social media. The questionnaire was decomposed in a logical way with different themes where people were asked about their social networks habits first, then their sports and charity sports habits and finally about their social networks and charity sports habits. The length of it was approximatively 8 minutes but the respondents had all time to complete it. The first page presented the study, the research questions and objectives with a personal word to thank them and reassure them about the anonymity. The last page of the questionnaire presented the demographical questions including the age, gender and job of the respondents. The results are all interpreted in chapter 4.

This electronic mail survey has been chosen because of the high response rate and the quantity of data it can produce and also for its low cost. This method was the simplest and more accessible one in order to conduct the research in a good way, and in time.

The depths interviews were programmed in advance at a meeting point in Paris, not to lose time and money. I was the one moving around the city to meet people. Four people and two associations – which were my core target - could not meet at the last minute or at all, so the interviews had to be rescheduled on the phone. The first part of these interviews was to explain who I was, why I was doing this and how they could help me. It lasted for about 30 min to 1
hour. As it was in France the whole process had then to be translated in English. All interviews are available in written documents in appendices pp.81 to 96

As mentioned before, the access to the sampling population appeared to be easy, the only issue was managing the time for the depths interviews (qualitative research) and attracting people to get involved in the research through the questionnaire (quantitative research).

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

To obtain meanings from the collected data, there are two steps that can be done: editing and coding.

According to Pervez Ghauri, Kjell Gronhaug (2005), editing “is to secure a quality standard for the data” which may involve “inspection” and “correction.”

On the other hand, coding “can be seen as some sort of classification” which means “specifying the categories” (Pervez Ghauri, Kjelle Gronhaug – 2005).

For this study, and more particularly, for the quantitative research, the questionnaire was analysed by Google doc techniques. In fact, unfortunately I did not have any software that was required to conduct a proper analysis of the quantitative research.

Concerning the qualitative research, the process of the depths interviews was prepared in advance, then analysed and interpreted. A service of skilled psychologists would have been fortunate to add another dimension to the results but due to time and money, I was the one administering the interviews.

3.5 Research Ethics

Trevino and Nelson (2011) define ethics as what is right and wrong, here conducted by individuals. It is “a set of personal moral principles or values”.

Concerning the subject of the dissertation, it involved some relevant ethics areas such as humans’ relationships and how we interact with other people.

In fact if we take a deeper look at the humans’ ethics issues that could have been encountered in this dissertation, Diener and Crandall (1978) highlight four main areas:
• Whether there is *harm to participants*; in this study and in particular when doing the qualitative and quantitative researches, I aimed no to harm participants in their self-esteem or in a stressful manner with my questions.

• Whether there is a *lack of informed consent*; when doing the interviews, I was giving an informed consent form in order to advise participants of the study’s goals and how they were going to help me highlight some findings.

• Whether there is an *invasion of privacy*; it was impossible for me to know beforehand if my topic was going to be sensitive to a particular individual, so I had to treat each case individually, especially when doing the interviews. It took some time to adjust the speech in front of people from different ages, backgrounds and behaviours.

• Whether *deception* is involved; as Bryman and Bell (2011) underline “deception occurs when researchers represent their researcher as something other than what it is” – during the whole study, it was made sure that the respondents had all the information not to be disappointed afterwards. They were told that the data could be used, the interviews could be recorded and that I will be the only one analysing the findings.

Furthermore, concerning the data management, during the whole process of this dissertation I have encountered some confidentiality agreements. When doing the interviews, for the qualitative research, I had to make sure that the interviewees allowed me to use their data. For this, a sample interview consent form had been prepared, in order for them to understand the whole process, to agree to take part of it and to thank them afterwards. Some agreed to be cited, so others preferred remained anonymous, but none of the people that were asked to undertake the interview said no which was very much appreciated. None of these people were forced, they were selected based on their abilities to correspond to the core target. (Appendices ‘informed consent forms’ pp.78-80)

On the another hand, the questionnaire that was made for the quantitative research, included objectivity and equal respect. It was clearly written and not too long to highlight in the best way the respondents’ opinions. I was being thankful to the respondents knowing that they were solicited by others.

As highlighting by Bryman & Bell (2011) & the UK data archive (2009), the respondents of the dissertation’s interviews hold the copyright in the spoken words, when the researcher holds the copyright of the reproduction’s transcription of these words. Especially when the whole process had to be retransmitted from French to English.
Furthermore, the quantitative and qualitative researches was the fruit of my own study among French charity sports’ events participants. In order to complete the whole project, arguments were based on academic articles studies and different authors that are all acknowledged in the bibliography, at the end of this dissertation. Authors and sentences are cited in order to respect the intellectual property of others.

3.6 Limitations of Methodology

This dissertation was a four-month study that took place in France, from September to December 2015. During that period of time, I was working full-time as a sport press relations assistant & communication assistant for the BernasCOM agency. I tended to be organised the first few weeks and then realized how hard it was to combine both studies and job. Time had to be managed in order to achieve my goals, but in the end, I was always late and I had to reschedule several times my actions plan. A few times, I found myself losing time re-reading chapters in order to understand where I had left my ideas and what needed to be prioritised.

Again, time was counted when it came to interviews and meeting people. Some interviews were face-to-face and some others on the phone as people were not always available in such a small amount of time. I had to prepare everything beforehand to be efficient (where, when, what to bring, what to say, how to adjust my speech, etc...).

I had made efforts retransmitting data from the interviews in the best way. As the meetings and the questionnaire were in French, I had to translate the whole process in English without deforming the results.

Furthermore, I was using my own phone in order to record the interviews not to lose a piece of what was said by the interviewees, when taking notes in the same time. I needed to be careful to get enough memory and battery when it was time to meet them.

Moreover, time also reduced my study to a smaller amount of respondents which was 103 answers for the questionnaire and 8 individual interviews. When a larger number of people undertook the online questionnaire, some people could have lied about their data and so the validity of it could be contested, despite the fact that it provided true anonymity.

Adding that Groves (1989) demonstrates that a quantitative research must minimize the risk of two types of error, the following should be encountered:
- Observation & poor measurement of the findings; when doing the questionnaire’s analysis it appears difficult to observe the results and keep it subjective not to involve any personal judgments.
- Nonobservation & nonresponse; in the analysis some individuals can decide not to respond or are not easy to contact and then distort the sample. There are also those who choose not to respond to specific questions, and then also distort the whole study.

Finally, when a larger sample size may have produced a deeper study, potential bias could be find in this dissertation and more particular in the data analysis.

As said, time was a huge limitation and added a lot of pressure in the last month of writing. To reassure myself, I was asking other students on where they were at and how they were handling the anxiety.
4. Data Analysis

4.1 Questionnaire research findings

Once the questionnaire was sent, 103 persons answered it which was a bit less than what was expected. The first part of this questionnaire was made to understand the social media presence and use of the participants. Then, it was related to CSE and in a last but not least theme, they were asked their social media behaviour towards CSE.

The questionnaire was analysed for the 103 respondents.

It was designed and written in French as the core and main target was French people. The results take shape of different charts and the interpretation is in English.

The interviews were also recorded in French, then analysed and interpreted in English. (Appendices pp. 81-96)

4.1.1 Participants’ profile

Figure 1: gender of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43.7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents that undertook the questionnaire were 58 women and 45 man which respectively represents 56.3 % and 43.7% of the population.

Figure 2: age of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25 yo</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35 yo</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45 yo</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55 yo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main two groups that are highlighted on the questionnaire are the following:
- The 18-25 years old with 38 respondents, which represent 36.9%;
- The 26-35 years old with 54 respondents, which represent 52.4%;
- The three other categories will not be as relevant for the findings as it represents only 10.7% with 11 respondents in total.

**Figure 3: situation of the respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen, shopkeepers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executives</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate professions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired persons</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others, unemployed persons</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three main situations where we find most respondents are the following:
- Executives with 34 respondents and which represents 33% of them;
- Students with 28 respondents and which represents 27.2% of them;
- Employees with 22 respondents and which represents 21.4% of them.

In short, the interviews were almost as women as men, around 18 to 35 years old, with three main situations (executives, students and employees).

### 4.1.2 The presence and use of social media

**Figure 4: the presence on social media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 103 respondents, 10 of them said that they were not connected on this first question. But if we then look at the next question they absolutely all said that they were connected on Facebook, which means that they misunderstood the word “connected” in a way that you always need to be on your phone, tablet or computer on social networks. Thankfully, later on I
asked on which social media they were mainly connected and how much time they were spending on it.

**Figure 5: the presence on Facebook**

![Bar graph showing Facebook presence](image)

It is obvious to say that all of the 103 respondents are using the Facebook social media platform, which represents 100% of the answers.

**Figure 6: the use on Facebook**

![Bar graph showing Facebook use](image)

When looking at the results concerning the time spent on the Facebook platform, three main duration are highlighted:

- 68 respondents (66%) spend more than 2 hours per day on Facebook.
- 19 respondents (18.4%) spend less than 1 hour per day on Facebook.
- 16 respondents (15.5%) log in at least once a day on Facebook.

We can say that this platform would be a good tool to access people as they mainly spend more than two hours per day.

**Figure 7: the presence on Instagram**

![Bar graph showing Instagram presence](image)

When looking at the chart, 87 out of 103 respondents said that they were using the Instagram social media, which represents 84.5% of the answers, whereas 16 (15.5%) of them do not use
it, or may not have an account. Like Facebook, this social platform could be relevant for the research’s findings.

Figure 8: The use on Instagram

When looking at the results concerning the time spent on the Instagram platform, three main duration are highlighted:

- 32 respondents (31.1%) spend less than 1 hour per day on Instagram.
- 24 respondents (23.3%) spend more than 2 hours per day on Instagram.
- 24 respondents (23.3%) log in at least once a day on Instagram.

We can say that this platform would be a good tool to access people as they log in every day and spend up to more than 2 hours.

Figure 9: The presence on Twitter

When looking at the chart, 66 out of 103 respondents said that they were using the social media Twitter, which represents 64.1% of the answers, whereas 37 (35.9%) of them do not use it, or may not have an account. Like Facebook and Instagram, this social platform could be relevant for the research’s findings.
When looking at the results concerning the time spent on the Twitter platform, the results are quite divided with the ones that do not have an account, those who have one but do not use it and those who spend less than one hour per day:

- 30 respondents (29.1%) spend less than 1 hour per day on Twitter.
- 19 respondents (18.4%) do not have a Twitter account.
- 17 respondents (16.5%) have an account but do not use it.

We can say that this platform would still remain as a relevant tool to access people as almost 50% of the respondents log in at least once every day and spend up to more than 2 hours (10.7%).

When looking at the chart, 59 out of 103 respondents said that they were using the social media Snapchat, which represents 57.3% of the answers, whereas 44 (42.7%) of them do not use it, or may not have an account. Like Facebook, Instagram & Twitter, this social platform could be relevant for the research’s findings.
- 29 respondents (28.2%) spend less than 1 hour per day on Snapchat.
- 25 respondents (24.3%) do not have a Snapchat account.
- 22 respondents (21.4%) daily use it, log in at least once.

We can say that this platform would still remain as a relevant tool to access people as almost 50% of the respondents log in at least once every day and spend up to more than 2 hours (8.7%).

**Figure 13: the presence on YouTube**

When looking at the chart, 76 out of 103 respondents said that they were using the social media YouTube, which represents 73.8% of the answers, whereas 22 (26.2%) of them do not use it, or may not have an account. Like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & Snapchat, this social platform could be relevant for the research’s findings.

**Figure 14: the use on YouTube**

When looking at the results concerning the time spent on the YouTube platform, the results are almost equally divided:

- 24 respondents (23.3%) log in up to 4 times per week on YouTube.
- 21 respondents (20.4%) log in at least once a day on YouTube.
- 19 respondents (18.4%) do not have a YouTube account.

We can say that this platform would still remain as a relevant tool to access people as almost 70% of the respondents log in at least once a week and spend up to more than 2 hours (11.7%). Internet users do not need a YouTube account to watch other YouTube videos.
Figure 15: the presence on Pinterest

When looking at the chart, 38 out of 103 respondents said that they were using the social media Pinterest, which represents 36.9% of the answers, whereas 65 (63.1%) of them do not use it, or may not have an account. Compare to the other social platforms, this one might not be relevant for the research’s findings.

Figure 16: the use on Pinterest:

When looking at the results concerning the time spent on the Pinterest platform, the results are also divided between those who daily use it and those who do not have an account:

- 37 respondents (35.9%) do not have a Pinterest account.
- 23 respondents (22.3%) spend less than an hour per day.
- 21 respondents (20.4%) have an account, but do not use it.

Pinterest is a useful platform for sharing photos and inspirations, but it does not seem here as a priority in terms of sharing information and getting people involved in joining a charity sport event. Though, it could be used as a landscape of all the associations’ actions and missions.
4.1.3 The participants’ contents on social media

*Figure 17: sharing of information*

Do you like posting news on your accounts’ walls?

![Pie chart showing distribution of responses: 73 respondents (70.9%) said yes, 30 respondents (29.1%) said no.]

When looking at the results, 73 respondents (70.9%) said that they like sharing information/news on their personal social media’s walls’ accounts, whereas 30 respondents (29.1%) do not like sharing information on social media.

*Figure 18: Type of content*

What sort of content do you share among all social media?

![Bar chart showing distribution of responses: 63 responses (61.2%) for sharing sports news contents, 42 responses (40.8%) sharing news content, 40 responses (38.8%) sharing future events.]

When looking at the results, the respondents like to share different kinds of content, when the most content are the following:

- 63 responses (61.2%) for sharing sports news contents,
- 42 responses (40.8%) sharing news content,
- 40 responses (38.8%) sharing future events.

4.1.4 Sports achievements, social networks and participants

*Figure 19: Practice of regular physical activity*

Do you practice a regular physical activity?

![Pie chart showing distribution of responses: 98 respondents (96.1%) said yes, 1 respondent (1%) said no.]

---

41
When looking at the results, it is clear that the respondents practice a regular physical activity.

**Figure 19: Training frequency**

**How often do you train?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a week</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 times a week</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a day and week</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the results, the two mains common frequencies are the following:

- 56 respondents (54.4%) train three to five times per week,
- 24 respondents (23.3%) train two times per week.

**Figure 20: Type of sport**

**What type of sport do you do?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handball</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pole Dance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrossFit</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not do any sport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the results, the three mains sports are the following:

- 85 responses (82.5%) for running,
- 37 responses (35.9%) for cycling,
- 24 responses (23.3%) for swimming.

There also are 35 responses (34%) that are for other sports, which does not help for further research…
Figure 21: Sharing sports content

Do you usually post your races’ results, yours improvements, your equipment or even parts of your body while doing sport, on social media?

![Figure 21: Sharing sports content](image)

When looking at the results, participants and social media users said for almost 75% that they usually post their personalized sports content online.

Figure 22: Type of social media used for sharing sports content

On which social media(s) do you post your sport content?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not post sport content</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the results, three main social media platforms are highlighted:

- 69 responses (67%) for Facebook,
- 67 responses (65%) for Instagram,
- 27 responses (26.2%) for Twitter.

As seen earlier and above, these three social media platforms where the most daily-solicited. It makes sense to find that results again here.
Figure 23: Use of social media elements when sharing sports content

Do you use one or more of these elements when posting sports content?

When looking at the results, a few elements line up. Those are the following:

- 66 responses (64.1%) for the use of dedicated hashtags of the event (e.g. #triathlondesroses),
- 55 responses (53.4%) for the localisation of the event,
- 53 responses (51.5%) for general hashtags (e.g. #running, #Paris, #charity)
- 53 responses (51.5%) for tagging friends

4.1.5 Charity sports achievements, social networks and participants

Figure 24: Experience of charity sports events.

Have you ever taken part of a charity sport event?

When looking at the results, the respondents have clearly taken part of at least one charity sport event with 73 responses (70.9%). 24 respondents (23.3%) said that they haven’t taken part yet and are interested whereas 6 of them are not interested (5.8%).
What type of charity sport event have you already experienced?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis tournaments</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never experienced a CSE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the results, only one main sport is highlighted: running charity sports events with 69 responses (67%). 28 (27.2%) of them said that they had never experienced a charity sport event yet.

Is the fact that a race stands up for a charity cause a motive of involvement for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES!</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES, depending on the race</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO, not really</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never experienced a CSE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the results, opinions are divided:

- 66 respondents (64.1%) said YES, but depending on the charitable cause,
- 19 respondents (18.4%) said NO,
- 18 respondents (17.5%) said YES, every time.

When participating to a specific charity sport event, did you feel like you were making somehow a change?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES, every time</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES, depending on the cause</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never experienced a CSE</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When participating to a specific charity sport event, did you feel like you were making somehow a change?
When looking at the results & those who have already participated to a CSE, opinions are divided:

- 32 respondents (31.1%) said YES, but depending on the cause,
- 27 respondents (26.2%) said YES to all events.

**Figure 28: Motivation influences**

What would be the different organizations’ communication elements that could influence your participation to a charity sport event?

When looking at the results, several elements are highlighted through the choice of the respondents. Here are the following commons responses:

- 81 responses (78.6%) to get involved if 100% donations go to the charitable cause.
- 60 responses (58.3%) to get involved if racing with a victim or racing for her/him.
- 39 responses (37.9%) to get involved if a sportsperson (VIP) also gets involved in the cause.
- 38 responses (36.9%) to get involved if hearing testimonies of the charitable cause’s victims.

Some others features got a few responses. Here are the following:

- 25 responses (24.3%) to get involved if the race differentiates itself from others through a theme, a colour, a specificity.
- 22 responses (21.4%) to get involved if a brand also gets involved.
- 19 responses (18.4%) to be influenced by the number of the race’s kilometres.

**Figure 29: Showing the participant’s enrolment**

Are you likely to join the CSE online, even share information about it to convince or to show your participation to your entourage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>I am not sure I will participate to a CSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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When looking at the results, a majority of 67 respondents (65%) said YES compared to a few respondents (19 – 18.4%) that are definitely not going to join the online event and for others (17 respondents – 16.5%) are not even sure to participate.

**Figure 30: CSE contents communication elements.**

**When participating to a charity sport event, and sharing content, are you likely to use the organization’s communication elements?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic charter</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated hashtags</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tags</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Localisation</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not sure I will participate to a CSE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not share content even if participating</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the results, several elements are highlighted through the choice of the respondents. Here are the following commons responses:

- 63 responses (61.2%) for sharing content using dedicated hashtags of the CSE.
- 41 responses (39.8%) for sharing content using localisation.
- 29 responses (28.2%) for sharing content using tags.
- 21 responses (20.4%) for sharing content using the CSE’s colours.

**Figure 31: Sharing when participating to a CSE.**

**Before, during or after a charity sport event, are you likely to share memories, emotions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES, every time</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES, sometimes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not sure I will participate to a CSE</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO I am not sure I will participate to a CSE</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the results and those who are likely to participate to a CSE, here are the following main responses:

- 39 respondents (37.9%) would share content sometimes they participate at a CSE.
- 24 respondents (23.3%) would share content every time they participate to a CSE.
- 24 respondents (23.3) are still not sure whether they will participate to a CSE or not.
Figure 32: Sharing CSE memories on social media platforms

After a CSE, which social media are you likely to use to share your memories?

When looking at the results, three main social media platforms are highlighted:

- 60 responses (58.3%) to share CSE memories on Instagram.
- 59 responses (57.3%) to share CSE memories on Facebook.
- 24 responses (23.3%) to share CSE memories on Twitter.

As seen earlier and above, these three social media platforms were the most daily-solicited. Again, it makes sense to find that results here.

Figure 33: Information about the cause and reenrolment

After participating at a CSE, are you likely to stay informed about the cause? Even, do you think you will reenrol next year?

When looking at the results & those who have participated to a CSE, two main responses are highlighted:

- 47 respondents (45.6%) will not stay informed but will reenrol next year.
- 27 respondents (26.2%) will stay informed and will reenrol next year.
**Figure 34: Information about the cause and reenrolment**

Did this questionnaire make you want to learn a bit more about charity sports events?

![Pie chart showing percentages]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES, I will participate to a future CSE</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES, I will get information about future CSE</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT really</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the results, opinions about this study are divided:

- For 49 respondents (47.6%), this study made them want to participate to a future CSE.
- For 33 respondents (32%), this study did not have any effect concerning CSE.
- For 21 respondents (20.4%), this study made them want to learn more about these specific events.

The main profile that was drawn through this questionnaire is the following:

Almost equally women and men, mainly runners, between 18-35 years old, with 52% between 26-35 years old, rather executives, students or employees that do regular physical activities several times a week. They are connected at least once a day and spend up to more than 2 hours per day on social media such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. They love to share content and especially sports news and their own sports content. Most of them have already experienced a charity sport content and use different functionalities to enrich their posts (hashtags, localisation, tags) when sharing.

When running is their passion, they would like to run for or with a victim and that all donation would go to the cause while participating to a charity sport event.

Even if they do not stay informed about the cause afterwards, they for sure will enrol again next year.
4.2 Interview research findings

4.2.1 Participants’ behaviours

6 chosen digital runners and participants of at least one CSE were interviewed in order to highlight some charity sport event’s behaviours through social media. Paul, Athaa, Pauline, Aline, Mounia & Mickaël accepted to be quoted. Their complete interviews are available in appendices pp. 86-96.

Here is a summary of what emerged from that qualitative research:

**The social media connectivity:** The 6 interviewees daily use the following communication tools:
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter

**Subscribe to social media sports events online**

5 interviewees all agreed on saying that they were subscribing to sports events through social media, because first it was very useful to get information about the event (place, time, etc...) and then to see who was joining. In fact, Mounia highlighted “Completely! I learnt as I went along with runners associations that almost every time a sport event will be thrown, there will be a Facebook event created and that I could share it with some friends. In parallel, I could also meet new people. One thing also very useful is the questions you can ask directly to the organizers and also encourage people before the race.”

However, Mickaël still goes to the charity sport event’s website to seek for information before going on the different social media platforms.

**Their use of social media in relation to sport and sharing content:**

- “To promote my running crew”
- “Proud of my time, my achievements”
- “To inform my friends of my sports results”
- “To get to know other participants of the race I just did”
- “Before I use to do it all the time, now I only do it if there is an interest for others”
- “I love sharing my sports results and other content because I can keep my running data”
- “There is an inspiring atmosphere”
- “I can share emotions, joy, happiness”
- “Because then I received several comments from my friends, and that what keeps me going”
- “To keep memories”

The charity sports events they took part in this year:

- Les Bacchantes – Prostate’s disease prevention – 8km run – one subscription (20€ up to 35€) = 10€ for research.
- UNICEF Connected Race – Children’s support – 10km run - one subscription = 5€ up to 25€ go to the UNICEF foundation.
- Imagine for Margo – Children without cancer prevention – 10km run – 10€ and then 200€ funds are needed. All donations go to the cause.
- Odysséa – Breast cancer prevention – 1 – 5 – 10km run – 6€ to 41€.
- Arsep – multiple sclerosis prevention- association that organises meetings for people to collect money and challenge themselves on different sports events.
- Institut Curie course des Jonquilles – 5 - 10k run – 12€ and then 100€ funds are needed.

Two interviewees emphasized their motivations to participate to these specific events this year. Aline put in light the fact that it was essential for her to “use an activity that allows me to promote a charity cause and in the same time personally move me.”

When Mounia highlighted that one of the races she took part in was very stimulating as she had to collect a minimum of 100€ donation to get in. It took her only two days to collect the funds and for the first time she participated to the race without any supporters, nor friends but only to appreciate it in a different way. It made her thought of her grandmother – a sort of personal therapy in short. For the UNICEF Connected race, Mounia hold the universal and solidarity sides that emerge from that charity sport event. “Because of the dedicated hashtag, you feel like you’re running with your Brazilian or New-Yorkers running buddies.”

The way their heard about charity sports events:

Social media was the number one response for all interviewees. However, Aline also heard about one specific charity event through her job that was actually sponsoring it. Mickaël said that over the year he also heard about charity sports events from advertising campaigns, one article in a running magazine and from word-of-mouth.
The way they will talk about charity sports events:

Paul was not sure he will talk about future charity sport events to his entourage when the others said yes. Aline is actually already doing it for some up-coming events, when Mickaël said that he was “always trying to get people motivated and especially when it is for a good cause”.

The way their shared charity sport event content:

All interviewees said that they shared some charity sport event content while participating. Here are the most common element used:

- Dedicated hashtags of the event
- Localisation
- Tags

Mickaël put on light the way he was always trying to highlight the races’ promotional tools such as the T-shirt given when you subscribe, in order to give a maximum of visibility. When Mounia added that she was usually adapting her communication along with those of events, but under one condition: “the ethical side of the race must suit me from the start to the finish line!”

The way they felt about their charity sport event participation:

Some interviewees felt some emotions while Paul, for example, did not talk about his sentiments but more about the information you get concerning a specific cause.

Athaa and Pauline felt proud to help others out. Pauline added “when participating I add a small piece of what could become a Pyramid”. When Mickaël bid higher saying “I felt like I got involved in the cause, on a small scale of course, and maybe I could move some people of my entourage. When running is our passion, why not running for those who can’t?”

Aline added another dimension when saying, “It also reminds us how lucky we are and that helping one another with donation, time, etc. still remains the best solution”.

Mounia had another approach to the subject reporting “I am proud of participating to these types of charity sports events because you really get to involve yourself for a few kilometres. Nevertheless, I do not think I am helping out the association that much. For that, people should have a particular role in the association’s heart. Not to concentrate on that aspect too much, when participating I think of all those who can’t do it and then it pushes me forward. But we
never get enough information about these associations, though certain releases / newsletter are interesting. Prevention should be a bigger scope!”

The way they keep in touch with some charity sport event:

5 interviewees immediately said that they were following the association’s news updates once the participation over, when Mickaël said “not really”. On the other hand, they agreed on enrolling to these charity sports events next year, when only Paul said “not really”.

Mickaël justified “I would do the UNICEF Connected race again because I really loved the concept which was different and fun whereas the other races really need to work on their organisation.”

Mounia had a different approach saying “For some charity sport events I only enrol once compare to others. I think it is because I was disappointed by the organisation. The thing that I keep in mind and that the CSE have taught me so far, is to keep people motivated and help them to push them forward. As I am one of the co-leaders of a running association, I put these skills in practice every week. That’s how, actually, I really keep connections with charity sports events, through the year.”

How they see an effective and playful charity sport event:

When asking this last question, Paul put in evidence the lack of clarity when there are so many charity sports events created every year.

For others, here are their main ideas:

- All donation will go to the cause.
- A running brand should be involved as well as volunteering well-known athletes.
- Meeting athletes as well as the members of the association before going on the starting line.
- Helping out victims by racing with or for them
- The race should last from 5 up to 22km, not to dissuade potential participants.
- Security around the race
- Helping out some associations that do not have yet an enough communication background to stand up against other races.
- Free picnic after the race in order for all participants to gather and meet.
4.2.2 Charity sports events ’organizers’behaviours

2 chosen charity associations that throw a charity sport event every year were also interviewed for the study. The complete interviews are available in appendices pp. 81-85.

Here is a summary of their interviews:

*The association & the sports event:*

The Arc Foundation, has several different missions, which are identifying, selecting and financing cancer projects. It also aims for informing and preventing on cancer advances research. Nathalie Courtial, the communication manager was the interlocutor during this interview, accompanied with the digital actions manager. This charitable association throws every year in September the ‘Triathlon des Roses’, a triathlon race with small distances to initiate women. It gathered 400 participants this year (270 in 2014).

The Bacchantes association has for mission to collect funds in aid of the prostate’s diseases. It has taken place every November 11th since 2012. Pierre, the communication manager, accepted to answer the questions. It gathered 3 430 participants in Paris this year (+22% vs 2014).

*The specificities:*

The ’triathlon des Roses’ event is very easy to access (two small distances) and it is reserved to women. The different format was chosen in order to be unique and a bit crazy, taking examples on patients’ and searchers ‘daily challenges.
It is also a race that unites people, a race that participants can do by themselves or in relay.
The code colours of the race is pink, to meet the Pink October campaigns. It is a premium race created in collaboration with the Stade Français (Parisian upper sports club), that not only proposes a race but some entertainment as well. In fact, the event has artists coming along and participants are dancing with music in the background on the D-day.
The association owns the race and do not want any naming; the race should stay a human dimension.
The ‘Bacchantes’ race is an 8k run open to anybody. Participants are encouraged to run together wearing moustaches. This event meets the Movember’s campaigns. The code colours is orange and the atmosphere is fun, convivial. As Pierre described “it is a non-serious run for a serious cause!”

*Their communication strategy:*

- **Timing:**
  - The communication of the ‘triathlon des Roses’ event was pretty late last year and they realised that the two summer vacation months (July/August) were not helping. This year, the communication will be made late April / beginning of May, knowing that the event takes place the last weekend of September.
  - The ‘Bacchantes’ race opens its subscriptions for spring. The members are present on other sport events to inform about the challenge and get people to come. The real communication begins early September (emailing, social media, flyers, magazines…)

- **Place:**
  - The 2016 ‘triathlon des Roses’ event will also be developed in Toulouse (South West of France) as the city is usually called ‘The Pink city’, enhancing the relation with Pink October campaigns.
  - The ‘Bacchantes’ race is present in Toulouse and in Paris.

- **Buzz:** The first communication elements the ‘Triathlon des Roses’ association did, was launching a teaser for the press. To create buzz, surprise and traffic, they sent for 4 days in-a-row different objects to the feminine press journalists. For participants, they could access to pre-inscriptions on the website and received emails for news updates until the event.
- VIP:

  o “They are important for the press” reported Nathalie. But they need to be volunteering and the association do not want them to be under the spotlight during the event, because the real actors are the women.
  o Pierre said that they do not have any VIP coming to the event yet.

*Their social media strategy:*

*Triathlon des Roses event:*

- Facebook: 124 000 fans + event page. They post 2/3 CSE content per week. It can be highlighting Pink October elements campaigns, sharing collecting pages, etc...
- Twitter: 3 730 fans under the Foundation account, to keep a link between the ARC Foundation and the different events that are created. No need to scatter. Same posts as Facebook + some institutional content, with health’s actors and scientific news. Live Tweet during the event.
- Instagram: The association does not have an account yet it counts around 110 posts with the hashtag #triathlondesroses. They are thinking of creating one maybe this year. First, they need to create an editorial line. As Nathalie underlined “it could be a good kick-off on this platform as the event is powerful in terms of colours, aesthetic...”

*Interactions with the community:*

- Tone: It is scientific, factual but it is also turned towards listening and answering.
- Hashtags: #triathlondesroses
- Content: Volunteers’ experiences videos, victim’s race feedbacks. No need for cancer testimony on social media; there is a special page on the website for that. It is important to keep some distance, to take a step back.
- Conversation: the Facebook fan page and the Facebook event page are really solicited when the event is around the corner. It is a real communication tool to send information about the race and reassure the participants whether they are scared or excited.
**Bacchantes event:**

- Facebook: 2 800 fans + event page. They post 1 charity sports event content per week up to 2/3 CSE content per day before the D-day.
- Twitter: 594 fans. Same posts as Facebook. These two platforms allow the association to reach the core target, using a less institutional communication tone.
- Instagram: The association does not have an account yet it counts around 500 posts with the hashtag #lesbacchantes. They are also thinking of creating one maybe this year.

**Interactions with the community:**

- Tone: “we have opted for a tone that suits the race’s spirit: conviviality! Social media and the communication rather fun that can be employed, allows us to reach differently a greater number of potential participants.”
- Hashtags: #lesbacchantes
- Content: Photos, videos, texts, information…
- Conversation: “There are a lot of meetings, sharing and emotions while talking to the participants online and offline.” The members, as said earlier, go to other sports events to support their event and get people to join in.

**Retaining participants:**

Nathalie underlined the number of participants that wanted to subscribe to the future event once the 2015 one was over. She is certain that the future 2016 edition will be a success. To retain and engage new potential participant, the association advice to subscribe to their social media and the newsletter in order to get the updates.

Pierre was pleasantly surprised by the participants’ moustaches’ faithfulness, coming back every year. These participants bring friends and family members. Despite the great success of social media, the ‘Bacchantes’ association will not stop using the more traditional communication: flyers, emailing and meeting people…
5. Discussion

The undertaken study aimed to investigate the efficacy of charity sports events reinforced by the use fo social media. In parallel, research has been done to highlight if French charity sports events participants could have the best playful and meaningful experience without being connected through social media?

To conduct this investigation, primary and secondary data have been collected. It permitted to highlight several aspects and behaviors towards these specific events. From reviewing the results of the qualitative and quantitative methods, a few different points arose.

The first point that can be highlighted after reviewing other academic studies is the relationship between organizations, on the one hand, and Internet users and social media, on the other hand. According to Matthew Nicholson’s words (2007) “sports and the media are engaged in a co-dependent relationship in which the media supports […] events…” the qualitative data showed the social interactions that emerged in the new digital strategies supporting charity sports events. In fact, in their interview both associations reported that social media have always helped them in the past to reach their target, especially when the rather friendly tone of the communication is employed. It allows conversation and the development of links with potential participants. As a matter of fact, as one of the interviewees pointed out, social media can connect participants directly with events’ organizers. For instance, when joining the Facebook event, easy and quick access to information gives reassurance. In short, it removes possible barriers that could dissuade potential participants to join in. Furthermore, when the question was asked through the qualitative and quantitative methods, 61% of the respondents said they were also joining Facebook events pages to see who was already in (friends, people they would like to meet). This brings the sense of community back to the subject.

In contrast, when the interviewees were asked how they heard about these charity sports events, not all replied “only social media”. This points out the importance of traditional media in the communication strategy of organizations. Indeed, some associations do not have enough communication budget to approach the radio or the press. However, Pierre added his members would join other sports events, would share information and get people to join in his own charity event. In fact, despite the event’s expansion thanks to social media, he confirmed that their communication will not stop using flyers, emailing and meeting people.
In addition, Mickaël (one of the interviewees) said that he also heard about charity sports events from advertising campaigns, one article in a running magazine and from word-of-mouth. These elements come to complete the digital social media strategy.

Moreover, when launching a charity sport event using social media, numerous communication elements should be taking into account. As a matter of fact, organizations tend to differentiate themselves through these events to attract a maximum of participants and above all to give them an amazing experience. Filo, Funk and O’Brien (2010) highlighted the need of “reciprocity” between participation and entertainment. During the qualitative research, one of the interviewees pointed out the lack of clarity because of the too numerous charity sports events in France each year. It is becoming complicated to satisfy participants when their level of curiosity has tripled and their comparison behaviours skills have evolved.

To make sure associations and Internet users / participants were aligned, questions about their connectivity, interactions and social media platforms uses, were undeniable. Indeed, it appeared like the same common digital platforms would come up, which was Facebook & Twitter. Instagram was a bit of a surprise, when it was the most second social media platforms used by participants to share content and get involved with the CSE, two of the associations interviewed where thinking of creating an Instagram account later on this year. The most unbelievable fact was that participants had already posted content using the CSE’s dedicated hashtags, creating traffic and referencing, when the association did not even have an official account. It proves the great dimension of the digital sphere, which offers many opportunities for organizations to expand.

By interviewing two different charitable associations, the point was to see what were the different components used to attract participants and see their efficacy. First, two formats were presented (triathlon and running) and when comparing to the physical activities of the questionnaire’s respondents (running, cycling, swimming, triathlon), we can admit that it sounds quite relevant. In fact, 67% have already experienced a charity run event, when 82% said running was their regular physical activity, which again here makes sense.

Two cities were presented, Paris first and Toulouse second. Anecdotally the events were first created in Paris and when the first event ‘Triathlon des Roses’ would like to be developed in Toulouse in 2016, the second event ‘Les Bacchantes’ had already been developed in Toulouse in 2015. However, place did not appear as a potential threat (capital vs other big French cities),
but more like an expanding concept that could move people. In fact, some connected races have emerged and can be thrown anywhere in France and abroad in the same time, thanks to social media; it is the case if the UNICEF Connected race, which was actually quoted by the interviewees.

The question of welcoming VIP / athletes on a charity sport event was interesting, as it was also underlined by interviewees. On the one hand, Pierre, the communication manager of ‘Les Bacchantes’ admitted that they did not have any guest athlete yet, which did not exclude a future collaboration. On the other hand, Nathalie, the communication manager of the ‘Triathlon des Roses’ confessed that guests were involved in her event but precisely not sportsperson to reinforce the challenge of pushing yourself forward even if participants do not regularly train. It is important to remind that a charity sport event is more about getting involved, sharing and preventing than performing. Nathalie noticed how important those guests were for the press, to get clippings and traffic around the event, but under two conditions: the guests should not be under the spotlight of the event, and should be volunteering once enrolled. In addition to that point, participants underlined their wish to see athletes at the starting line, but and surprisingly, in a volunteering manner.

Today, when it is noticeable that athletes count enormous social media followers, it can really boost the event’s digital traffic and encourage fans to join in. Then, it emphasizes a real strategy for associations to use that “attraction” and if so, in a good manner.

In the same way, when tacking the content sharing issue while on a charity sport event, the questionnaire’s respondents underlined some functionalities that social media offer to improve the contents’ visibility. In fact, most of the respondents use the same common tools which are in order, dedicated hashtags of the event (e.g. #werunparis); localizations; general hashtags (e.g. #running); & to finish tags (association, city, sports’ clothes, friends...). These elements can be handily found among the three social media platforms they mainly use, therefore increasing the visibility of organizations. Moreover, one of the interviewees, Mickaël put on light the way goodies could be highlighted as well, such as the T-shirt given when subscribing, in order to give a maximum of visibility.

In addition to the different charity sports events participants’ motivations studies and my qualitative and quantitative collected data, some findings can be discussed.
Stefan Stieglitz and Ling Dan Xuan (2013) exposed the “emotional contagion” that an event should carry in relation to motivation. It becomes quite relevant when looking at charity sports events, which should be designed with content that triggers emotion. When asking charity sports events participants about how they felt once the race was over, some clearly talked about the bad organization or not so nice path of the race. Other participants really felt emotions as proudness and making a small difference for the association as well as raising awareness among entourage. This comes to be linked with Filo, Groza and Fairley’s study on motivation (2012).

In contrast, Mounia one of the interviewees, emphasized something missing in her participation to these events, a “special role”, and the importance for associations to rise their level of prevention.

In addition and to understand what could be improved, interviewees and respondents talked about their wishes for future charity sport events. Two main elements came up; the first was about donations which for participants should entirely go to the charitable cause (78%).

Equally, Mounia pointed out a race she did where she had to collect funds to get in. These new ways of raising funds could be a good way of involving participants. In second was found the wish of racing for or with a victim of the cause (58%) where achievement and challenge take all sense.

By the same token, they were asked how they would share memories, capture the moments. In relation to earlier studies (Filo, Funk, O’Brien 2009 – Woolf, Heere, Walker 2013) on the power of communities, some interviewees and respondents brought the “camaraderie” sense out. In fact, social media allowed them to share with friends and future potential friends on the two most quoted platforms, Facebook and Instagram. As Athaa, one of the interviewees, highlighted sharing content on social media allows him to keep his friends informed about his results but also to meet some other participants. Mounia to add the inspiring side of it, when your friends leave you cheering comments.

To emphasize John Williams and Susan J. Chinn’s words (2010), about “the importance of creating connections both online and offline”, the participants were asked whether they will talk about the charity sport event and come back the following year. When engaging individuals online may sound easy, we learnt that organizations should also interact and give great different experiences on the D-day. Mickaël justified “I would do the UNICEF Connected race again
because I really loved the concept which was different and fun whereas the other races really need to work on their organisation.” This is to seriously take into account when Internet users can easily post about their experience(s) on social media, influencing or dissuading others from participating.
Not to mention that 47% of participants said they will not stay informed about the cause but will enroll next year, which points out a real disconnection between the event and the cause.
6. Conclusions & Recommendations

To conclude, the discussed findings will help answering the research questions. Could these French charity sports events exist in an effectively manner without social media? As a matter of fact, if social media were not used by French charity sports events, some communication barriers would emerge. The event would struggle more to reach the core target and less traffic will be relayed on the digital sphere.

In fact, as highlighted, social media allow associations great opportunities to expand, and to interact with participants to first educate them and in a second time give them an experience in order to engage towards a specific cause. Creating conversations and getting feedbacks will permit to improve future editions of the event and retain participants.

Could French participants have the best playful and meaningful experience of a charity sport event, without being connected through social media? When Mounia explained that for once during a charity sport event she disregarded everything as she was running for others and she did not put herself on the front line or on social media, others highlighted the need of getting cheered up by friends, showing them results and keep inspiring certain participants or even entourage. Sharing was also seen as caring and maintaining memories.

In addition, sharing involves conversation. When conversation is involved, the study showed that participants are more likely to be attached to the cause and talk about it. It is a virtuous circle.

In short, French participants would have the best playful and meaningful experience of a charity sport event through social media.

When learning about participants’ social media behaviours, here are some recommendations for events’ organizers.

The use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is undeniable; but some other social media platforms should be considered especially since being different is sought-after. It is the case of YouTube that the quantitative data highlighted, as Internet users do not need an account to go see videos, which 76% of them do. Additionally Snapchat could be added to a
charity sport event’s digital strategy to capture live moments when the study showed that 59% of Internet users are connected to that social media app.

When social media bring new opportunities to expand and offer new ways of raising funds and different experiences, the overall study showed the importance of connections, interactions and conversations that should be going on. For that, it will be recommended to have a community manager in charge of the digital communication, to keep the same and right tone in order to reach the core target.

Furthermore, associations should not forget to align online and offline actions in order to retain their communities.

When it comes to differentiate themselves, associations could think of different format races. Indeed, run races are the easiest and more accessible ones, but the study pointed out the main regular activities of the participants, which were also cycling, swimming and doing triathlon. The study showed the success of the ‘Triathlon des Roses’.

To rise above others, associations could create funny and unique dedicated hashtags to encourage participants to share more content, as it is one of the communication elements they were usually applying to their posts.

When emotions is also a key element on these specific events, capturing these moments could be done through the creation of segmentation personas communications strategies. It would be the continuity of Hendricks and Peelen’s work (2013).
7. Limitations and directions for further research

The dissertation was an investigation of the French participants of charity sports events and their social media behaviours.

It was designed as none of the studies, which can be found today, would show the relation and interactions between social media, charity sports events and participants in France.

The research took place from September 2015 to January 2016, not allowing a lot of room for manoeuvre.

In fact, mainly due to a time limitation, some interesting findings could not have been explored through the research, becoming an opportunity for further research. It is acknowledged that a longitudinal approach investigation would provide a deeper basis for further research.

The findings highlighted were based on a snapshot approach of French participants of general charity sports events. It was enriched by in-depth individual interviews of two successful CSE’s communication managers, plus 6 interviews of participants.

In addition, the sample size of the quantitative research was restricted to 103 participants living in Paris, much smaller than expected, due to time limitation. Therefore, it may not be indicative of results if compared to a larger sample size.

When qualitative research was done through only two associations, it could be interesting to go further, interviewing several associations that create different format of charity sports events. It is undeniable that charity sports events’ organizers want to differentiate and create unique experiences. For that, another study could focus on this simple aspect, still in relation to social media.

Furthermore, as emotion was not enough developed by interviewees, it could also be another aspect that should be encountered. In fact, a study conducted by Stefan Stieglitz and Linh Dang-Xuan (2013) analysed the emotions stimuli that result in social media posts. Their findings highlighted that emotions appear to influence what we notice, learn, remember and ultimately the kinds of judgments and decisions we make. Again here is an opportunity to conduct a new approach of the subject. Learning more about the written communication – emotional stimuli (emotions words, framing of messages).
In the same time, when talking about the qualitative method, another limitation can be seen through the participants’ interviews. As a matter of fact, I knew the interviewees, which were some running friends. When it could be seen as an easy way to reach them and ask questions about the topic, it was rather disturbing to stay subjective when they were telling me their stories. Therefore, the fact that an external psychologist individual was not involved may have influenced the interviews. However, it has put the interviewees in confidence through a good atmosphere.

In short, it is underlined here that a further research should raise the question of hiring an external interviewer or not, to investigate the qualitative employed method.

Moreover, the context could be discussed for further research. In fact, additional interviews and questionnaire administrations could have been done in Paris but also including other big cities in order to generalise the findings to the French population.

Finally, the dissertation could be improved in many way, yet it highlighted some relevant unknown findings so far.
8. Self – Reflection

Enrolling a Marketing Master’s programme in January 2015 at the Dublin Business School was a real challenge. New country, new language and new marketing courses. The real adventure then began with learning the new, though difficult, English academic literature review method. From struggling to understanding the mechanism, it allowed me to conduct a project, a study, a dissertation on my own. This may be the only big project that I will ever undertake without collaborating with other members. Through the whole process Aisling Duhy, my tutor, was guiding me, young French researcher. She encouraged me to improve some chapters ‘parts, which then helped me to conduct quantitative and qualitative methods to discuss my research objectives.

To start with, when I chose the subject in March, I decided to go for a French context because I knew I will be working in France late 2015 and that would make the whole process easier. In the same time, I had chosen the subject of the dissertation according to my passion for sport and communication, but also in relation with the sports fields in which I want to work in. This dissertation will thus be another support for my future job applications in the sports industry. I put in practice my five-years of communication & marketing studies in order to conduct interviews quite well and approach my potential questionnaire’s respondents. The courses undertaken at the Dublin Business School also helped me going through this process (The Changing Consumer Research Methods, Graduate and Academic Support).

In fact, having the possibility to talk to charity sports events’ organizers, actors of tomorrow, was a real profit, linking again my personal interests and to my future job’s expectations.

Moreover, meeting the interviewees was quite interesting, as it was the first time I was putting in practice the methodology we had studied through the year. I also learnt, from the first to the last interview, how and what to improve for next applications. It reinforced my listener and communicator skills. However having to translate the whole interviews without deforming a word was pretty long and difficult.

In short, conducting a dissertation gave me strong research and analytical skills while conducting research methods and analyzing primary and secondary data.
By starting the process of delimiting the subject early on 2015, it permitted to narrow down ideas and start drawing a research time plan in order to get organized during the year and especially towards the end when the submission date was getting closer. Nevertheless, as I was working full-time, when the Dublin Business School marketing programme was over, it was difficult to manage time in order to meet the actions plan schedule. Readjusting actions and managing time are some other skills that I have also earned through the whole process of conducting a dissertation. It has given me huge confidence in my abilities and I see myself much more like an attractive candidate.
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1.3 Articles


➢ Kevin Filo, Kirsty Spence and Emily Sparvero (2013). Exploring the properties of community among charity sport event participants. *Managing Leisure, Vol. 18, No. 3*, 194–212

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Appendices - Here are the documents used throughout the research process.

Research Time-plan
Learning Styles

KOHL'S LEARNING STYLES

Reference: Peter Honey and Alan Mumford

LEARNING STYLES

KOHL'S LEARNING STYLES have been adapted by two management development specialists, Peter Honey and Alan Mumford. They use a four-way classification that closely resembles that of Kohl but is simplified for use in a practical training situation.

You can find out your own learning style by completing the scoring and following the succeeding questionnaire. A description of the Honey and Mumford classification follows for use after the questionnaire has been scored.

INSTRUCTIONS

There is no time limit for completing this questionnaire. It will probably take you 10-15 minutes. The accuracy of the results depends on how honestly you can be.

There are no right or wrong answers. If you answer more than once, please mark each item with either a tick or a cross. be sure to mark each item with either a tick or a cross.

1. I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad.

2. I often act without considering the possible consequences.

3. I tend to be creative when thinking about possible solutions.

4. I believe that formal procedures and policies restrict people.

5. I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly.

6. I am more interested in deadlines than in the people who work with them.

7. I like the sort of work where I have time for thorough preparation and implementation.

8. I regularly question people about their basic assumptions.

9. What matters most is whether something works in practice.

10. I actively seek out new experiences.

It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or future.

41. I think decisions based on a thorough analysis of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition.

42. I tend to be a perfectionist.

43. In discussions I usually produce lots of spontaneous ideas.

44. In meetings I put forward practical, realistic ideas.

45. More often than not, rules are there to be broken.

46. I prefer to stay back from a situation and consider all the perspectives.

47. I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments.

48. I balance talk more than I listen.

49. I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done.

50. I think written reports are short and to the point.

51. I believe that rational, logical thinking about the day.

52. I tend to discuss specific things with people rather than engaging in social discussion.

53. I like people who approach things realistically rather than theoretically.

54. In discussions I get impatient with irrelevantities and digressions.

55. If I have a report to write I tend to produce lots of drafts before settling on the final version.

56. I am keen to try new things out to see if they work in practice.

57. I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach.

58. I enjoy being the one that talks a lot.

59. In discussions, I often find that the people taking the point are not the most passionate and objective.

60. I like to consider many alternatives before making up my mind.

61. In discussion with people, I often find I am the most passionate and objective.

62. In discussion I am less likely to adopt a "low profile" than to take the lead and do most of the talking.

63. I like to be able to relate current actions to a longer term bigger picture.

64. When things go wrong I am happy to shirk it off and put it down to experience.

65. I tend to reject wild, spontaneous ideas as being impractical.

66. It's best to think carefully before taking action.

67. On balance I do listen more than I am talking.

68. I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to adopt a logical approach.

69. Most times I believe the end justifies the means.

70. I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done.

71. I find the formality of having specific objectives and plans stifling.

72. I'm usually one of the people who put life into a party.

73. I'm often prepared to get the job done.

74. I quickly get bored with unrealistic, detailed work.

75. I am keen on explaining the basic assumptions, principles and theories underlying things, and events.

76. I am always interested in finding out what people think.

77. I like meetings to be run on methodical lines, checking to a time plan and agenda.

78. I never get bored of abstract or ambiguous topics.

79. I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation.

80. People often find me interesting to talk to.

SCORING

You score one point for each item you ticked. Simply indicate on the boxes below which terms were ticked.

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**Learning Styles — General Descriptions**

**Activists**

Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is: ‘I'll try anything once’. They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards. Their days are filled with activity. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down they are busy looking for the next. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer term consolidation. They are gregarious people constantly involving themselves with others but, in doing so, they seek to centre all activities around themselves.

**Reflexors**

Reflexors like to stand back and ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first hand and from others, and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. They take the time to and analysis of data about experiences and events to what counts so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before making their own points. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant, unruffled air about them. When they act it is part of a wider picture which includes the past as well as the present and others’ observations as well as their own.

**Theorists**

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a verbal, step by step, logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists who won't rest easy until things are tidy and fit into a rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic. It’s logical it’s good! Questions they frequently ask are: ‘Does it make sense?’ ‘How does this fit with that?’ ‘What are the basic assumptions?’ They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is their ‘mental set’ and they rigidly reject anything that doesn’t fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgements, lateral thinking and anything flippan

**Pragmatists**

Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They are the sort of people who return from management courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They tend to be impatient with rumination and overanalysed discussions. They are essentially practical, down to earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities as a challenge. Their philosophy is: There is always a better way and if it works it’s good.
The research Onion – (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2009).
The multiple research methods & sampling techniques

Saunders et al, (2009)
Selecting a probability sample, Saunders & al 2009

![Flowchart Diagram](image-url)
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Thank you for agreeing to participate to this study. You will find below what this dissertation is about, a description of the involvement required and your rights as a participant.

The purpose of this study is:
The aim of my research is to discover the significance of social media in the participants' behaviours on French charity sports events. By learning from your past experiences on charity sports events, I would like to demonstrate that these special events cannot result of an efficient and playful experiences for participants without being taken over by social media.

The benefits of it will be:
- Learn from past experiences to create new amazing charity sports events’ experiences.
- Drive associations to manage or create their social media strategy(ies) - Learn how to retain participants through social medias (what social medias? What content? What tone? When? Etc…)

• Face-to-face interviews.
You are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time about the nature of the study or the methods I will be using. Feel free to contact me any time: constance.marle@icloud.com / 06 89 89 27 70
This interview will be recorded on my phone to help me accurately capture your insights in your own words. This will only be used by myself for the study. If you don’t feel comfortable with the situation, you can ask me anytime to turn it off.
You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and your information will be erased.
The insights that I will be gathering will be used to complete the qualitative data collection and will allow me to enhance the study and the quantitative data collection technique. This part will be read by my supervisor and might be read by other people form the Dublin Business School. Direct quotes from you may be cited to help me rely on my findings, unless one requests.
By signing below you agree that you have read and understood the above information, and accept to participate to this study.

I accept to be quoted: [ ] YES [ ] NO
I accept to show my full name: [ ] YES [ ] NO

Name of interviewee: ___________________________ DATE: __________ Signature: ___________________________
Name of interviewer: ___________________________ DATE: __________ Signature: ___________________________
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The benefits of it will be:
- Learn from past experiences to create new amazing charity sports events' experiences.
- Drive associations to manage or create their social media strategy(ies) - Learn how to retain participants through social medias (what social medias? What content? What tone? When? Etc...)

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Name of interviewer

Name of interviewer

DATE

SIGNATURE

DATE

SIGNATURE

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“Understanding the power of social media through an examination of participants’ behaviour on French charity sporting events’”

TRIATHLON DES ROSES INTERVIEW – Nathalie Courtial

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to participate to this study in order to help me understanding the connection between social networks and charity sports events.

Interview with Nathalie Courtial – communication manager of the Triathlon des Roses

1) What is the name of your association and what are your mission(s)? What are you stand in for?
   Foundation Arc aims for the cancer’s research. Our missions: identify, select and finance cancer projects. We also want to inform and prevent on cancer advances research.

2) What sort of charity sport event do you organise?
   Triathlon des Roses is a triathlon race with two different distances. There are very easy to access and reserved to women. Our aim is to differentiate ourselves from other charity sports events thanks to this race format. We want to prevent and encourage women to get detected. It is all about communication. It also has an image of a crazy challenge that patient and searchers take every day. It is a uniting challenge, a race that you can do by yourself or in relay.

3) How many participants did you have this year? Was it more than last year, for the 1st edition?
   This year we had 400 participants compare to last year with 270 participants.

4) Your cause is different in many ways. Can you explain us how and why?
   The race has the pink colours of Pink October. But despite that fact, it is different because it proposes a new format – a triathlon. It is a premium race where we want to make the women participants very comfortable. For this, we play music, we dance. There are some artists coming to perform that were once cancer’s victims. Some association’s members race with some victims or their family. To resume, we work with a team that makes sense and we are careful to any detail. It is a race that we own, we do not want any brand’s naming. But we work in collaboration with the Stade Français (sports club). We want this event to stay a human dimension.

5) Your charity sport event takes place once a year, how long before do you communicate? Do you have a particular communication strategy?
   Last year (2014), we have communicated pretty late, around the end of June, when the event took place in September.
   This year, we are going to communicate late April / beginning of May. We thought of developing the concept in Toulouse (South of France) as it sounded pertinent when Toulouse is called “The Pink City” (referring to the Pink October month). The only problem that we encounter is the 2 months of summer break, just before the event.
   The first thing we did last year was launching a teaser for the press. Then, as we wanted to create some buzz and surprise, we decided to send for 4 days in-a-row different objects to the feminine press journalists. 1st day was a pair of pink sun glasses, then next day another pink object until the 4th day when
we sent the press release with all the information about the event and an USB key with the 2014 edition photos.
The participants could access to pre-inscriptions online on our website, we also sent videos (March-April) then they had access to the inscriptions. We mainly communicated through emails and press releases.

6) You have some VIP coming to the event and through themselves into the cause. Is that important for you to have that support? Do you put themselves on the front line on your website and social media?
   What is important in the event’s communication is the press. We want a lot of clippings and so when the VIP do the race or get involved in the event at some point, the job is done. But, we don’t want the event to be just around them, but the real actors of it are the women. Also these VIP are all volunteers.

7) The event has a Facebook fan page and a Facebook event page – How many followers do you have? What is the frequency of your posts?
   We have 124 000 fans & we do 2/3 posts per week.

8) You are also present on Twitter but under the ARC Foundation (creator of the event) account. Are you going to create an account for the event (@triathlondesroses)? Or is it important that participants associate the event to the ARC Foundation?
   It is important for us to keep a link between the ARC Foundation and the events that are created. As we already have a Facebook page for the event, we are not going to create another Twitter account. We don’t want to scatter!

9) Do you post the same content on Facebook and Twitter?
   On Twitter, we post some institutional content, with health’s actors and scientific news. But we also share the Facebook’s posts on the Pink October campaigns, sharing of collecting pages…

10) Is Twitter useful for questions and answers from stressed participants? Is that a good way of interacting with these women before the race?
   We principally have these sort of messages on the Facebook platform, whether on the Facebook Fan page, the Facebook event page or by private messages. As said before, the Twitter account is to link with the ARC Foundation.

11) The event has 109 Instagram posts with the hashtag #triathlondesroses, are you thinking of creating an account to gather this community?
   We are actually thinking of creating one this year. But first, we need to think of an editorial line. As we know, it could be a good kick-off on this platform as the event is powerful in terms of colours, aesthetic.
12) What tone do you use when posting on the different social media platforms? Do you feel some emotion from the audience?
We use scientific and factual tones, but also listening and answering.

13) How do you attempt to interact with your community? What sort of content do you propose?
We usually put certain videos where the volunteers and victims tell their CSE stories.
We do not put in light life stories and testimonies but we have a dedicated space on our website. It is important for us to keep a distance, to take a step back. Unfortunately, we cannot get too involved in the victims’ lives.

14) Do you use different functionalities to enhance your posts? (Hashtags, localisation, tags, etc.)?
We rarely use all these elements except from the dedicated hashtag #triathlondesroses

15) Do you think that social media are helping you out communicating and reaching your core target?
Of course! Those create traffic towards our website and so towards prevention and screening.

16) Do you think these social media help them stay updated with your association? To get to learn more about the cause?
We have used the Live Tweet functionality this year and it was a great success (before and after the race)!
Once the race is over, we encourage all women to subscribe to the newsletter and the social media to stay in touch and receive the latest updates (events + research).

17) Thanks to you different digital actions, do you think you are retaining participants? Will they be there next year?
Well, we had loads of subscriptions demands once the race was over so we guess yes all of them will come back for the next edition.

Thank you again for taking time to answer my questions. It will be very useful for the study. Constance Marle – Proud participant of the 1st edition of the Triathlon des Roses 2014 and smiling volunteer of the 2015 Triathlon des Roses edition.
LES BACCHANTES INTERVIEW – Pierre

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to participate to this study in order to help me understanding the connection between social networks and charity sports events.

Interview with Pierre – communication manager of Les Bacchantes.

1) What is the name of your association and what are your mission(s)? What are you stand in for?
The association les Bacchantes has thrown every November 11th since 2012, a crazy race. This event stands for the fight of the prostate’s diseases. Our mission is to collect funds while having fun. As our race is in November, it meets the Movember's campaigns. We use the moustaches symbol in your communication.

2) What sort of charity sport event do you organise?
It is an 8k run that replies to a simple question: How can you run in a useful and solidarity manner?

3) Your cause is different in many ways. Can you explain us how and why?
There is a festive and convivial atmosphere. Moustaches everywhere! In short, it is a non-serious race for a serious cause!

   How many participants did you have this year? Was it more than last year?
   3,430 participants in Paris (4th edition, +22% vs. 2014)
   1,000 participants in Toulouse (1st edition)

4) Your charity sport event takes place once a year, how long before do you communicate? Do you have a particular communication strategy?
We tend to have the website ready for the first subscriptions early spring, then meet people on other sports events. Early September, we start to send emailing, distribute flyers and put ads on magazines.

5) Do you have some VIP coming to the event and through themselves into the cause?
Not yet.

6) The event has a Facebook fan page and a Facebook event page – How many followers do you have? What is the frequency of your posts?
Facebook 2,800 likes, Twitter 594 followers.
From 1 post per week, to 2/3 posts per day when the D-day is getting closer.

7) Do you post the same content on Facebook and Twitter?
Yes, but we adapt the content to the social media. (E.g. twitter only a few characters.)

8) Is Twitter useful for questions and answers from stressed participants? Is that a good way of interacting with these women before the race?
Twitter as Facebook allow us to maintain a good communication with our target. It is less institutional and friendlier.

9) The event has more than 500 Instagram posts with the hashtag #triathlondesroses, are you thinking of creating an account to gather this community?
We are thinking of creating an account yes.

10) What tone do you use when posting on the different social media platforms? Do you feel some emotion from the audience?
Our tone meets the event’s spirit. It is convivial and fun. There is a lot of emotions when meeting people during the race, a lot of sharing in regards to the cause.

11) How do you attempt to interact with your community? What sort of content do you propose?
We share photos, text, videos, information, etc. As said earlier, we tend to meet people on other events, that’s also part of the interactions going on.
12) Do you use different functionalities to enhance your posts? (Hashtags, localisation, tags, etc...)?
We use more and more tags and hashtags.

13) Do you highlight some aspects (testimonies, race’s guidebook, education of the cause...)
Information about the cause, banalisation of the prostate’s diseases, a lot of information about the race.
In fact a lot of participants are only occasional runners.

14) Do you think that social media are helping you out communicating and reaching your core target?
Definitely, even if we do not want to neglect the more traditional communication (emailing, flyers...).

15) Do you think these social media help them stay updated with your association? To get to learn more about the cause?
This communication channel cannot be neglected; in fact having the possibility to communicate in a funny way allows us to touch differently a larger population.

16) Thanks to you different digital actions, do you think you are retaining participants? Will they be there next year?
You deeply hope for that. For the moment, we are pleasantly surprised of the participant’s satisfaction and loyalty. They come back every year and mostly accompanied with family members or friends.
We’re very grateful for that!

Thank you again for taking time to answer my questions. It will be very useful for the study. Constance Marle – proud participant of the Bacchantes 2014 edition.
“Understanding the power of social media through an examination of participants’ behaviour on French charity sporting events’”

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Mickaël

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to participate to this study in order to help me understanding the connection between social networks and charity sports events.

1) Are you connected? On which social media?
   Not that much actually, but I do use Facebook quite often.

2. Do you usually join in a Facebook event, in order to get information or see who’s in?
   Yes, especially to get the events’ information and to know when the next subscriptions are. It is also handy to know the path and get the photos of the race. If I see someone that I know also doing it, it is always funnier.

3. What sport do you do?
   I was doing badminton until recently, but I stopped to exclusively dedicate myself to run. Sometimes I also do collective sports like basketball or volleyball.

4. Do you get involved in some races in Paris (run, cycling, or triathlon)?
   Yes, mainly when my friends also get involved.

5. Do you usually post some sports content, like results or personal sports achievements?
   I rarely post my races’ results on social media, only if I beat my personal records. I rather post photos of the race and afterwards picnics to keep the events’ memories. And if it can encourage people to join it, it’s a good deal!

6. Have you already participated to a charity sport event? What were your motivations?
   I have already experienced the UNICEF World Run, Les Bacchantes and the Odyssea races. I have done these races both for the challenge as for the fact that donations entirely go to the cause.

7. How did you hear about the event?
   Every time in a different manner. I discovered the Odyssea race thanks to social media, when I heard about Les Bacchantes from word-of-mouth and the UNICEF Word Race was on a running magazine I usually buy.

8. Did you find useful at this stage to get information from the Facebook event page?
   Not particularly, as most of the time I go on the event’s website.

9. Did you posted photos of you and or your friends during your participation? If yes, did you use any of the association’s communication elements?
   I posted a photo for each event, taking good care of using dedicated hashtags and putting on the front line the association’s elements such as the T-shirt given when subscribing in order to give the event a maximum of visibility.

10. After the D-Day, did you stay updated to the cause’ latest news?
    Not really.

11. Do you think you will reenrol next year?
    I think I am going to do the UNICEF World Run again because I really enjoyed the concept. The other charity sports events should work on their organisation.
12. Were you proud of participating to that kind of race? Did you feel like you made a difference? Or learnt at least about the cause?

Proud is not the word, but I am happy yes! I feel like I have served the cause at small-scale. And if I could touch my entourage it is a plus. When running is our passion, why not run for those who can’t?

13. Do you think you will talk about it around you, to get people involved?

I am always trying to get people motivated, and this especially when it is for a good cause.

14. Did the subscription’s price of the race go to the cause? Does this fact make any change for you as a participant?

Yes for the UNICEF race, not for the two others. It does make a difference for me as it feels like I am helping somehow a bit.

15. What would be the communication elements that would encourage you even more to participate to these specific events?

Ideally, it would first be a small race, 10km would be enough. Then, all donation would go to the cause. The path is something that annoys me sometimes, it is important to have an enjoyable journey, to convince us to come back. I have a bad memory of the Bacchantes’ race’s path in 2014… It would be interesting to run for or with victims, but I guess it must be difficult to organize. We always see runners with disabled people, and it stroke me every time. It is a beautiful example of solidarity, sports’ believes and values that I share.
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Paul

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to participate to this study in order to help me understanding the connection between social networks and charity sports events.

1) Are you connected? On which social media?
   Yes, on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

2) Do you usually join in a Facebook event, in order to get information or see who’s in?
   Yes.

3) What sport do you do?
   I run, play tennis and do some yoga.

4) Do you usually post some sports content, like results or personal sports achievements?
   I do it when I want to promote something special and also when I am proud of my time.

5) Have you already participated to a charity sport event? What were your motivations?
   I have already experienced the UNICEF World Run and Les Bacchantes. I principally did it for the cause.

6) How did you hear about the event?
   Every time it was through social media.

7) Did you find useful at this stage to get information from the Facebook event page?
   Yes!

8) Did you posted photos of you and or your friends during your participation? If yes, did you use any of the association’s communication elements?
   I posted a photo for the Bacchantes’ race with a moustache as it is the symbol and I used dedicated hashtags for both races.

9) After the D-Day, did you stay updated to the cause’ latest news?
   Yes!

10) Do you think you will reenrol next year?
    I am not really sure.

11) Were you proud of participating to that kind of race? Did you feel like you made a difference? Or learnt at least about the cause?
    Not really proud but it is true that we learn some actions of the associations: their missions, what they do to combat the cause…

12) Do you think you will talk about it around you, to get people involved?
    I don’t think so.
13) Did the subscription’s price of the race go to the cause? Does this fact make any change for you as a participant?

I am not sure of that point. But it doesn’t change anything for me, I know a race has some costs.

14) What would be the communication elements that would encourage you even more to participate to these specific events?

I do really have an opinion on this, I already get lost when looking at all the different charity events that emerge.
“Understanding the power of social media through an examination of participants’ behaviour on French charity sporting events’”

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Mounia

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to participate to this study in order to help me understanding the connection between social networks and charity sports events.

1) Are you connected? On which social media?
   Yes, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

2) Do you usually join in a Facebook event, in order to get information or see who’s in?
   Oh yeah! I have learnt from running with the same running team that everybody would join in the Facebook event and that we could share it with friends. Also by doing this, you also meet new people.

3) What sport do you do?
   I run, do crossfit and swimming.

4) Do you usually post some sports content, like results or personal sports achievements?
   I do it sometimes but when I am proud of my time and then I share it with my running network. And when you think about it, reading your friends’ comments is always very stimulating. Also, you never know who you get to inspire.

5) Have you already participated to a charity sport event? What were your motivations?
   I have already experienced many charity sports events. In fact, I have done the Curie Institute race, which was very stimulating as I had to collect a minimum of 100€ donation to get in. It took me only two days to collect the funds and for the first time I participated to the race without any supporters, nor friends but only to appreciate it in a different way. It made me thought of my grandmother – a sort of personal therapy in short. For the UNICEF Connected race, I hold the universal and solidarity sides that emerge from that charity sport event. Because of the dedicated hashtag, you feel like you’re running with your Brazilian or New-Yorkers running buddies.

6) How did you hear about the event?
   Every time it was through social media & my running buddies.

7) Did you find useful at this stage to get information from the Facebook event page?
   Yes, completely. You can get information about the race, and to post cheering messages to others and also very important, you get to ask questions directly to the organizers.

8) Did you posted photos of you and or your friends during your participation? If yes, did you use any of the association’s communication elements?
   I tend to adapt my posts to the event’s communication strategy. I use dedicated hashtags, localization, colours, tone and tags. But under one condition: the event’s ethical side should be maintain from the start to the finish line.

9) After the D-Day, did you stay updated to the cause’ latest news?
   Yes for some, but not always I have to say.

10) Do you think you will reenrol next year?
    For some charity sport events I only enrol once compare to others. I think because I was disappointed by the organisation. The thing that I keep in mind and that the CSE taught me is to keep people motivated and help them to push them forward. As I am one of the co-leaders of a running association,
I put these skills in practice every week. That’s how, actually, I really keep connections with charity sports events, through the year.

11) Were you proud of participating to that kind of race? Did you feel like you made a difference? Or learnt at least about the cause?

I am proud of participating to these types of charity sports events because you really get to involve yourself for a few kilometres. Nevertheless, I do not think I am helping out the association that much. For that, people should have a particular role in the association’s heart. Not to concentrate on that aspect too much, when participating I think of all those you can’t do it and then it pushes me forward. But we never get enough information about these associations, though certain releases / newsletter are interesting. Prevention should be a bigger scope!

12) Do you think you will talk about it around you, to get people involved?

Yes, I think so.

13) Did the subscription’s price of the race go to the cause? Does this fact make any change for you as a participant?

Yes it was donations for causes. It makes a huge difference to me, even if I am not sure there are lots of things behind this that we are not aware of.

14) What would be the communication elements that would encourage you even more to participate to these specific events?

My dream charity sport event would be first meeting associations before the event to learn more about the cause, also athletes. Then I would like to hear testimonies to get a bit more of what the victims feel like every day. I would also wish to run with one of these victims, to share that particular moment. The perfect race would be up to 10km.
"Understanding the power of social media through an examination of participants’ behaviour on French charity sporting events’"

**INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Aline**

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to participate to this study in order to help me understanding the connection between social networks and charity sports events.

1) **Are you connected? On which social media?**

Yes, on Facebook and Instagram.

2) **Do you usually join in a Facebook event, in order to get information or see who’s in?**

Yes, all the time.

3) **What sport do you do?**

I run, do cycling and some yoga.

4) **Do you usually post some sports content, like results or personal sports achievements?**

I do it all the time. Like this, I can keep my data, share with others.

5) **Have you already participated to a charity sport event? What were your motivations?**

I have already experienced Imagine for Margo, Arsep, and the UNICEF connected race. For me, it is essential to use my running activity to promote a health cause, especially when it moves me.

6) **How did you hear about the event?**

Every time it was through social media & my job that promoted one of the races.

7) **Did you find useful at this stage to get information from the Facebook event page?**

Yes, completely. I also could invite my friends which is rather cool!

8) **Did you posted photos of you and or your friends during your participation? If yes, did you use any of the association’s communication elements?**

Yes, I usually post photos with the use of localization and hashtags.

9) **After the D-Day, did you stay updated to the cause’ latest news?**

Yes.

10) **Do you think you will reenrol next year?**

Yes, and maybe some others.

11) **Were you proud of participating to that kind of race? Did you feel like you made a difference? Or learnt at least about the cause?**

These events really raise awareness among people and give information about sometimes unknown causes. They also permit to relativize and not to forget how important it is to share.

12) **Do you think you will talk about it around you, to get people involved?**

I am already doing it.
13) Did the subscription’s price of the race go to the cause? Does this fact make any change for you as a participant?

Yes it was donations for causes. It makes a difference to me.

14) What would be the communication elements that would encourage you even more to participate to these specific events?

My dream charity sport event would be first between 7k and 10km. And we would get medals and T-shirts at the finish line. Then a huge free picnic would be organised in order to all gather and share our own experiences. We could meet the athletes and the some victims. It would be a very secure race in Paris around very nice places.
“Understanding the power of social media through an examination of participants’ behaviour on French charity sporting events”

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Pauline

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to participate to this study in order to help me understanding the connection between social networks and charity sports events.

1) Are you connected? On which social media?
   Yes, on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

2) Do you usually join in a Facebook event, in order to get information or see who’s in?
   Yes, all the time.

3) What sport do you do?
   I run and some yoga.

4) Do you usually post some sports content, like results or personal sports achievements?
   Before, I used to do it all the time. Now I do it when I see a real interest for me or others.

5) Have you already participated to a charity sport event? What were your motivations?
   I have already experienced the Odyssea race.

6) How did you hear about the event?
   Every time it was through social media & my friends.

7) Did you find useful at this stage to get information from the Facebook event page?
   Yes, completely. You get information about the race and also get to invite your friends.

8) Did you posted photos of you and or your friends during your participation? If yes, did you use any of the association’s communication elements?
   Yes, I usually post photos with the use of dedicated hashtags, localization and colours.

9) After the D-Day, did you stay updated to the cause’ latest news?
   Yes.

10) Do you think you will reenrol next year?
    Yes, for sure.

11) Were you proud of participating to that kind of race? Did you feel like you made a difference? Or learnt at least about the cause?
    I was proud, even if it is a small-scale action, but still.

12) Do you think you will talk about it around you, to get people involved?
    Yes, for sure!

13) What would be the communication elements that would encourage you even more to participate to these specific events?
    Running for someone would be very interesting!
“Understanding the power of social media through an examination of participants’ behaviour on French charity sporting events”

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Athaa

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to participate to this study in order to help me understanding the connection between social networks and charity sports events.

1) Are you connected? On which social media?
   Yes, Facebook Twitter and Instagram.

2) Do you usually join in a Facebook event, in order to get information or see who’s in?
   Yes!

3) What sport do you do?
   I run, CrossFit, cycling.

4) Do you get involved in some races in Paris (run, cycling, or triathlon)?
   Yes!

5) Do you usually post some sports content, like results or personal sports achievements?
   Yes, to inform my friends about my races’ results. Then, also to meet other participants.

6) Have you already participated to a charity sport event? What were your motivations?
   I have already experienced the UNICEF World Run.

7) How did you hear about the event?
   Through social media.

8) Did you find useful at this stage to get information from the Facebook event page?
   Yes!

9) Did you posted photos of you and or your friends during your participation? If yes, did you use any of the association’s communication elements?
   I usually post photos with dedicated hashtags.

10) After the D-Day, did you stay updated to the cause’ latest news?
    Yes.

11) Do you think you will reenrol next year?
    Yes.

12) Were you proud of participating to that kind of race? Did you feel like you made a difference? Or learnt at least about the cause?
    Yes, because for once I was running for a good cause, not for my own challenge.

13) Do you think you will talk about it around you, to get people involved?
    Yes.
14) Did the subscription’s price of the race go to the cause? Does this fact make any change for you as a participant?

Yes it made a difference because all donations went to the cause.

15) What would be the communication elements that would encourage you even more to participate to these specific events?

Ideally, it would first be a running brand that would be involved, with volunteering athletes. The race would be 10 to 22km and all donation would go to the cause.