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Running Head: CHARITY SPORT EVENTS AND ATTACHMENT

The Meaning Behind Attachment: Exploring Camaraderie, Cause, and Competency at a  
Charity Sport Event

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## Abstract

Charity sport events have emerged as widespread and integral fundraising mechanisms for charitable organizations. This paper explores the meaning that charity sport events hold in participants' lives. Using the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) as the theoretical framework, the authors examine participant attachment to charity sport events. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants in a charity sport event (N=32) to discuss their perceptions of the event and their overall event experiences. Results revealed that camaraderie, cause, and competency reflect the enhanced meaning of the event and provide further explanation of attachment. Suggestions are made for charitable organizations and host communities to leverage these factors effectively and develop long-term sustainable events, and to assist in recruiting volunteers and facilitating social change in host communities.

The Meaning Behind Attachment: Exploring Camaraderie, Cause, and Competency at a  
Charity Sport Event

In the year 2000, if an individual wanted to provide financial support to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, s/he could have mailed a check, telephoned an affiliate office to make his/her contribution, or gone to the Foundation's website to proceed with their donation. However, these standard channels were far from the only means through which donations could be made. In that year, an individual could have played golf in American Airlines' Komen Foundation Celebrity Golf Weekend, participated in special self-defense classes offered through Bally's Total Fitness, taken fitness classes as part of the full day public recreation event Workout in the Park, participated in jazzercise as part of Dance for the Cure, ran in Race for the Cure, or taken part in the Virtual Runner Program, a "virtual run" over the Internet that augments Race for the Cure. Meanwhile, women could also play golf in Rally for the Cure or participate in a triathlon series sponsored by the Danskin corporation. Each of these events and activities were staged as fundraisers for the Komen Foundation (King, 2001), and their existence demonstrates the emergence of participatory sport events aligned with a charitable cause, or charity sport events.

The rise in popularity of charity sport events has coincided with record highs in charitable giving in the United States. Individual donations reached an all-time high in the US in 2004 (American Association of Fundraising Counsel, 2005). This growth has occurred while sport participation continues to be popular with 62 million US adults participating in sport in 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004-05). Perhaps most importantly, charity sport events have emerged at a time when consumer attitudes have shifted towards heightened ethical, social, and spiritual sensitivity (Ebenkamp & Stark,

1999). Pringle and Thompson (1999) state that material wealth has become less important to consumers, while the need for belonging, self-esteem, and self-realization have increased in importance. While addressing the Association of National Advertisers, Robert Ekert, president and CEO of Kraft Foods, described consumers as “yearning to connect to people and things that will give meaning to their lives” (Ebenkamp & Stark, 1999, p. 20). However, defining, or determining the factors that constitute this meaning has proved challenging.

Charity sport events have become valuable resources for charitable organizations. The most successful charity sport event in the world, The American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life, generated over \$350 million in 2006 (Cause Marketing Forum, 2007). The purpose of this research is to examine meaning inherent to a participant’s attachment to a charity sport event and explore why people connect and commit to these activities. The 2006 LIVESTRONG Challenge serves as the research context as it allows registrants to participate in physical activity (i.e., cycling, running, walking) for the benefit of the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF), an Austin, Texas-based non-profit organization with the mission to inspire and empower people with cancer.

This manuscript encompasses three sections. First, the study’s theoretical framework is introduced, leading to three research questions. Second, the research methods employed are described. Finally, the results are discussed, leading to conclusions about managerial implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

## Literature Review

*Theoretical Framework*

This research employs Funk and James' (2001, 2006) Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) as its theoretical framework. The PCM espouses that both individual and social situational factors work together in the development of allegiance within consumers (Funk & James, 2006). The PCM conceptualizes the ways consumers relate to sport objects in terms of four stages along a continuum: awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance. The stages represent a hierarchical gradient in the psychological connection that individuals feel towards events/activities (Funk & James, 2001).

The PCM shares similarities with models such as the Hierarchy of Effects Theory, TransTheoretical Model, and the Active Lifestyle Stages of Adoption Model. These models depict how an individual progresses through various stages of adoption, while changing his/her behavior. The PCM was selected for the current research because of the model's focus on the psychological relationship an individual forms with sport objects and the framework's capacity to generate an understanding of both active and passive participation (Stewart, Smith, & Nicholson, 2003). Beaton and Funk (2008) concluded that the PCM offers a valid way to assess participation in physically active leisure settings. Accordingly, Funk, Toohey, and Bruun (2007) successfully used the framework to understand participant motives in an international marathon. The current study adapts this framework to explore participants' connections with, and specifically attachment to, a charity sport event.

To clarify, charity sport events can include any sport event where a significant portion of proceeds benefit a specified charity. Speed and Thompson (2000) suggest

individual response to sport event sponsorship is impacted by different components of the event. These components are attitudes towards the event, attitudes toward the sponsor, and perception of congruence between sponsor and event. Similarly, different components of a charity sport event can influence and shape the meaning the event holds for participants. In an overview of urban marathon running, Nettleton and Hardey (2006) suggest that components inherent to urban marathons such as the image of the city, healthy lifestyle, personal and physical achievement, media coverage, social solidarity, and philanthropy have collectively contributed to the growth and success of the urban marathon. Not all of these features are relevant to charity sport events. For instance, smaller scale charity sport events may be afforded minimal media coverage. However, various event facets including the host city, the physical activity or sport, socialization, and the benefiting charity bundle together to contribute to participation in the event, and the overall meaning of the event.

The PCM was deemed most suitable for the current research because of its social-psychological approach that incorporates a range of personal, psychological, and environmental factors (Henderson & Bialeschki, 2005). This social-psychological orientation lends itself to the examination of meaning for event participants. The PCM suggests an individual becomes connected to a sport event via processes that represent a developmental progression up a vertical continuum with four stages: awareness, or the realization that a sport event exists; attraction, preference for the event; attachment, emotional, symbolic, and functional meaning for the event; and allegiance, or commitment to the event.

The current research focuses specifically on the third stage of the PCM, attachment. Event participants have already demonstrated awareness and attraction to the event through their registration and participation, but these participants, particularly those in their first year, may not demonstrate allegiance, or psychological commitment (e.g., Iwasaki & Havtitz, 1998) to the event. Within the attachment process, the needs and motives satisfied through event participation can interact with one another. These needs and motives also interact with a participant's self-concept and values.

Cumulatively, these interactions lead to attachment, as demonstrated by the event taking on enhanced meaning in the individual's life. By focusing on attachment, the current research responds to the contention that the attachment process requires further deconstruction (Funk & James, 2006) and research (Funk, et al., 2007). The PCM has not thoroughly addressed attachment, or the meaning that underlies attachment. This research addresses this void.

### *The Nature of Attachment*

Attachment is regarded as a universal human experience that occurs throughout an individual's lifecycle (Schultz, Kleine, & Kernan, 1989). Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) suggest that attachment provides opportunity for both self-expression as well as expression of connection to others. Schultz and her colleagues (1989) highlight that attachment reflects a linkage between an individual and an object based upon individuation, or the differentiation of self from others, integration of self with others, and temporal orientation, meaning that the self varies from one experience to the next.

Kleine and Baker (2004) examine attachment within the contexts of material possessions, experiences, and places. Material possession attachment provides self-



definitional value in that objects reflect the individual and their experiences (Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995) as well as what the individual believes s/he can achieve (Kleine & Baker, 2004). Experience attachment is also thought to allow an individual to communicate his/her identity through self-expression (Arnould & Price, 1993). Place attachment is emotionally based with a strong social element, grounded in the social interactions that occur within the place (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004). The social interactions among individuals and groups that occur at places of recreation have been found to foster meaning for the place (Kyle, Mowen, Absher, & Havitz, 2006).

The sport context has also been employed as the research setting in examinations of attachment. Being a sport fan can provide an individual with a sense of attachment (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000). But rather than simply attachment to a team, an individual may be attached to a variety of aspects of the sport object, including the focal sport and the community (Robinson & Trail, 2005). Funk and James (2006) argue that attachment is a dynamic, emotionally complex process from which an individual can use a sport object to develop strong attitudes, express themselves, and align with specific values. Values are believed to be a beneficial means to gain an understanding of individuals' motivations and attitudes towards a sport object (Kahle, Duncan, Dalakis, & Aiken, 2001). Values are concepts or beliefs related to desirable end states or behaviors that go beyond specific situations, guide decision making for behavior, and are ordered by relative importance (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987).

### *The Role of Values*

Values have been used to better understand consumer behavior and classify individuals into specific groups (Kahle, Beatty, & Homer, 1986). Values are believed to

be an important influence on consumer behavior, and the meanings and motives behind consumer activities depend on values (Kahle & Kennedy, 1989). Furthermore, values have been found to influence the formation of attitudes towards brands (Perkins & Reynolds, 1988). The notion that the meaning consumers assign to products has also been suggested to depend upon values, and the worth of products can be enhanced through ties to select values (Kahle, 1985). To assess values, instruments such as Rokeach's Value Survey (RVS) (Rokeach, 1973), Value and Life Style (VALS) (Kahle et al., 1986), and the List of Values (LOV) (Kahle et al., 1986) have been developed. However, the intangibility of values, combined with the meaning and diverse features of charity sport events, suggest that exploratory work could allow for a better understanding of this aspect of attachment.

The PCM depicts attachment as forming when important associations with the product/activity begin to align with personal goals and values. The attachment process involves the interaction among motives and needs satisfied at the attraction outcome level with an individual's existing values (Funk & James, 2006). When associations implicit to a sport object become linked with an individual's values, attachment has developed (Funk & James, 2001). Funk, Ridinger, and Moorman (2003) identify an influence from both core (general) and contextual (situation-specific) factors on sport consumption. Research specifically on charity sport event participation suggests that core (e.g., recreation) and contextual (e.g., charitable giving) motives satisfied at the attraction stage can interact with one another, thus leading to both the motives and the event taking on enhanced meaning among participants (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008).

In discussing the importance of meaning, Bloch and Richins (1983) advance two different elements of importance: instrumental importance and enduring importance. Instrumental importance relates to an individual's desire to obtain extrinsic goals through the use of a product, while enduring importance reflects a product's relationship with an individual's central needs and values. Bloch and Richins further suggest that meaning, the intangible character ascribed to a product, influences both the instrumental and enduring importance consumers might draw from their association.

Funk and James (2001) describe a link between importance and meaning to explain attachment. Their work suggests attachment requires that subjects ascribe intrinsic importance to the sport objects, and that situational/extrinsic factors can alter the strength of that disposition. In relating attachment to facets of involvement, the authors believe that attachment is reflected in higher scores for sign, symbolic expression afforded by the sport event; and centrality, importance of the sport event. This suggests that attachment reveals the sport object as an expression of self and of high importance.

In a further examination of attachment, Funk and James (2006) describe a "meaningful connection that is dynamic, multifaceted, and possesses a degree of strength" (p.192). To reflect this meaningful connection, Funk and James suggest the sport object has taken on emotional, symbolic, and functional meaning for an individual. To operationalize these different facets of meaning, affect towards the sport object is used to measure emotional meaning; importance of the sport object is used to assess symbolic meaning; and knowledge of the sport object is used to measure functional meaning (Funk & James, 2006). Similarly, Dick and Basu (1994) outline

three attitude properties that underlie loyalty: cognitive, affective, and conative. Two of these properties align with Funk and James' assessment of attachment with affective antecedents corresponding with emotional meaning, and cognitive antecedents running parallel with functional meaning. Meanwhile, symbolic meaning may reflect an interaction between the emotional and the functional. Furthermore, Bansal, Irving, and Taylor (2004) advance three components underlying commitment: affective, continuance, and normative; providing additional evidence of the relevance of affect within attachment.

In operationalizing the facets of meaning which comprise attachment, Funk and James (2006) do not provide specific definitions for what constitutes this meaning. Describing meaning in more tangible terms could prove valuable. Pursuant to this, the current research seeks to develop a better understanding of attachment to a charity sport event, and the meaning associated with it, by advancing the following research questions:

*Research Question 1: What constitutes emotional meaning for a charity sport event?*

*Research Question 2: What constitutes symbolic meaning for a charity sport event?*

*Research Question 3: What constitutes functional meaning for a charity sport event?*

#### Method

To address these three research questions, qualitative research was conducted consisting of 32 semi-structured interviews with participants in a charity sport event. Qualitative research was utilized as it emphasizes processes and meaning, and allows researchers to explore how experiences are given salience (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The interviews concentrated on participant experiences and perceptions of the focal event, as well as their respective relationships with the charitable cause. Interviews were employed as it was expected that event experiences and relationships with the charity would vary across participants (Veal, 2006). Furthermore, less structured interviewing allows researchers to understand, rather than explain, complex human behavior (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

### *Participants*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants in the Lance Armstrong Foundation's (LAF) 2006 LIVESTRONG Challenge in Austin, Texas. This is an established participatory sport event aligned with a prominent charity, in which all proceeds go towards the LAF's mission to inspire and empower people with cancer. The LIVESTRONG Challenge was one of a series of events staged by the LAF in five cities across the United States between June and October 2006. Participants chose from a 5K walk or run, 10K run, or a 10-, 40-, 70-, 100-mile cycling ride. Participants were required to pay a \$50 registration fee with a \$50 fundraising minimum for walkers and runners, and a \$500 fundraising minimum for cycling participants. The event drew 2,500 participants, and according to the LAF, attracted a predominantly white (80%) and affluent participant base with a majority falling between the ages of 30-50, with a 60/40 male to female ratio.

The interview data consisted of 32 participants with 13 in their first year of participation, and 19 indicating they had previously participated in LAF events. Interviewees were approached randomly with an effort to alternate between male and female participants. Sixteen males and 16 females were interviewed, with one

individual of Hispanic ethnicity and 31 White participants. Twenty-nine of the interviewees resided within the United States with one Canadian resident, one participant from England, and one participant from Puerto Rico. Finally, 10 interviewees were cancer survivors themselves, while the remaining 22 had not had cancer.

### *Materials*

A list of possible questions was drafted to serve as a guide for interviews (see Appendix A). The list of questions was structured to elicit participants' knowledge of, and relationship with, the charitable cause, as well as their perceptions of the event and overall event experience. The guide was used with each interview, but questions were asked in such a way as to follow from the responses provided by the individual interviewees (Seidman, 1998). While Jaccard, Brinberg, and Ackerman (1986) suggest that the first comments made by interviewees should be regarded as more important, the authors feel the adherence to the interview guide in steering the sequence of questions minimized the influence of order of elicitation. The dynamics of each interview were managed as "mundane interaction," in which the interviewer asked questions and followed up on various issues raised by the interviewee (Rapley, 2004, p. 25).

### *Procedures*

The interviews were held in October 2006 after ethical clearance had been obtained from the research team's institution. Each interview was conducted at the event, after each interviewee had completed the event. Interviews were held either at the finish line following completion, or at the post-event party held on the event

grounds. The interviewer was onsite at the event from 8:00AM until 6:00PM, and the informal atmosphere of the post-event party facilitated approaching a wide range of participants. After 32 interviews, the primary researcher felt that the data had reached a saturation point, or qualitative information isomorph, in which there was an emerging redundancy within the collected data (Jennings, 2001). Participants were approached by the primary researcher and asked if they would like to answer a few questions regarding the event as part of a research project. Potential interviewees were asked for permission to audio record the interview. With each interviewee's permission, all interviews were audio recorded. Of the 33 participants approached for interview, one indicated that s/he did not want to be audio recorded and as a result, the interview was not conducted.

Each interview lasted 10-12 minutes on average, and began with a series of introductory questions to establish rapport (Fontana & Frey, 1994) with a focus on formality rather than familiarity (Seidman, 1998). Rapport was greatly enhanced by the overall meaning and emotion associated with the event. In this convivial atmosphere, participants were unreserved in revealing their feelings and attitudes related to the event. While the post-ride party allows for friends, family, spectators, and volunteers to attend, only active event participants were interviewed. Effort was made to include both first-year and multi-year participants as interviewees. The PCM suggests that human behavior is quite complex and the development of attachment is not necessarily linear progression. Different trajectories can occur such as one person may take a more deliberative progression while another may be more dynamic progression. The relatively quick emergence of this meaning could result from a close connection with

the charitable cause. For example, an individual recently diagnosed with cancer could demonstrate attachment to the event in his/her first year of participation.

Each interview was transcribed, creating a total of 14,904 words of data. The interview transcriptions were coded using what Denis, Lamothe, and Langley (2001) refer to as a mid-range scheme. This allowed themes to emerge both inductively from the interview data as well as deductively using attachment as a guiding premise. Denis and colleagues suggest this approach “allows one to gain insight from the data without necessarily denying or reinventing concepts that have been useful previously” (p. 812). The transcriptions were analyzed by three investigators, each of whom were academics, and were blind to the purposes of the study.

#### *Data Analysis*

Each investigator was given a copy of the transcriptions along with the instruction to look for themes reflecting attachment to the event, with no specific instructions or definitions of what constituted attachment. The investigators did not discuss the transcriptions nor collaborate with each other during analysis. The intent of this investigator triangulation was to decrease the potential of bias in analysis (Denzin, 1978). The three investigators identified four, seven, and five codes respectively. In addition to identifying codes, each investigator included a list of sub-codes, which they felt comprised some of the larger codes.

From there, the primary researcher evaluated the various codes, and sub-codes, looking for overlap. For instance, the second investigator highlighted friendship and sense of solidarity as separate codes. This overlap was condensed into sense of solidarity, with friendship as a sub-code. Further, the third investigator cited supporting



cancer research and identification with the cause as separate codes. These were condensed into the code of identification with the cause. Ultimately, four codes per investigator were identified. These condensed codes and sub-codes are listed in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1  
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Next, in an effort to again condense, then combine themes as and where appropriate, the primary researcher looked for commonalities among the four codes identified by each investigator. Community, sense of solidarity, being a part of something bigger than themselves, and sense of belonging were combined to form: camaraderie. The codes of meaningful participation, the event has special meaning, obligation to others, and identification with the cause informed the theme: cause. Finally, physicality, sense of achievement, and identification with the event for the sporting aspect were condensed into: competency. One remaining code, personal accomplishment, included sub-codes that related to both cause (e.g., being inspired by those who have cancer, being an example to others) and competency (e.g., proving that this is something they can achieve). As a result, the sub-codes were categorized across cause and competency.

In each step, the process of condensing the codes identified by the investigators involved the delineation of codes into major groupings to collectively account for all codes and sub-codes. This is similar to the classification of incidents conducted by Bitner, Booms, and Tetrault (1990) as they inductively created major categories that could include all incidents within their data. Ultimately, three main themes of camaraderie, cause, and competency were identified. In the next section, these themes

are presented narratively through direct quotations. This narrative approach captures the meaning and complexity inherent to event attachment by portraying the actual words of the interviewees (e.g., Rubin & Rubin, 2005). For a listing of each theme, with corresponding sub-themes and representative quotations, please refer to Table 2.

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Insert Table 2  
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## Results

The results are categorized into three sections reflecting each theme uncovered in the analysis. Pseudonyms are used in place of participants' names to introduce quotations. For additional demographic and background information relating to each participant quoted, please refer to Table 3. After a discussion of the results, the implications, limitations, and future directions for this research are described.

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Insert Table 3  
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### *Camaraderie*

The first theme to emerge from the interviews was camaraderie. This concept is embodied in the sense of solidarity and belonging described by the participants. Individuals revealed that by participating, they felt they were being a part of something bigger than themselves and were contributing to a large group trying to find a solution. The participants revealed that they enjoyed being surrounded by like-minded individuals and felt that there was a friendship along with sharing a common cause with their fellow participants.

When asked what he considered the most important element of the event, Jack quickly replied, “For me, it’s building the community. Yeah, building the community.” The sense of community and solidarity was touched upon by Tiffany in describing that participating provided her, “The knowledge that you’re not alone. All these people are here with you doing things together. Other people are going through the same thing, there’s solidarity.” This was further described by Amanda:

I think the most important thing is the socialization and camaraderie, whether you’re out here because you wanted to ride 40, 70, 100 miles, whether you’re out here because you’re a fundraiser, or you’re just a spectator cheering someone on, or if you have no ties at all. I think the most important part is the camaraderie tying everyone together. Everyone can benefit from it, learn, and grow.

The notion that participants felt they are a part of something larger than themselves was highlighted as an element that separated the LIVESTRONG Challenge from other events. When asked what aspect of the event was most prominent for him, Matt stated, “The thing that sticks out the most is the act of being a part of something bigger than yourself, and taking that first step towards doing something big. That’s the biggest part for me.” Participants also felt this group shared a connection. Jeffrey mentioned this connectedness was the most important facet of the event. As he stated, “I think it has to be kind of like the collective, everybody is doing it together, everybody is trying to make a difference. So small efforts by everyone make a big difference on the whole.” Jeremy expressed a similar sentiment when describing what he liked about the event, “I like the socialization, and being a part of a larger group.”

Furthermore, individuals believed that participants are all of a similar mindset, leading to a greater connection to both the other participants and the event. Millie expressed this by saying, “I think all the people involved and all the people who you meet are really important. Everyone on the ride was great, everyone talks to each other, we’re all encouraging each other.” Justin made a similar observation:

Well, everybody’s on a mission and everybody’s working together. And everybody is really supporting, extremely supportive. You know you go on bike rides and people have different agendas, but here everyone seems to have the same agenda, which is great.

Finally, the camaraderie felt through the event is embodied in the friendship individuals feel with other participants. In describing the overall meaning of the event, Jessica stated, “It’s just an awesome thing that we can kind of get past it [cancer] and come out and just be together and have a great time. Supporting each other.” This friendship is further depicted by Isaac explaining what he feels is most important about the event, “It’s the friendship factor, the people you meet, the friends I’ve got around the world now, just through coming here and meeting people ... There’s just that connection.” Individuals feel that participating provides a sense of camaraderie. This is based upon the solidarity and belonging that surrounds them with like-minded individuals and leads them to feeling they are part of something bigger than the individual.

### *Cause*

The second theme to emerge from the interviews was cause. Individuals viewed participation as more than a means to challenge themselves physically and accomplish

an activity-based goal. Participants described the event as a way to make a difference in the world by raising awareness and supporting a worthy cause. In addition, the event allowed participants to find inspiration as well as inspire others.

The idea that the event represents more than just an opportunity to participate in physical activity was described by Jeffrey when he talked about the overall meaning of the event by stating, “A lot of people probably wouldn’t do it [the event] if they were just looking to exercise. So for us, it’s something to do to add meaning to the activity.” Meanwhile, a number of participants highlighted how they were making a difference through participation. When asked what was going through her mind as she crossed the finish line, Zoe replied, “God, I was thinking that I made the sacrifice that helps somebody who needs it.” When asked the same question, Adam stated, “Hopefully riding a silly bike for a certain amount of time will help make a difference.” Mitch described the difference he felt he was making in more tangible terms by stating that the most important aspect of the event was, “Definitely raising the money. Especially since the government keeps cutting money for cancer research. So events like this can replace that.”

The notion of cause as embodied in participants’ sense of making a difference, is best summed up by Jessica. When asked to describe the event’s importance, she stated, “There’s so many people out there that have to live with it [cancer] and any help possible can make a big difference in people’s lives.” She was later asked to describe what was going through her mind and how she was feeling when she crossed the finish line. She replied that, “It was just a great sense of almost relief that I finished.... Just to be able to do it and to finish and say that I helped someone who might go through it at a

later date.” Raising awareness was described as one aspect of how participants were making a difference. When asked for the most important element of the event, Jackie simply stated, “Awareness. Cancer awareness.” She also portrayed her relationship with the Lance Armstrong Foundation as, “Pretty close... so I’m trying to get as involved as I can and spread the word.”

Participants also expressed the element of inspiration present throughout the event. Cancer survivors highlighted how participating allowed them to serve as an example to others of what can be achieved, while individuals who did not have cancer mentioned the inspiration they drew from participating alongside survivors. Mitch explained that when he crossed the finish line he was, “thinking that if you can survive cancer, you can run a 5K, you can pretty much do anything else.” Fritz said the most important aspect of the event to him was, “just participating as a cancer survivor, like a lot of people here....I’m the ‘wow person’ you know... somebody like me, that’s a long-term survivor, people look at me and say, ‘wow, you’re still around, man.’” Jenna demonstrated the inspiration she feels she provides as a cancer survivor with the following:

I have two things that are important to me. The first one is just to prove to myself that I can do it as a survivor and a person with only one leg. The second thing that’s very important to me is to encourage other people who are going through what I’ve already been through and let them know that there’s a light at the other side of the tunnel.

The example set by cancer survivors and the inspiration they provided was expressed by participants who are not cancer survivors. Kendra described the overall

meaning of the event by stating, “just seeing people who have survived chemotherapy and had such a rough time with it. It’s just inspiration.” Johnny mentioned that the most important aspect of the event for him was, “Being inspired by those who have cancer. I don’t have cancer, but it’s inspiring for me to see someone with cancer out there riding 100 miles.” Amelia provided a similar description:

I think the biggest one is just looking at and knowing that all these cancer survivors, or the people who are just going through cancer, the smiles on their faces. And their hearts are about three times as big when they finish something like this, and I just get teary eyed thinking about it.

The inspiration provided allowed participants to push through the challenges presented during the event. Matt mentioned that the heat and weather conditions affected his performance in the event, but stated that he had to, “Suck it up, and just deal with it,” before adding, “I was sucking it up for people who aren’t here to suck it up anymore. I’m here for people who would give anything to be back here and dealing with minor things like the weather.” Amanda provided this anecdote from her ride:

I mean, thinking about the greater cause in which you’re here for, that will pull you up the hill every time. As someone told me on the hilly ride, she’s a cancer survivor, we had a hill up ahead of us.... I was in my bottom gear and I told them, ‘guys I never clip out, but I’m about to.’ Eva was her name and she looked at me and said, “I’m gonna tell you, it’s not as hard as cancer, it’s not as hard as chemo.” And I’m like, that’s it, so we did it. So just thinking about the reason why everyone is here – overcoming cancer, fighting it now, have fought it, might fight it later – that will take you through a lot.

Participation in the event allowed individuals to feel they were making a difference and raising awareness, while also inspiring and being inspired by fellow participants.

### *Competency*

The third and final theme to emerge from the interviews is competency. This concept was revealed through participants who highlighted the health and fitness aspects of the event. Participating in the event, and the training the event required, was viewed as a physical challenge that was enjoyable and contributed to participant attachment. Individuals felt a connection to the physical activity, and participating in the event allowed them to take part in this activity, which contributed to attachment to the event.

The health component of the event was mentioned as an important facet. Amanda stated, “I do it obviously for the physical benefits and health.” Betty made a similar point:

I think it’s a combination of the fundraising, and for me, the physical. I really pushed myself to get ready for it, which is good for me. So it’s both for me, definitely the fundraising, but also the physical challenge. Kind of made me get healthier too.

The physical challenge mentioned above was highlighted by additional participants as a factor that contributed meaning to the event. Jeffrey explained that the event was a means for “purely challenging yourself to do something you wouldn’t normally do.”

The relative importance of the physical challenge was highlighted by Heidi in describing the most important element of the event: “Personally, I was trying to do this physical challenge. That was the most important physical thing for me.” Justine stated



that, “it was the physical thing that got me here first.” The physical challenge was viewed personally, as a means for participants to demonstrate their capabilities. Christopher detailed the meaning of the event with the following, “I think the physical part for me personally. To try and set a goal and work towards the goal, then meet that goal.” Millie summarized the personal aspect of the physical challenge by stating that, “I think it’s become more of a personal challenge of me because I’ve never done anything like this before. I’ve probably ridden my bike, and worked out at the gym, but never anything along these lines.”

Participants also described their attachment to the event through physical achievement in terms of their alignment with the activity in general. Amelia mentioned that she identified closely with the event because she was “loving cycling.” Jeremy mentioned that he cited the activity as an important dimension of the event because he is a “competitive cyclist” who “loves riding.” The sport activity’s role in shaping the meaning of the event was elaborated on by Jack: “Cycling is a big part of my life so I think it’s easier for me to connect with the event because of that.” Furthermore, Amelia described the activity as something that separated the event from other charity-based sport events in stating the following:

Actually, there’s been so many runs and walks for cancer, but I think what it is, is loving getting on a bike myself. More and more people are getting on bikes, road bikes, any type of bike, I think, because of this.

Participating in the event allowed participants to feel a sense of competency embodied in the physical challenge and health and fitness inherent to the event along with their enthusiasm for the activity.

## Discussion

Three themes related to attachment to a charity sport event emerged from the data. Camaraderie is represented by the solidarity and friendship highlighted by participants. Cause is characterized by the greater goals of participants to raise awareness and support the charity, as well as the inspiration derived from participation. Competency relates to the physical challenge and fitness provided by the event.

The three themes of camaraderie, cause, and competency appear to be aspects of participation that dictate or guide individuals' decisions to participate in the event. Also, it would appear that these themes are applicable to a vast array of situations or experiences for these participants. This aligns with the notion of concepts or beliefs related to desirable end states that transcend situations while guiding consumer decision making, suggesting that these themes align with values (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987) that underlie the meaning linked to attachment (Funk & James, 2001, 2006).

The themes of camaraderie, cause, and competency relate to the people, the charity, and the activity, and this reveals that an individual can be oriented to different parts of the experience and demonstrate different points of attachment (Robinson & Trail, 2005). Furthermore, attachment is shown through the importance with which the event was described by interviewees, along with the strong attitudes towards the event highlighted throughout the interviews. The strong attitudes demonstrated by participants, along with the meaningful event experiences described, suggest advancement along the continuum of recreation specialization (Bryan, 1977). This advancement then reflects a higher level of commitment and attachment to the event (Buchanan, 1985). Collectively, this reflects the centrality of camaraderie, cause, and

competency to the attachment process within the PCM framework (Funk & James, 2006).

Specifically, with regard to research question 1, the data suggest that the event has taken on emotional meaning, which is embodied in the connection and experience participants share, along with the relationships established among participants.

Camaraderie reflects this connection and these relationships, suggesting this theme underlies emotional meaning. In this context, emotional meaning corresponds with values such as warm relationships with others, sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement (Kahle et al., 1986; Kahle & Kennedy, 1989). Furthermore, emotional meaning relates to enduring importance in that the charity sport event is used to satisfy enduring human needs, such as the need for connection with others (Bloch & Richins, 1983). Also, emotional meaning underlies attachment's capacity to allow individuals to express a connection with others (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988) and integrate the self with others (Schultz et al., 1989), as well as the social component and interactions inherent to attachment (Kyle et al., 1995, 2006).

Emotional meaning appears to embody the strong, positive feelings towards an object used to operationalize the construct (e.g., Funk & James, 2006). Emotion can be defined as a feeling that arises within an individual, often complemented by physiological change (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000a). This definition suggests that emotional meaning relates to sentiment ascribed to a sport object based on the feelings provoked. To address research question 1, the current research suggests that emotional meaning can be defined as intangible feeling towards a sport object

embodied in the object's ability to allow an individual to connect with others, while experiencing a sense of solidarity, friendship, and belonging.

With regard to research question 2, the findings indicate that the event has taken on symbolic meaning, which is demonstrated by the event serving as a means towards self-expression, while providing a greater goal and inspiration. The greater goal, inspiration, and self-expression afforded by the event ties to cause, implying that the theme of cause constitutes symbolic meaning. For charity sport events, symbolic meaning relates to values such as self-fulfilment and being well-respected, based on the support and belief in the charitable mission inherent to this meaning (Kahle et al., 1986; Kahle & Kennedy, 1989). The greater goal behind participation also associates with enduring importance in that these goals can obtain high levels of importance and become a constant focus in a participant's life (Bloch & Richins, 1983). Symbolic meaning portrays the self-definitional dimension of attachment allowing individuals to express themselves and their alignment with a cause in which they believe (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988).

Funk and James (2006) touched on perceived importance by operationalizing symbolic meaning with importance-based items, however, this neglects the self-expression and inspirational aspects of the construct. Symbolism has been defined as the process of representing things by means of symbols or ascribing significance to objects, events, and relationships (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000b). This definition implies that symbolic meaning relates to both the importance and representation of the object. The current research suggests that symbolic meaning be defined as intangible feeling towards a sport object embodied in the object's overall

importance derived from its capacity to allow for self-expression and the pursuit of a greater goal, as well as to inspire.

Finally, with regard to research question 3, the results demonstrate that the event has taken on functional meaning as the event provides physical challenge and the opportunity for achievement. The physical challenge stemming from the sport aspect of the event, along with the sense of achievement and accomplishment that accompany completing the event, aligns with competency, and this theme reflects functional meaning. With physical challenge, health, fitness, and sport in mind, functional meaning ties closely to the value, sense of accomplishment (Kahle et al., 1986; Kahle & Kennedy, 1989). Meaning for the event based on the health, fitness, and sport facets points towards instrumental importance as event participation serves as a means to achieve extrinsic, short-term goals (i.e., getting healthy, gaining skills, and knowledge) (Bloch & Richins, 1983). Functional meaning points towards attachment providing a vehicle by which an individual can showcase what s/he believes is achievable (Kleine & Baker, 2004), as well as how an individual can differentiate self from others (Schultz et al., 1989) through the physical challenge and training required by the event.

Funk and James (2006) have assessed functional meaning using knowledge of the sport object. Nonetheless, this limits this facet of meaning to the information that can be obtained, and neglects other extrinsic aspects of the object (i.e., health benefits, skill acquisition, etc.). Functional is defined as something designed for a specific use (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000c), which touches on the utilitarian nature of functional meaning. The current research advances the following definition of functional meaning: intangible feeling towards a sport object embodied in the extrinsic

benefits that can be provided by the object such as knowledge and skill acquisition, health and fitness. Using these definitions, attachment to a charity sport event can be defined as when the event allows an individual to express a connection with others through solidarity; express themselves through inspiration and a greater goal; and obtain short-term, extrinsic benefits.

### *Theoretical Implications*

The findings introduce a number of theoretical implications. First, this research provides further evidence for the application of the PCM framework to active sport participation. It has been suggested that this framework is suitable for the examination of active sport participants (e.g., Beaton & Funk, 2008; Stewart et al., 2003), and the current research supports this. Furthermore, while event-based work has shed light on attraction within the PCM (e.g., Funk et al., 2007), this study provides further detail on attachment. The current research represents an effort to further explore, refine, and enhance the tangibility of attachment to a sport object, specifically charity sport events. By generating definitions for three separate facets of meaning: emotional, symbolic, and functional; greater detail is provided for what comprises attachment to a charity sport event. This research suggests that camaraderie reflects emotional meaning, cause constitutes symbolic meaning, and competency comprises functional meaning. The definitions provided build upon the operational definitions employed by Funk and James (2006), while integrating aspects of importance (Bloch & Richins, 1983) and contextual factors. This provides specific evidence of what constitutes meaning to participants in a charity sport event.

Second, the current research represents an examination of values within the PCM framework. While values are highlighted as factors contributing to attachment to a sport object (Funk & James, 2001; 2006), the framework has been used predominantly in the examination of motives (e.g., Filo & Funk, 2005), attitudes (Filo, Funk, & Alexandris, 2008; Gladden & Funk, 2002), and loyalty (Funk & James, 2006). The findings provide qualitative evidence that values aligned closely with camaraderie, cause, and competency are critical elements of attachment within the charity sport event context, and reflect different components of the meaning held for the event. The current research could serve as a starting point for the exploration of the values that contribute to both attachment and allegiance to sport objects within the PCM framework.

Third, the findings uncovered within this research draw parallels between participant attachment to a charity sport event and serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982). In describing the concept of serious leisure, Stebbins (2001) highlights rewards experienced by this type of leisure. Stebbins outlines meeting people, making new friends, and taking part in a group as a social reward of serious leisure. This reward overlaps with camaraderie activated through participation, and the sense of solidarity belonging, and friendship inherent to this theme. A second reward is making a valued contribution to a group accomplishing something significant. This shares similarities with cause, and the notion of making a difference as a group through participation. Third, Stebbins indicates that fulfilling one's human potential and expressing individual skill as a personal reward of serious leisure. This relates closely to competency and the enthusiasm for the activity and physical challenge within this theme. Taken together,

each theme aligns with a specific reward of serious leisure, suggesting that attachment to a charity sport event reflects a form of serious leisure for participants.

Finally, this research represents exploration of the relationship between meaning and importance. Bloch and Richins (1983) suggest that a product's meaning is a characteristic that influences the perceived importance of the product, and discuss instrumental and enduring importance. The findings of the current research indicate that instrumental and enduring importance are revealed through each facet of meaning. Emotional and symbolic meaning correspond with enduring importance, while functional meaning ties to instrumental importance.

### *Managerial Implications*

The findings of this research may not be generalizable to all sport events. Charity sport events are increasing in popularity, thus blurring the distinction between sport events and *charity* sport events. However, charity sport events may be unique from events with minimal or non-existent links to a charitable cause in a variety of ways. Accordingly, two themes uncovered in this research (camaraderie, cause) each have close connections to the charitable aspect of the event examined, and may not share the same relevance to all sport events. Nonetheless, a variety of implications for charity sport event managers are introduced by these findings. First, values are believed to be stable over time (Rokeach, 1973), and the event serves as a means to further activate or engage these values within participants. These values have influenced participants' attitudes towards the event (Perkins & Reynolds, 1988), as well as helped shape the overall meaning of the activity for participants (Kahle & Kennedy, 1989). Charity sport event organizers can use these values to segment their participant base



(Kahle et al., 1986) and market their event to increase its meaning and worth to potential participants (Kahle, 1985), which ultimately adds to event sustainability and benefits the charitable cause.

Second, with emotional, symbolic, and functional meaning in place, charity sport event managers should look to leverage this meaning, along with the factors that constitute it, towards consistent commitment to the event. Funk and James (2001) describe customization and structural bonding as levers that can move individuals from attachment to allegiance. Customization and structural bonding involve allowing individual preferences to shape the specific services and experiences provided by a sport entity. With regard to charity sport events, this can be implemented through camaraderie, cause, and competency. Year-round social events can be held for participants to bolster camaraderie, allowing participants to meet, socialize, and celebrate their sense of community outside of the event. These year-round social events represent opportunities for event managers to enable sociability and facilitate informal social opportunities. Chalip (2006) identifies these strategies as means to foster celebration and camaraderie. Cause can be reinforced through consistent communication of the charity's success and status to participants, including specifics regarding how the proceeds from each event have been utilized. Competency can be augmented through the provision of training programs and personal trainers to maximize participants' physical achievement through the event.

Additionally, the meaning the event holds, particularly the camaraderie and community embodied in the event's emotional meaning, along with its enduring importance, appear to reflect subculture (Green & Chalip, 1998). Rather than a

subculture dedicated solely to the sport activity, or the charitable organization, event participants seem to align with a subculture that represents a hybrid of these elements. The emotional, symbolic, and functional meaning held for the event suggest the event as a means to celebrate this subculture. Green and Chalip recommend reinforcing social interaction, nurturing event participants' performance, and the retelling of event stories as means for sport event managers to facilitate celebration of subculture. This celebration of subculture can then augment the festive atmosphere of the event, working to keep participants in the host community longer (O'Brien, 2007).

Charity sport event managers can next look to transfer increased commitment to the event to the charity's central activities. With participants fully committed to the event, organizations may work towards getting individuals involved in their additional fundraising mechanisms and activities. Donor programs could be created specifically for event participants that encourage individuals to develop their own smaller-scale sport events to raise funds for the organization, while allowing participants to further experience camaraderie, cause, and competency.

The organization may also use its increasingly committed participant base to assist in volunteer recruitment. Sport and event volunteers have been found to be motivated by social interaction (Kemp, 2002), solidarity (Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998), camaraderie and friendship (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007), and altruism (Cuskelly, McIntyre, & Boag, 1998). Similarly, community and solidarity, along with identification with the mission, have been found to motivate volunteers in the social services (e.g., Kelley, Lune, & Murphy, 2005). These motivations relate closely to the value-laden concepts of camaraderie and cause uncovered in this research.

Organizations can leverage these themes to motivate and attract volunteers from within their participant base for future events, as well as the overall execution of the mission.

Finally, the emotional, symbolic, and functional meaning participants hold for the event seems to be both a facilitator and product of its celebratory atmosphere. This goodwill factor, also known as *communitas*, presents what O'Brien and Chalip (2007a) refer to as "a useful opportunity to foster change in a community's social agenda" (p.330). O'Brien and Chalip suggest that, when strategically leveraged, *communitas* can be used to enhance positive social impacts from sport events by focusing stakeholders' attention on important social issues within host communities.

Increasingly, emphasis is placed upon sport managers to demonstrate the social value of sport to their communities served (Zeigler, 2007), and charity sport events provide a vehicle to accomplish this. Social action is particularly relevant to the charity sport event context in that such events provide a platform for further communication and execution of the charitable organization's mission. Organizations such as the LAF could ensure that event participants are provided ample opportunities to support the mission of the Foundation. In addition, both the short- and long-term goals can be explicitly communicated to participants along with specific instructions for how individuals can help in the achievement of these goals. Furthermore, social change can be promoted through the media coverage afforded to an event (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007a, 2007b). Participant attachment, and the overall meaning of the event to participants, can be featured in the advertising and reporting of the event to highlight the agenda and mission of the Foundation.

In leveraging the charity sport event, and the meaning it holds, event managers must be cautious not to exploit the charity or over-extend participants. Nettleton and Hardey (2006) describe fundraising through mass participation running events as an effective means to draw attention to illness and share experiences. However, the authors caution against using guilt as a means to increase involvement. Charity sport managers can use the event context to inform and remind participants, but should avoid using the event as a means of heavy-handed persuasion that could compromise the event and/or antagonize participants.

### *Limitations*

Two limitations of the current research should be recognized. First, the interviews were conducted in the first year of the event's existence in this format. As a result, the demographic and psychographic make-up of the event was not known in advance. Consequently, the 32 interviewees do not exactly reflect the characteristics of the event's audience in terms of gender, age, socioeconomic status, and years participating in LAF events. Also, interviewees volunteered to participate after being approached by the primary researcher. Their willingness to spend their time and energy discussing the event with the interviewer could reflect enthusiasm and a pre-existing enhanced connection with the event. As a result, potential bias towards the event should be acknowledged.

### *Future Directions*

Using this research as a starting point, a number of future studies are warranted. First, the current research examined the attachment process and outcomes using first- and multi-year participants in charity sport events. Data focusing exclusively on first-

year participants could be collected as a means to examine individuals who became attached to the event rather quickly. As noted above, various life circumstances and the overall connection with the charitable cause could lead to enhanced meaning for the event prior to participation. Determining the facets that comprise this enhanced meaning within first-year participants could prove useful. Future work could also focus strictly on multi-year participants who have demonstrated commitment to the event to further explore their attitudes and behavior towards charity sport events as a means to explore allegiance within the PCM framework.

Furthermore, a comparison can be made between first-year and multi-year participants to determine if differences exist in the overall meaning the event holds, as well as the factors that underlie this meaning. This comparison could be used to inform distinct marketing campaigns targeted towards the different participant segments. In addition, the behavioral outcomes inherent to attachment could be assessed. As noted above, conative antecedents (behavior) can contribute to loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994), and future work could examine the behaviors (e.g., volunteering, additional donations, repeat participation, purchasing and wearing event and charity-related merchandise) that may reflect attachment. Exploring Bansal and colleagues' (2004) notion of normative commitment could also prove useful in the charity sport event. For example, evaluating how an individual's sense of obligation to the charity guides their attitude and behavior towards the event would seem particularly useful.

Future research might also explore if and how meaning held for the event translates to event sponsors. Research has suggested that consumer response to a sponsored sport event translates to event sponsors (Crimmins & Horn, 1996) and that

consumers consider corporate participants in cause-related marketing and sponsorship to be socially responsible (Brown & Dacin, 1997). The emergence of cause reflects the relative importance of socially responsible behavior within event participants.

Additional research could determine if this influences attitudes, purchase intent, and behavior towards event sponsors and their products.

Next, research can examine the meaning the event holds for event volunteers. The current research examined active participants exclusively, however, charity sport events rely on a dedicated volunteer force that contributes a great deal of time, effort, and energy towards the event. Fairley and colleagues (2007) suggest that managers can take advantage of multiple points of attachment in recruiting and retaining volunteers. Exploring the connection volunteers feel towards a charity sport event through an examination of camaraderie, cause, and competency within volunteerism could assist event organizations in attracting and retaining volunteers. Similar work can be done with event spectators as well.

Also, scales could be developed to reflect each of the values uncovered in this research, or the LOV could be administered to event participants, to collect quantitative data examining the relative contribution of each value. Of the instruments used to assess values, the LOV has been found to be more parsimonious (Madrigal & Kahle, 1994) and more closely related to consumer behavior (Kahle et al., 1986). Participants could be asked to choose their first and second most important values from the list as a means to determine the components of the event with which participants align. These refined scales could be employed within a variety of sport event contexts to determine the applicability of these values to different events. Also, the scales could provide an

effective means to distinguish participant segments based on usage behavior (e.g., Pritchard & Funk, 2006). The scales developed could be used to create participant profiles through segmentation. This runs parallel to enduring involvement-based consumer research, which employs facets to develop involvement profiles (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999). Similar profiles can be developed using the three themes uncovered within this research, and the corresponding items developed.

Furthermore, the interviews were condensed into a one-day period, and individual interview length was limited due to event logistics. A deeper, longitudinal, examination of charity sport event participants could provide additional insights into the event experience. Richer data could be uncovered through observing and interacting with a sample of event participants leading up to, during, and after the event.

Finally, as a means to further explore the factors that underlie attachment to a charity sport event, additional qualitative data could be collected. This research could ask participants to list the factors that they feel contribute to their attachment. Multiple content analyses, including proportional frequency counts with a goal towards inter-rater reliability could be employed to analyze the data and shed further light on what constitutes attachment.

### Conclusions

This research uncovers what attachment to a charity sport event means to event participants. Specifically, the findings reveal three distinct aspects of meaning. First, camaraderie, or the connection and relationships participants share through participation reflects emotional meaning. Second, cause, the self-expression, greater goals, and inspiration provided by event participation embody symbolic meaning.

Finally, competency, the sense of achievement and physical challenge related to training and completing the event emerged as functional meaning. These three facets of meaning tie to different values inherent to the individual, and exhibit the complexity of attachment. It is hoped that this research leads to further work on attachment to assist sport event organizers in effectively managing their events. Charity sport events provide an ideal context for the examination of attachment and meaning. Further examination can continue to assist organizers in developing strategies that leverage the meaning inherent to a focal event to achieve increased involvement in both the event and the charity's central activities.



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1 Appendix

2 Interview Guide

3 -Could you explain what was going through your mind and how you were feeling when  
4 you crossed the finish line?

5 -How has the LAF's role in the event shaped the overall meaning of the event for you?

6 -Do you know what is the LAF's mission?

7 -How closely do you identify with the LAF's mission and activities?

8 -What do you feel is the most important aspect of the LIVESTRONG Challenge?

9 -Prior to registration, what did you foresee as potential obstacles to participation?

10 -How did you negotiate or overcome those obstacles?

11 -Would these obstacles be harder to manage if the event was not aligned with the LAF?

12

1 Table 1

2 *Matrix Display of Condensed Codes and Sub-codes Identified Through Investigator*  
 3 *Triangulation*

4

<b><u>Investigator 1</u></b>	<b><u>Investigator 2</u></b>	<b><u>Investigator 3</u></b>
<b>Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• Like-minded individuals</li> <li>• Support</li> </ul>	<b>Supporting a Worthy Cause</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting those who have battled cancer, who have lost the battle, or those who are fighting it</li> </ul>	<b>Identification with the cause</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification with the LAF</li> <li>• Supporting cancer research/survivors</li> </ul>
<b>Sense of Achievement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal</li> <li>• Making a difference</li> <li>• Inspiration</li> </ul>	<b>Personal Accomplishment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcoming cancer</li> <li>• Proving that this is something they can achieve</li> <li>• Being an example to others</li> </ul>	<b>Identification with the event for sporting aspect</b>
<b>Meaningful Participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment to format rather than cause</li> </ul>	<b>Being a part of something bigger than themselves</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A greater goal</li> <li>• Remembering and supporting loved ones who have cancer</li> </ul>	<b>Sense of belonging</b>
<b>Physical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health, fitness, physical challenge</li> </ul>	<b>Sense of solidarity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of a larger group trying to find a solution</li> <li>• Friendship plus sharing a common cause</li> </ul>	<b>Obligation to others</b>

5

## 1 Table 2

2 *Matrix Display of Themes, Sub-themes and Representative Data*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Representative Quotations</b>
1. Camaraderie	a) Solidarity and Belonging	“I think the most important thing is the socialization and camaraderie, whether you’re out here because you wanted to ride 40, 70, 100 miles, whether you’re out here because you’re a fundraiser, or you’re just a spectator cheering someone on, or if you have no ties at all. I think the most important part is the camaraderie tying everyone together. Everyone can benefit from it, learn, and grow.” (Amanda, multi-year participant)
	b) Being a part of something bigger than themselves	“The thing that sticks out the most is the act of being a part of something bigger than yourself, and taking that first step towards doing something big. That’s the biggest part for me.” (Matt, multi-year participant)
	c) Friendship	“It’s the friendship factor, the people you meet, the friends I’ve got around the world now, just through coming here and meeting people ... There’s just that connection.” (Isaac, multi-year participant)
2. Cause	a) Making a Difference	“Hopefully riding a silly bike for a certain amount of time will help make a difference.” (Adam, multi-year participant)
	b) Finding Inspiration	“Just seeing people who have survived chemotherapy and had such a rough time with it. It’s just inspiration” (Kendra, multi-year participant)
	c) Inspiring Others	“I have two things that are important to me. The first one is just to prove to myself that I can do it as a survivor and a person with only one leg. The second thing that’s very important to me is to encourage other people who are going through what I’ve already been through and let them know that there’s a light at the other side of the tunnel.” (Jenna, multi-year participant)
3. Competency	a) Health and Fitness	“I do it obviously for the physical benefits and health.” (Amanda, multi-year participant)
	b) Physical Challenge	“Personally, I was trying to do this physical challenge. That was the most important physical thing for me.” (Heidi, first-year participant)
	c) Activity	“Cycling is a big part of my life so I think it’s easier for me to connect with the event because of that.” (Jack, multi-year participant)

1 Table 3

2 *Demographic, Background Information, and Pseudonyms for Individuals Quoted in*  
3 *Interviews (N=23)*

4

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Page Number(s) Quoted</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Country of Residence</u>	<u>First Year Participant</u>	<u>Cancer Survivor</u>
Jack	17, 24	Male	USA	No	No
Tiffany	17-18	Female	USA	No	No
Amanda	18, 22, 23	Female	USA	No	No
Matt	18, 22	Male	USA	No	No
Jeffrey	18, 20, 23	Male	USA	Yes	No
Jeremy	18, 24	Male	USA	No	Yes
Millie	18-19, 24	Female	USA	Yes	No
Justin	19	Male	USA	Yes	Yes
Jessica	19, 20	Female	USA	Yes	Yes
Isaac	19	Male	England	No	No
Zoe	20	Female	Puerto Rico	Yes	No
Adam	20	Male	USA	No	No
Mitch	20, 21	Male	USA	No	Yes
Jackie	20, 21	Female	Canada	Yes	Yes
Fritz	21	Male	USA	No	Yes
Jenna	21	Female	USA	No	Yes
Kendra	21	Female	USA	No	No
Johnny	21-22	Male	USA	No	No
Amelia	22, 24	Female	USA	No	No
Betty	23	Female	USA	Yes	No
Heidi	23	Female	USA	Yes	No
Justine	24	Female	USA	No	Yes
Christopher	24	Male	USA	Yes	No

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