



**UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW**

Master Degree Project in Marketing and Consumption

**Dedication through Fitness Vacation**  
-A tool in strengthening the running identity

Therese Hellborg and Jelena Vitkovic

Supervisor: Lena Mossberg  
Master Degree Project No. 2013:66  
Graduate School

# Dedication through fitness vacation

## - A tool in strengthening the running identity

Therese Hellborg

MSc student in Marketing and Consumption at School of Business, Economics, and Law at University of Gothenburg

Jelena Vitkovic

MSc student in Marketing and Consumption at School of Business, Economics, and Law at University of Gothenburg

---

### ABSTRACT

The idea of training three times a day might not be the first thing one thinks of when hearing the word vacation, fitness vacations are, however, not a new phenomenon. Recently, they have, nonetheless, been repackaged to target a new, and wider, audience of people using the vacations as part of their social identity. Existing studies have focused on competition and its role in identity evolvment and have called for further research on the role of identity evolvment in serious leisure. Hence, this study explores the process of running identity, investigating the relationship between running identity, motivation, and fitness vacations, through an ethnographic study. The study presents, based on previous theory and data collection, four components of running identity which aid the analysis of the role identity plays in motivations related to fitness vacations. Results indicate that the consumption of fitness vacations is closely linked to the process of identity evolvment. For the serious runners the motivation behind consuming a fitness vacation is related to obtaining performance results, while the less serious runners travelled for hedonic reasons and the experience itself. Overall the fitness vacation resulted in re-vitalisation for the participants, helping them to continue towards their goals at home.

*Keywords: consumer culture, motivation, running identity, running career*

---

### INTRODUCTION

For most people, exercising three times a day, every day, is probably not the first thing to come to mind when hearing the word holiday. However, this untypical choice of vacation is becoming more popular both in practice with wider offerings from tour operators as well as a wider participation (Jacobsson, 2013). Some typical offerings in this new segment include boot camps, bicycling and running vacations where travellers can exercise in a way they do not have the opportunity to do at home. With shifting travel patterns and more experienced tourists the desire for new enriched experiences (Chen et al., 2008) has contributed to fitness tourism growing rapidly. Marketing research suggests that “many consumers are attracted to unusual and novel consumption experiences and choose vacations, leisure activities, and celebrations that are predicted to

be less pleasurable and enjoyable” (Keinan and Kivetz, 2011:935).

What drives these changes? How come some consumers are prepared to exercise more during their one week vacation than they do in a month at home? Answering these questions can tell us more about consumption of experiences and can provide marketers with basis for segmenting. Trying to understand consumption, in this case the consumption of fitness vacations will prove pointless without reflecting upon the cultural context in which the purchase was made (Solomon et al., 2010). Consumer culture is the *frame* for consumers’ actions, feelings, and thoughts and is thus seen as creating likely patterns of behaviour (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). The cultural impact from a group on an individual may differ, but for many the membership in a specific group or the purchase of a specific

product is a way of expressing themselves and enhancing a wanted image they wish others to have of them. The product or service purchased becomes a tool in the process of expressing their true self to others, like *I am an athlete* (Park and Lessig, 1977). Thus, a person's membership in a group will influence his/her purchase decisions as well as identity (Solomon et al., 2010). Shipway and Jones (2008) found that building a social identity, where one can identify with a group, is an important motivator for many runners. Hence, consumption is closely related to identity and identity in turn is closely related to the community of which one is part. This study, therefore, focuses on the running community in gaining in-depth knowledge of the consumption experience of fitness tourism.

Previous studies in sport tourism experiences have by some authors been described as limited since they have been descriptive and have not focused on creating an understanding of the concept (Weed, 2006). Lately, more efforts have, however, been put in place to overbridge this gap through the use of serious leisure (Gibson, 2005; Green and Jones, 2005; Shipway and Jones, 2007, 2008), a notion used "to understand the behaviour of the committed sport tourist" (Green and Jones, 2005:165). These efforts have shown that people develop a career through experiences, both in the aspect of *travel career* (Pearce and Lee, 2005) as well as *running career* that will influence the motivation to consume the experience (Green and Jones, 2005; Shipway and Jones, 2008; Getz and Andersson, 2010). Like climbing a ladder, the person will reach *career markers*, progressing upon the ladder, developing their career in connection to identity and place in the running community (Shipway and Jones, 2008). Through the runner's engagement in the running culture, and all the rituals, stories, and symbols, he/she will progress in their running career, and collect cultural capital that in turn will strengthen the individual's identity as a runner (ibid.).

The present study provides a framework for better understanding the relationship between running identity evolvment and consumption in the setting of fitness vacations, through the approach of observing runners' (1) perception of their own membership of the running

community, (2) running behaviour at home, (3) use of symbols related to running, and finally, (4) perceived value of a fitness vacation. This then, answers the call from Shipway and Jones (2008) for further research into the evolvment of a running identity for a richer discussion around active sport tourism and running culture.

The intent is, thus, to explore the process of identity evolvment, hence investigating the relationship between running identity, motivation, and fitness vacation in this process. The purpose of this study leads to the following research question: *What role does running identity play in the motivations to consume fitness vacations?*

## THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

### *Our social identity*

Identity is often the motivation behind decisions we make (Oyserman, 2009), therefore when studying the motivations of consuming a fitness vacation it is necessary to consider not only theory of motivation but also identity. Consumer culture theory (CCT) of identity and communities (McCracken, 1988) provides the consumerist cultural backdrop against which our theory and analysis are presented. CCT explains consumption partly as a result of identity evolvment influencing the way a person and one's surrounding sees oneself (McCracken 1988; Gabriel and Lang, 2006; Solomon et al., 2010). Self-perception is a source of motivation as people are often motivated to influence the way others see them, but also the way they see themselves (Prebensen, 2006). The modern western society is seen as a world in which it is the products, or spare time and holidays, we buy that tell our stories for us, enabling our self-realisation (Davidsson, 1992; Prebensen 2006). This idea of consumption as part of storytelling about the *self* stems from the view that consumption is based not only on products' utilities but also on their symbolic meanings (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1988; Giddens, 1991; Bourdieu, 1984; Gabriel and Lang, 2006).

The evolvment of identity is a multidimensional process. An individual might have several identities connected to specific situations (Green and Jones, 2005). Identity

related to a specific leisure activity, such as running, becomes important in situations connected to the activity. For example, it gives the person social recognition from others, or the individual's values and beliefs are confirmed through the activity (Shamir, 1992). Oyserman's (2009) identity-based motivation (IBM) model supports this view and suggests that if a certain social identity is made salient, for example by a market offering, it will motivate such behaviour which acts to strengthen the specific social identity, in our case the running identity. Hence, to reach our aim of understanding the relation between running identity and fitness vacation motivation we need to examine whether the social identity is made salient and relevant in runners decisions to participate in fitness vacation. If we find signs of the running identity in connection to consumption of fitness vacations we can find support of Oyerman's (2009) IBM model and social-identity theory in general. This we do by first examining theoretically in this section which components the running identity consists of, in order to be able to determine whether these components are present when reviewing our data findings. We look at running identity through a person's relation to the running culture, how he/she practice running, use of symbols related to running, and the value they associate to it.

#### *Identity in relation to the running culture*

One component in the evolvement of the running identity is the cultural context which encompasses nearly all our actions. Culture is described by McCracken (1988), as supplying the world with meaning and thus shaping the way we look at life and the way we behave. Consumer culture is seen as a *frame* for consumers' actions, feeling and thoughts and is thus seen as creating likely patterns of behaviour (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Consumption is then the means through which culturally constituted meanings are transported from the culturally constituted world to the individual (McCracken, 1988). Consuming a fitness vacation will say something about the buyer, what it says can be interpreted differently, depending on the viewer's cultural belonging. Hence, by focusing upon the runners' perception of the culture and their consumption of fitness vacations a greater

understanding can be generated about the evolvement of their identity as a runner.

Connected to identity is one's role within a society or community. Postindustrial society has been described as producing a culture where people group together according to interests or material attachments. Maffesoli (1996) called this neo-tribalism. This idea of communities has been echoed in numerous consumer culture studies of consumer behaviour (Celsi et al, 1993; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Kozinets, 2001). Being connected to important others, those in a community one idolizes, is one of the identified ways people achieve self-authentication where authenticity is searched for in products and experiences (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010) (The other two goals to self-authentication identified are through regaining control or feeling virtuous.). One, hence, obtains a social identity where focus is upon defining oneself by the characteristics of the group to which one belongs. Members of the group identify positive characteristics of the group and associate oneself with these while also comparing the group to other *out-groups* which are deemed less attractive in order to maximise the positive social identity of the own group (Shipway and Jones, 2008). However, even within the group to which one conforms consumers are also motivated to express their individuality and to differentiate themselves, this becomes a balancing act between conformity and differentiation (Chan et al., 2012).

Simply, people consume in order to showcase their identity (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), and their membership in a specific group. By having the *right* shoes or clothing, reading the *right* books, practising the *right* sport, and so on, the person will gain a stronger relationship to the group, connecting themselves to important people in that culture, hence, strengthening a social identity (Shipway and Jones, 2008; Beverland and Farrelly, 2010; Chan et al., 2012). As Giddens (1991) states, identity is a continuing narrative we tell integrating into it our surrounding society and culture. Consequently, what the person perceives as important in the running culture will be an important indicator to his/her identity, and will lead us up to a part of the understanding of the running identity through

our first subquestion: *How does the perception of the running culture reveal running identity?*

#### *Identity in relation to the practice of running*

A second component, whose importance for the evolvement of a running identity becomes evident when viewing previous studies on runners, is running practice. Running practice has been used continuously in profiling runners and separating them into different clusters (e.g. Ogles and Masters, 2003; Rohm et al., 2006). Furthermore, aspects related to the activity such as endurance, skills, and exercising contributes to increasing the social identity of a person (Shamir, 1992), and running practice is used among runners as a yardstick to differentiate different groups of runners from each other. Smith (1998) found through his study that there was a difference in association to identity among people who run, i.e. there was a distinction between runners and joggers that was linked to differences in motivation and the objectives of running. A runner was considered to be serious about running, i.e. the persons level exceeded the basic physical fitness level required, while a jogger was driven more from extrinsic motivations, like losing weight and staying healthy. Much of the distinction was based on the performance by the individuals in races. In order to succeed and acquire an above average physical fitness a well-planned workout is arguably required. Consequently, it becomes important to view the relationship between running practice and running identity, which is done through our second subquestion: *How do differences in running practice impact running identity?*

#### *Identity in relation to symbols*

A third component in the evolvement of the running identity relates to the use of symbols to communicate an identity. Leisure activities, similarly to products and services, have been chosen to make a statement about consumers by means of the attributes associated to different leisure activities (Haggard and Williams, 1992; Shamir, 1992; Bond and Falk, 2012). This self-realisation process is not only directed outward in social-symbolism but also inward in constructing self-identity, through self-symbolism (Elliott 1997). We do not operate much on *inside information* but make up our self-perception from inferences, which

we attach meanings to. We, thus, infer reasons for our actions from observing our behaviour retroactively (Bem, 1972), hence the self-symbolism (Elliott, 1997). The way consumption is seen to fit in the construction of identity and self-realisation stems from the view of identity not being stable but rather manageable. In fact, it is believed that one has an ideal self which is an identity one would want to come as close to as possible (Freud, 1914), and consumption can act as an attempt at bridging the actual self with the ideal self (McCracken, 1988). The products and services consumed by an individual help to define the perceived self, since the product or service places the individual in a certain context ultimately helping to answer the question *Who am I now?* (Solomon et al., 2010).

Products, with their symbolic meanings, are consumed as social markers, helping a person to show a social status, a relationship, an emotion, or connecting the person to a specific event, like a competition (Douglas and Isherwood, 1996). By exploring the relationship persons have to symbols used in this process it is possible to gain an insight into the core self (Belk, 1988). Thus, when studying the identity of runners it is necessary to explore how symbols are used in relation to their running. This, then, gives us a third area of interest in relation to running identity: *How are symbols used in relation to running identity?*

#### *Identity in relation to value*

The fourth component, which contributes to the evolvement of a running identity is the values of the runner. The culture in a group, like the running community, gives the people in it, a sort of value lens, which they view communication and products through. The value put on a product is called *product-specific value* and is a subcategory to consumer value (Solomon et al., 2010). When viewing value it is also important to take into account the person's background and experiences, since this is believed to be highly influential on the perceived value on the product offered (Quester et al., 2006), such as a fitness vacation. The value a consumer holds of a product will affect satisfaction and the consumer's perception of price fairness (Zeithaml, 1988). In basic, consumer value, is

personal, related to a specific situation, and always involves a comparison with other objects. The level of value is thereafter determined by the benefits the person will receive by consuming it. Hence, the experience consuming it will be of great importance in determining the product-specific value (Holbrook, 1999).

In total Holbrook (1999) presents eight types of consumer value that derives from the experience consumer has while consuming the product: efficiency, excellence, status, self-esteem, play, aesthetics, ethics, and spirituality. However, when discussing value in the sense of what attracts people to a certain sport, Quester et al. (2006) identified only four. Even though similarities do exist between the values identified in the studies, differences exist as well. The four values identified were freedom, belongingness, excellence, and connection (ibid.). Since value seems to be connected to the activity performed it would be necessary to look closer on the value associated to fitness vacation by runners in order to get a deeper understanding of the motivations behind consuming one: *What values do fitness vacation carry for runners?*

### **Motivations**

As the study attempts to answer the question of what role identity has in motivations for consuming fitness vacations it is necessary to look not only at the theoretical background of running identity but also of motivations. The number of opinions and theories surrounding motivation shows the complexity in trying to understand its origin and nature, but in basic terms, motivation refers to the process that forms an individual's behaviour (Solomon et al., 2010), *why* the person thinks and behaves as he/she does. The concept of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations was introduced through the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) and echoes theories in consumer research where consumers are theorized to have either utilitarian or hedonic motivations (Batra and Athola, 1990; Khan et al., 2005). Differentiating between the intrinsic or extrinsic source of the motivation is common in motivational studies (e.g. Prebensen, 2006; Kleiven, 2009; Ritchie et al., 2009). With the differentiation, it is necessary to look at both sources of motivation to better understand

leisure activity participation (Rohm et al., 2006; Kleiven, 2009). Furthermore, from previous studies it is evident that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations are commonly present among runners (e.g. Masters et al., 1993; Leedy, 2000; Ogles and Masters, 2003; Rohm et al., 2006).

### *Extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation*

Studies presenting extrinsic tourism motivations have been common for decades (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Fodness, 1994). Extrinsic motivation, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), concerns actions done to obtain a goal and can either be externally regulated or self-determined in varying degrees. This means that extrinsic motivation implies both those actions done due to external rewards or punishments as well as completely self-chosen actions which have been integrated with one's needs and values but are not done for the inherent satisfactions.

Intrinsic motivation is connected to doing something for its own sake, because the feeling obtained is positive. Mannell et al. (1988) argue for the importance of intrinsic motivations and perceived freedom while talking about leisure tourism. Facilitating factors for intrinsic motivation to occur are: a feeling of competence, autonomy, optimal challenges, effectance-promoting feedback and freedom from demeaning evaluations (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The theory of flow exemplifies intrinsic motivation; "if... the action is rewarding in itself, we are likely to keep going, and we say that we 'want to do' whatever we are doing" (Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, 1993:57). Flow is described as "one of complete involvement of the actor with his activity" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975:36). While doing something for intrinsic reasons rather than extrinsic, i.e. where a person is most likely to experience flow, the performer will get a more rewarding feeling (Mannell et al., 1988).

### *Internalisation of motivation*

Iso-Ahola and St Clair (2000) introduced a theory of exercise motivation which is based on the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985), proposing that extrinsic motivation needs to become intrinsic in order for exercise motivation to be sustained over a

long period. This, they argue, could happen through routine to the point where exercise was done for its own sake rather than to satisfy any needs or goals. This process could be aided by an escape process where exercise would be the way to avoid overly stressful environments. The internalisation of exercise motivation could further also be aided by self-regulation whereby goal setting, self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement could provide a sense of mastery or competence, which is an intrinsic reward strived for in leisure (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Furthermore, the more a person can feel competent and autonomous when carrying a task out the more internalised the regulation process will be. An example within tourist motivations is believing a vacation will be good mentally and physically to get away from stress (Ryan and Deci, 2000). However, the highest prioritised dimensions change with different life stages as well as ages (Kleiven, 2009), supporting the theory of a travel career ladder where motives change with the tourism experience (Pearce and Lee, 2005).

In the case of runners, Leedy (2000) found that runners were motivated mostly by health and fitness benefits, which was the same for both the more committed runners as well as the less committed ones. Another trait that committed runners had, more so than the less committed, was a stronger positive mental character, e.g. a feeling of more wellbeing or less stress (i.e. running worked as a stress relief). These results coincide with the theory of Iso-Ahola and St Clair (2000) suggesting that with more practice and routine it is possible to internalise motivation so as to achieve intrinsic motivation for the feeling rather than rational necessity of it. For runners before a marathon race flow has an indirect effect on performance through motivation since they will long for the rewarding feeling to return (Schüler and Brunner, 2009). Thus, if a person experiences flow while exercising it consequently leads to a stronger workout behaviour which results in a better performance at the race.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Study design*

To be able to explore the process of running identity evolvment, within the relationship of running identity, motivation and fitness

vacation, an ethnographic inspired qualitative approach was used. Ethnography aims to “reveal structure and interactions in a society, the contested nature of culture, the meaning that people give to their action and interaction. It also reveals how people are situated within a cultural context” (Holloway and Todres, 2003:354). By observing runners in their natural habitat, the aim of an ethnographic study is to explore their behaviour and the meaning behind them (Spradley, 1979), both as an observer but also through first-hand experience in the running community. In order to achieve the intent of the study, the objective was to observe their (1) perception of their own membership of the running community, (2) running behaviour at home, (3) use of symbols related to running, and finally, (4) the perceived value of a fitness vacation, in order to draw conclusions about changes in motivation among the informants.

### *Data collection*

The data collecting phase started with an immersion into online forums and blogs devoted to the leisure activity running, but also magazines and video clips with clues about the culture. By observing informants use of these community sites a pre-understanding of the running culture were given. The focus of this pre-stage of the data collection phase was on two sites: the running community *jogg.se*, and running sites on Facebook. During the next stage, participant observations were conducted simultaneous with semi-structured interviews.

Participant observation meant that we started to run, and engaged ourselves with runners both in real life, as well as online. The Internet provides a new context with anonymity, wide participation and social accessibility as well as information accessibility. Sherry and Kozinets (2001), referring to Baudrillard's *hyperreality*, the contemporary blending of simulation and reality, suggest an online addition to offline ethnography in the form of *netnography*. The importance of online communities has seemingly grown with the rise of Internet and its role as a communication channel between like-minded people. Hence, the virtual reality enables runners to keep in touch with others after the fitness vacation ends, which enables the online communities to become an important channel for the participants. The

Name	Years of age	Times running/week	Been on fitness vacation	Types of fitness vacation (f.v.)
Sara	28	2-3	Yes	Arrange herself
Stina	38	2-3	Yes	Commercial f.v.
Laila	57	2-3	Yes	Commercial f.v.
Daniel	37	2-3	No	N.A.
Erik	28	3	No	N.A.
Kerstin	67	3	Yes	Commercial f.v.
Linnea	28	4-6	Yes	Through her club
Loke	32	5	Yes	Arrange himself
Karl	46	5-10	Yes	Arrange himself

*Table 1. An overview of the informants.*

online community we have foremost focused on is jogg.se where members can share their log of their running sessions as well as discuss all running related topics such as new scientific studies, new products or more lighthearted discussions such as “You know you’re a runner when...”.

The participant observations in real life, were conducted during two running session in Slottskogen, Gothenburg. These running meetings were organised by a local organisation, Göteborgs Running Club, and were held by two runners that functioned as coaches. The meetings differ from time to time, but included running techniques and different types of running, like trail. The number of runners participating was between 137-145. The aim was to get a feeling of how it was to run in a group, the talk between runners, and the atmosphere, in order to better understand the possible need and wants for participating in a fitness vacation, since much effort is on marketing classes during these vacations. During the first participation, one of the authors only observed the runners from a distance during the workout. Afterwards an informal interview was done with two of the runners. This informal interview was one of many that took place continuously throughout the study’s all phases: participated observation, online, and in real life. During the second meeting, one of the authors interacted with runners throughout the workout session in order to get closer to the informants.

Semi-structured interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2005) were completed with nine runners, whose running varied in intensity and form (table 1). Although no informant ran less than two times a week, some ran more and longer than others. As noted through the preliminary

observation, there are many takes on a fitness vacation. Aside from the commercialised fitness vacation through tour operators, people label other types of vacation and travels as a type of fitness vacation. Therefore, when selecting our sample of informants, we chose to include runners with experience from different types of fitness vacations. Three informants (Laila, Stina and Kerstin) had gone through the tour operator Springtime Travel. One person (Linnea) has gone through her running club, and three informants (Sara, Karl, and Loke) had arranged their own fitness vacation. We also included two runners (Daniel and Erik) who had not participated in any form of fitness vacation. In the situation where the informants arranged their own fitness vacation, the trip needed to meet two criteria; (1) the main activity and focus of the trip should be on running, and (2) the running sessions should not be casual running, but more focused running.

All informants are also, to different extents, members of the running community and therefore co-creators of the running culture. However, they have different standpoints within the culture and community that are reflected in their travel history. All of the informants have also competed in running to different extents. These differences were captured as a way to show the multiple sides and complexity of the running community and enable us to obtain a broader spectrum of views on the phenomenon from different standpoints within the same culture, that of running.

The semi-structured interviews were approximately one hour and contained nine broad themes (table 2). In all the interviews probe questions were used, as a way of



creating a deeper understanding of the informant and his/her cultural understanding. The probe questions were also our first step in the analysis process (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The interviews were not structured so much from a question-respond context, but aimed to creating a conversation between informant and researcher where both players were active in producing cultural talk (Moisander et al., 2009). In order to do so, as well as to further obtain deeply rooted information, projective techniques and elicitation materials were used (Moisander and Valton, 2006; Moisander et al., 2009). The interviews were also conducted in as a relaxing environment for the informant

Themes	
1	Why did you start with running?
2	Training schedule
3	Competitions
4	Goals with running
5	The meaning of running
6	Equipment
7	Definition of a running
8	Emotions connected to running
9	Fitness vacation

Table 2. Themes of semi-structured interviews.

as possible: café, at work, or through Skype. The elicitation materials used were all the same during the nine interviews, and drawn from our pre-observation, hence somehow connected to conversations observed online. The material consisted of four photos (a group running session, a doctor, mass start in a competition, and slope running), five words (food, barefoot running, leisure, interval running, and jogger versus runner), and one quote: *If you do not run the mile [10 km] under 30, you are not a runner.*

### Data analysis

The interviews conducted, as well as the notes from the participated observations and notes from the online forums visited, were transcribed. As explained, the analysis started during the interviews with probe questions (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The data collected was then analysed separately by the two authors, as a way to extract from the data as much and as wide an understanding as possible. The analysis was done in different levels where the first level aimed to search for themes in the transcripts. The second level, aimed to fully incorporate the knowledge and

understanding of the running culture by looking at relevant literature while reviewing the themes and the transcripts. A third level, aimed to compare and contrast and incorporate the two previous levels from both authors into the final result. In accordance with the hermeneutic method as described by Thompson et al. (1994) the analysis did not merely follow a straight line process, as previous knowledge informed the analysis of the interviews, new knowledge from interviews and later literature readings informed previous knowledge and contributed to a circular analysis.

### The trustworthiness of the study

We have continuously incorporated the use of triangulation with data, method, and investigator triangulation in order to strengthen the study's trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Erlandson et al., 1993; Decrop, 1999), as well as purposive sampling in order to required a higher level of transferability (Erlandson et al., 1993). In the sampling phase we used purposive sampling to find informants with different experiences in order to receive different point of views on fitness vacations and at the same time be able to acquire a rich set of data. By having a variety among the informants, we were able to acquire information that in turn will reflect the various constructions of reality (ibid.). Sources of data used included a wide variation (data triangulation), e.g. written secondary data (newspapers, blogs, textbooks and articles), none-written secondary data (photographs), and primary data from interviews, and observations (Decrop, 1999). In the data collecting phase several methods were used, these include interviews, participant observation and non-participant observation (method triangulation). This made it possible to cross-check the information between different sources (ibid.). During the interviews projective techniques were used in order to reach hidden or latent needs and values. Finally, the separate analysis conducted by the authors in the first analysis stage (investigator triangulation) contributed further to the trustworthiness of the study (ibid.).

However, it serves to tell that all our efforts did not pay off. Throughout the interviews we invited our informants to read the transcription

and/or the analysis in order to make sure we understood and interpreted them correctly. None of the informants were interested in doing this, with explanations like *you have it on tape*, or *I trust you*. Because of this a member check was not possible to do. Due to the nature of an ethnographic study (Spradley, 1979), this might come to question the study's credibility (Decrop, 1999), and hence, our results.

## ANALYSIS

In this section, we analyse the components that make up the running identity and link the identity to the motivations to consume a running fitness vacation. In the first part of the analysis we go through and describe how the four key components presented; running practices; cultural relation; symbols; and finally, values; contribute to running identity amongst the informants. In the second part of the analysis, with the help of these four components of running identity, we show the different progresses of informants on the ladder of the running career and how they will differ in motivation. The linking of the informants' running identity to their motivations, then, provides an analysis of the role identity plays in motivation towards fitness vacation participation.

### **The running culture**

#### *The name of 'someone that runs'*

The true definition of *someone that runs*, is seemingly not that easy. Throughout our observations and interviews we have encountered several versions of this specific definition, where runner and jogger are some of the more common ones. From the nine informants we noticed a very different use of terms, where some had plenty of words for a person that runs, while others only used these two common ones. One of the informants used a whopping twenty different expressions for someone that runs.

The use of different expressions may not tell us any truths, but can give us a hint of the differences among the positions our informants hold in the running community, how they perceive them. By categorising people in different categories, some of the informants seemingly had a more hierarchical point of view of the running community. They divide

the community into subgroups to a higher extent and separate people from each other. This distinction of runners, with the number of names, enables more serious members to distance themselves from those deemed less serious in a similar fashion as those with cultural capital need to differentiate themselves (Bourdieu 1984). The difference between joggers and runners, however, seems to be the most common distinction between people that run, and it is viewed in diverse ways between the informants, and the interviews showed clearly that the words are loaded with meaning. All the informants felt there was a difference between the two, where joggers were less ambitious and rarely competed, rather they were seen as motivated more by the health aspect of running. Runners, on the other hand, had a more structured training, more driven by specific performance targets and when they competed they did it with an aim to improve previous results while joggers had less demands on their race participation. These terms are not two fixed points but lie on a continuum which means that there are differences within the runners and joggers. There is also a hierarchy between them in terms of status. Even to the point that some saw that the differences often come down to a trend, where the less serious participants are described as merely following trends.

*The word jogger I associate with the trend in the 80's. I perceived it as being based on a desire for better health and therefore went jogging. The word runner I associate more with competitions. You don't do it just because it's healthy, but because you get a kick out of it. (Daniel, 37)*

Also Karl, who runs 5-10 times per week and has participated in numerous marathons considers himself a real runner and proposes that the wide participation of today is due to a recurring trend.

*We're in the middle of a trend now, again. I'm old enough to have experiences the last jogging wave and that disappeared for some years and then about two years ago it absolutely exploded I think. /.../ Personal trainers are popping up left and right calling themselves experienced runners and they've been running for two seasons. I've been competing for 30 seasons. You can tell many are taking advantage of it now. (Karl, 46)*

With the expression of some people just following a trend, the word jogger seems less attractive. This comparison, and hierarchy thinking is a way of comparing the group you belong to with out-groups which is thought to be less attractive, is a way to strengthen the positive aspect of your own social identity (Shipway and Jones, 2008). Among the informants that view themselves as lower in the hierarchy the distinction between runner and jogger was more down to how serious the person was with his/her running. For a runner, running was more of a lifestyle and the workouts were planned. In a way, this is somewhat similar to the trend point of view, expressed by Daniel and Karl, but none of the other informants expressed that running was just something they are doing for the moment. They were all seemingly dedicated to it, but not in the same way.

#### *I am a...*

While looking at how the informants viewed themselves, a pattern, somewhat loosely, emerged. The two informants that named themselves not only runners but something more (competitive runner and serious amateur), were the ones with the most nuances, while the happy joggers had fewer. Identity evolvment, in a cultural meaning, is about defining oneself by the characteristics of the group (Shipway and Jones, 2008), and even though the need to belong is great, it is also important to satisfy the need of individuality (Chan et al., 2012). Even though the informants are all practicing running, they have further defined groups within the running community by naming themselves something more, as with the case of competitive runner and serious amateur. Their *frame*, constructed by their view on the running culture, changes their actions, feelings, thoughts, and behaviour (Arnould and Thompson, 2005).

By solely looking at how the informants viewed themselves by definition, we can see a continuum forming of their position in the hierarchy. Where Karl (46) is seemingly the highest in hierarchy with his definition of himself as competitive runner. At the bottom, we find two women; Stina (38), and Laila (57) that named themselves joggers. The title might give an indication of their perception of their own role within the running community, which

in turn is strongly connected to their identity (Maffesoli, 1996).

#### *The view of the 'others'*

The placement of people in the hierarchy does not stop with the running community. When examining the running community one thing we have looked at, is how runners discuss those that do not run. In identifying a community which shares values and characteristics its perception of those outside the community is helpful in order to see the frame of the culture (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). On the Internet forum jogg.se, where runners discuss topics such as *Your loved ones' attitude*, some participants show indication of an *us and them* view (Shipway and Jones, 2008) in regard to non-runners when being questioned by non-runners about their commitment to running.

*I recognise that, people who are extremely inactive themselves often seem to know very well how others should exercise and live their lives. It feels sometimes like it is jealousy since they don't have the motivation or will to get active. (Man, 35)*

*People around me usually say "this could turn into an addiction" reminding me of that neighbour who in the 60's just ran and ran and ended up losing both work and family. When they find out that I sometimes run barefoot they become completely convinced that I'm addicted. In my case this is not caring, this is just guilt feelings from encouched potatoes. (Man, 43)*

The looks received from non-runners while out running were often, on jogg.se, described as possible jealousy from those who do not run themselves. This negative view on non-runners, were not shared by the informants, especially the ones that viewed themselves as joggers. However, looking at other runners when oneself is a runner was common and many reflected that they were curious about other runners and felt a feeling of fellowship with them.

*I think it's mostly jealousy, or another form of it, namely inspiration. If you can do it I can, many dream. Off topic: It would be nice if more runners you meet would give back an encouraging smile! A bit like MC people that say hi to each other. (Man, 46)*

*My own eyes stick to other runners quite often actually, a bit of self-recognition or fellowship feeling I think (and not seldom I also look at their shoes and clothes...) (Man, 44)*

*Sometimes I stare myself if I am passed by a jogger when I am out walking, but it is mostly because I'm looking at equipment, running technique and because it looks nice to be out and running. (Woman, 33)*

### **Coming together**

This way of identifying other runners becomes a natural part of the important social factors of the community. The feeling of fellowship is noticeable as informants describe some situations as common, which if they occurred outside of the running culture, would not be as socially encouraged. Engaging with others whom one identifies as a runner is easy. Especially if the context is a clear running one, as for example, in a forest where only runners spend their time at certain hours, at group workouts with strangers, or before a race. The authors also witnessed this social openness during the participating observations with Göteborgs running club.

*Before the running session started we were all waiting, standing in smaller clusters. Since I was there alone I tried to start talking to a guy standing next to me. With the knowledge about how we Swedes are when strangers start talking to us, I was surprised how easy it was. There were no hesitation from the guy, and soon I was introduced to his friend's girlfriend that was also there. We talked for 10 minutes about where the best places for running was in Gothenburg, and did only stop because the workout started. (Author's observation)*

The members of the community mostly speak about running with each other and not as much with those who are not involved with running and whom they do not perceive as interested enough. A common vent for conversations is the Internet, for its many advantages of reach and easy access. Competition seems to be another situation where this type of social play happens. Before a race, runners do talk with each other, stir up one another, and talk about how their workout for the race has gone. This behaviour is not seen among all of the informants. The self-proclaimed joggers seemed to distance themselves from this type of social play.

This process of connecting to others within the community also shines through during the fitness vacation. Informants that have been on the commercial fitness vacation talk about people trying to imitate important characters on these trips, such as the trainers, which is one way of achieving self-authentication as a runner (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010). As explained all the trainers had specific green clothing on arrival that was also sold in the store. However, at the end of the week a lot of the participants had bought the same type of clothes, making it impossible to tell who was a trainer and not, by just looking at the clothes. Hence, connected themselves to who they deemed important in the culture, strengthening their social identity as a runner (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010).

### **Running culture and identity**

Our subquestion related to identity and running culture was: *How does the perception of the running culture reveal running identity?* As we have shown, there are tendencies where the person's identity shines through, by how they perceive the running culture. The informants that seems to be more serious about their running, and viewing themselves as a runner compare to jogger, have a more split view of the people in the running community. They divide people into subcategories more than the informants viewing themselves as joggers, and therein being lower on the hierarchy in the running community. It also seems that people higher in the hierarchy see a greater gap between runners and non-runners. Moreover, people that perceive themselves as higher up in the hierarchy are reaching out more to other runners, having conversations about exercising and running in general than the people lower down. They seem to view the running community as an opportunity to change information and knowledge.

### **The practice of running**

#### **Habits**

As running becomes an intricate part of everyday life the runner identity starts to protrude. When discussing how to know when one is a runner on Internet running forum jogg.se members bring up examples of how running plays an important part in everyday life through the habits developed around the

activity. They describe how running takes up much time, or requires planning and active thinking to incorporate into work and family life. Being a runner also means to them that running unexpectedly pops up in some parts of life one would not expect, such as when watching a song contest on television or seeing running where it is not present in the form of misinterpreting newspaper articles thinking they were related to running.

*When you as a consultant arrive at a number of different workplaces and the first question you ask is if there is a changing room so that you can shower after the lunch run. (Man, 56)*

*Haha the thing about the showering!... have thought long about that...when you mentally make up a week's shower schedule to make it fit with your running. (Woman, 25)*

*When you sit in front of the TV to watch the song contest and you judge the songs on how well they would fit in the MP3-player during a run...(Man, 57)*

*When packing for a vacation and the most important thing that is packed first is the running gear...then you can see what else there is room for. (Woman, 50)*

### Training

Under running practice you find a person's exercise, and effort to improve endurance and his/her skills, which in turn will strengthen the person's social identity as a runner (Shamir, 1992). All of our informants ran at least 2-3 times a week. However, their running sessions were structured very differently. Some participants applied their knowledge about running into their running session and their planning to a higher extent. For example, Karl, Daniel, Loke, and Linnea, did not just *go out and run*. They had a purpose with the running for the day, like interval or long distance. They also had a comprehensive plan, a lot of the time for the whole year, so they could peak their running ability before a race, or avoid injuries. This was not seen among all informants as some did not put so much effort into applying knowledge to their running session. They simply would go out and run.

A differentiation in the language between the two groups was that the runners talked about "*I run 20 miles [Swedish mile = 10 km] a week*" instead of talking about how many times they

run, while the joggers more addressed that "*I run 2-3 times a week*". Seemingly a comparison between quality and quantity. For the runner it does not matter how many times you run, what matters is what you do under those running sessions, and how it will help you achieve your goals. This more structured running is also the way to acquire a physical fitness above average, which is a common differentiation between runners and joggers (Smith, 1998).

### Goals

Goals are an important part of furthering the running career. The goals are highly individual but provide the runners with a sense of challenge and motivation. For some the goals take the form of certain time limits for a certain time distance and for others it can be the completion of a race. Goals can also be tied to the runner identity as those informants that self-identify as runners show a clear inclination towards goals in the form of races and the measurable improvement that these goals offer. For those self-identifying as joggers the goals are less clear and less homogenous. The differences are wider but there is a tendency towards more health related goals.

### Training practice and identity

As one's training practice becomes an important part of life it will become known to the people in one's surrounding, this then has an impact on the views of others on one's identity and thus also on one's self-identification. The training practice thus works in two ways to contribute to the runner identity, both directly through the running activity becoming an important part of everyday life but also indirectly through the runners noticing and reacting to the fact that others view them as a runner. This means that running practice contributes to the feeling of being a runner when it sets the runner apart from non-runners in their environment. What is common for the different examples given by the members of jogg.se is that they describe repeated actions by the runners which to the people in their surrounding may seem odd and stand out. These actions make them be seen in a different light and others will identify them as runners, often to the point that their self-identification is influenced as well. An

example of this is the woman (26) who comments that one way to know that you are a runner is when your three old son asks you if you are going running whenever you walk towards the door.

Moreover, how the workout is done is also used as a yardstick among runners in order to differentiate the large community of runners, together with the goals set by the individual (Smith, 1998). We have seen that both the workout and goals set has a higher focus and is more planned as the individual becomes more serious about his/her running. Making it a clear distinction between runners and joggers (Smith, 1998), and hence, answering our second subquestion: *How do differences in running practice impact running identity?*

### **Symbols in running**

#### *The value of knowledge*

Knowledge is collected from different places for the informants and is put in their knowledge bank. A distinction between the sources of knowledge as well as the meanings of knowledge collected could also be seen. In reaching one's goals certain things were deemed important by the informants, one being the knowledge possessed about running. Knowledge provides the runners with an opportunity to obtain the maximum effect their body has to offer and not waste too much energy while running. Knowledge is also a way to motivate some of the informants to go out and run. Running simply becomes more fun when you have more knowledge about how the body function and its reaction to running. Even though it is not outspoken by the informants, we could see a difference in knowledge when it comes to aspects such as how they structured their workouts and running techniques. The runners applied their knowledge to a higher extent than joggers, but also search for new knowledge much more.

As with many other types of subjects, a common source for many of the informants was books and magazines. Laila had a goal of taking part in, what she called, running school, in hope of getting tips for her running. Although she is not sure of what type of tips you would get during one of these classes, or what type of tips she actually would want. Even though it was something she had been

thinking about, it had not, up to this point, been a strong enough motivation for her to actually take part in one. While Laila had not taken part in one, other participants had. Both Sara and Linnea had, although in different forms. Linnea is running with a club so she gets a lot of technique direction from her coaches. Sara, however, is continuously taking part in something called Löpakademin, an exercise program with a focus on running strength, technique, and etcetera. This is done in addition to her normal running.

It also seemed that the informants had no problems sharing their knowledge with others. However, this was done to different extent. For the joggers, the conversations were more about whether you had been running or whether you were going to run. Not so much about how. For some of the informants, this social sharing of knowledge was very much connected to who they talked to. The runners, did not like talking to joggers (less serious runners) since they found a lack of connection to them. They simply did not have the same mentality.

#### *Equipment*

Overall the informants agreed that most important for clothing was that it needed to be functional. However, their openness towards new equipment differed. There was certain scepticism towards adding a new type of equipment to the running by some of the informants, and some even thought that equipment, like GPS clocks, is unnecessary.

*You don't need it to run, you do not need it to reach an effect from the exercise. I think it is better to know your body and be able to go on the form of the day, and feel where your levels of effort lie in that moment. (Karl, 46)*

*It is just another technical product. It is possible that it would be of interest in the future, but I have a resistance. To use something new, and then you have some sort of problem. I am a little restricted to introduce new equipment. (Daniel, 37)*

Others rely on the help they got from workout apps to improve their running, when it comes to things like speed. But, as we noticed, this reliance on equipment could lead to some frustration if it fails.

*When I finished and was about to end the running session on my app I got quite shocked. I had just ran 190,20 km on 24:57 minutes! For a while, I had run over the border to Norway. The run had felt good, but let's face it, not that good! (Observation from author)*

Looking through some of the 4714 discussions started on jogg.se dedicated to "Clothing, shoes and gadgets" it is easy, however, to note that the choice of the right running gear is important for many runners. Since knowledge is very important within the running culture, this is portrayed even through the gear used. Members on jogg.se as well as some of our informants point out that when watching other runners they will sometimes look at their shoes since the choice of shoes, for example very light-weight shoes says something about that runner's strategy and hence also knowledge. There is an on-going discussion amongst runners on what the best shoe type is for running and this may then be reflected in the observations runners do of each other. Cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) can therefore be obtained in the running culture through objects as in the wider consumer culture, however in the running culture this is due to the knowledge presented rather than mere fashionable sense.

### *Symbols and identity*

The subquestion relating to symbols was; *How are symbols used in relation to running identity?* We have shown that both equipment and knowledge work as a way to identify other runners and distinguish runners from what is deemed as less serious, i.e. joggers. This coincides with Beverland and Farrelly's (2010) claim that community with some people and dissociation with others is used for self-authenticity in experiences. By having the *right* shoes or clothing, reading the *right* books, and so on the runners will feel more a part of the running community (Solomon et al., 2010), and show a certain status within the community (Douglas and Isherwood, 1996). Like for example, running in barefoot shoes, something that only few runners do.

### **The value of a fitness vacation**

#### *Type of fitness travel*

The divides between the participants and their self-identifications as runners is reflected in

their views of the different types of fitness vacations. While some question how effective trips not organised by tour operators can be due to possible lack of organisation and inspiration, others describe the tour operated fitness vacations as unnecessary and expensive since they felt it could be done cheaper and without help. As is commonly known within marketing the perception of a fair price is tied to the value perception of the consumer (Zeithaml, 1988). In the case of our informants, those who are more negatively inclined toward privately organised versions are those with previous experience of tour operated fitness travel that run 2-3 times a week, do not regularly compete, and do not identify as runners, but joggers.

*Well then [if organising a fitness trip by yourself] you're very ambitious. To have that discipline. Because here [on tour operated trips] you have someone who is very good at teaching and you get to try new things out. /.../ I think it's difficult to find the discipline for that and also the variation. Are you supposed to come up with the variations yourself? Then you'd have to try something new by yourself. It becomes a bit silly. How are you supposed to know what to do? This is really good because here you get some inspiration, you can look at it as an inspirational trip. (Stina, 38)*

*Some people mix up going to Mallorca and the hotel offering something [exercise activities] and that is not the same as this [tour operated fitness vacation]. /.../ I would not call that a fitness vacation, rather a sun vacation. I wouldn't personally think of working out 4 times a day, I wouldn't get that idea.*

*Q: So it is not as serious?*

*No, not for me, that would be a completely different type of trip for me. (Laila, 57)*

On the other hand, informants that identify as more serious, that exercise more often, and partake in races regularly as part of their improvement believe the tour operated vacations to be less serious. These informants do not feel that they belong in a fitness vacation of this sort.

*Let's differentiate between two things, the training camp which all better runners that can afford it go on to a better climate during the winter to top up their shape. Then you have the organised fitness vacations which have popped up the last few years and there it's....well I won't name any elite runners but there is an*

Value	Who?	Description
Social	All	Meeting new people; common interest; group dynamic.
Energy	All	The experience gives new energy to exercise and work.
Climate	All	Warm weather; beautiful views; sunny.
New experiences	All	New environment to run in; new feelings; trying new things; experiences in something else.
Mental challenge	Joggers	Being challenged by the other participants or coaches to overcome mental obstacles.
Focusing	Joggers	More time to focus on training; nothing else that demands your attention; scheduled times.
Knowledge	Joggers	Getting more knowledge about food, and running techniques.
Improvement	Runners	Improve their running skills, techniques, and time to achieve specific goals.

Table 3. Values related to a fitness vacation.

expression calling “exerciser fat Greta”, those are the less serious exercisers with a lot of money that come down to those ones to work out like the elite. /.../ I would never pay that much for a training camp. Especially since it’s so easy to organise it yourself. (Karl, 46).

#### Value and fitness vacation

Seemingly, the different views of what is a good fitness vacation differs between the informants, however, the value they put into the fitness vacation is more equivalent (table 3). Values associated with fitness vacations in general were social value, energy giving value, climate, and finally an opportunity to gain new experiences. Values associated with a fitness vacation in general by all informants were the social aspect, an energy giving activity, and finally the climate. The value of climate could be very specific for Swedish runners (Holbrook, 1999) especially since it was common among all runners, and related to Sweden’s not-well-known-reputation for sunny and warm climate. The climate value is also not found among Holbrook’s (1999) and Quester et al.’s (2006) values, which could be a further indicator to the background of the informants, i.e. living in Sweden.

Another value, worth looking closer at, is the value of new experiences. Even though it was found among most informants, what was incorporated into new experiences differ between informants higher upon the running ladder. People with a view of themselves as being more towards an athlete and/or runner talked about new experiences as in a new environment to run in, new visual expressions, while informants among joggers more talked about new experiences as in trying new things.

Aside from values found amongst all, there were also values only found in certain groups of the informants. Values more exclusive for informants who named themselves joggers, were mental challenges, focusing, and knowledge. Overall, these values all focus more on a person with lower knowledge base, that do not prioritise running as important part of their life, and that need encouragement in believing in their own capacity. Even though there are similarities between improvement and mental challenges, this is the reason we choose to separate them. While mental challenge in some sense is about improving your performance, it is more about a mental barrier and a will to *perform the best you could*, that do not exist among the runners.

As presented earlier, our subquestion related to value was: *What value do fitness vacations carry for runners?* The differences in values related to a fitness vacation, may to some extent be related to the specific type of fitness vacation the informants has consumed. Informants, associating themselves as joggers, have consumed commercial fitness vacations, arranged by tour operators. Values only found in this segment are mental challenge, focusing, and knowledge. The informants that viewed themselves as runners, has most of the time arrange their own fitness vacation or gone through their running club. For these people the value improvement was found. Overall, common values for all types of fitness vacation was social, energy, climate, and new experiences (even though differences in what type of new experiences we talked about existed).



Motivation	Who?	Description
Health	All	Running to stay healthy and fit.
Positive effect	All	Running had a positive effect on both body and mind.
Addiction	All	Longing for the feeling after a run; feeling abstinence when deprived from training.
Flow	All	Feeling of invincibility; can go on forever; euphoric.
Social	All	A sense of belonging; meeting like minded people.
Freedom	All	It is a simple training form; do not consume a lot of time; can be done everywhere.
Fun	Runners	It was simply fun to run.
Improvement	Runners	Running for a specific result; compete with a goal; challenge yourself mentally and physically; improve your knowledge.

Table 4. Motivation for running.

### Motivation to run

Very soon into our study it became clear that running was, for many, not a primary activity from the beginning. Instead it sort of drifted into the informants' life through other sport activities, such as orientation, or through family/friends/colleague. Only one informant, Karl, clearly stated that running in specific, has been a part of his life since early years. However, even though the reason for entering the running world differs, similarities in why they run still exist among the informants. Many of them mentioned reasons such as; health benefits, positive emotions, addiction, a sense of freedom, and finally an mentally state, similar to flow (table 4); following the multi-motive perspective from previous studies (Pearce and Lee, 2005; Prebensen, 2006; Kleiven, 2009).

Leedy (2000) found that runners were motivated mostly by health and fitness benefits, and the weight of these types of extrinsic motivations (Ryan and Deci, 2000) was prominent in our case as well. Even though not all of the informants could agree on that running was fun, they all talked about, in some sense, the positive effect running had on them. Many of them clearly stated that they run for the physical benefits, such as that they become more alert through exercising. While motivations such as health, and positive effects on the mind and body were prominent among all the informants, the motivation *I run because it is fun* was only seen among the runners. Another extrinsic motivation found among the informants was *freedom*. Running is an activity that does not demand a lot of logistics. You could simply just put on the shoes and go out and run.

The reasons for running are tied to emotions for all involved, although these can differ from the feeling of relief when clearing one's head from a stressful day or the feeling of confidence as one gets closer to ones set out goal. Running commonly means having to go through pain and hardships by pushing the body but as a reward after completion a high, a feeling of relief mixed with content, is achieved. This positive feeling, which the runners strive to achieve again and again is sometimes described as a drug or an addiction by the informants.

*I would not want to be without it now. It becomes like a poison, like a positive moment 22. If you run you feel better and if you feel better you are more tempted to go outside and run, so it is like a spiral of good. (Stina, 38)*

*I never feel as good as after I have been out running. If I have been out running for an hour I feel good for two days afterwards. Seriously, it is like I, well it becomes kind of like an exercise drug. (Erik, 28)*

Aside from the general good feeling one receives from running, some of the informants talked about a feeling of invincibility or a loss of time while running, that occurs after running for some time. Flow or peak experience, a feeling of complete involvement with the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), is an important experience in identity and works well as an intrinsic motivation and reward (Schüler and Brunner, 2009).

*To get over that threshold. When it is really heavy, I just want to lie down in a snowdrift in some ditch and die, and then, suddenly stepping over the threshold. It becomes so easy to run. I never want to stop, and I feel like I could run forever. That feeling is freaking cool. (Sara, 28)*

The will to improve was found among runners, but not joggers. This could be related to the type of goals the informants had. As presented before, the goals for joggers were less clear and less homogeneous compared to runners. This is in line with why the motivation *improvement* is clear among runners and not joggers. The social motivation for running is found among all informants, and can be related to Quester et al. (2006) value of belongingness.

By just regarding why the informants run in the first place, we can see that informants among both groups, runners and joggers, are driven mostly by the same motivations: health, positive effect, addiction, flow, social, and freedom. Only two motivations were found only among runners: fun and improvement. A motivation like fun, could be of significant importance in the further evolution of the runner identity, since it falls under the intrinsic motivation type (Mannell et al., 1988; Ryan and Deci, 2000) and is deemed as more rewarding than extrinsic by the person experiencing it (Mannell et al., 1988) and leads to a desire to run again (Schüler and Brunner, 2009).

### **Motivation to travel**

A fitness vacation in this study, no matter if it were a commercial fitness vacation or a fitness vacation arranged by the informant itself, had a focus on running. Many of the motivation to why they run was the same between the two types of groups (runners and joggers) discussed in this study. However, two type of motivation were distinguished between the two groups; fun and improvement that were found only among the runners. This could be linked back to the values connected to a fitness vacation (table 3), where a value only found among informants self-identifying as more serious, i.e. runners, are improvement. A running vacation is primarily taken for improving the performance. These vacations are tactically taken at a certain timing, for example during the winter when the mental hardships of running in the cold are at their worst or before a race where top shape is required.

For informants that do not see themselves as equally serious, i.e. joggers, the prime motives brought forward are the socialising the

vacation offers and the need for a vacation. The timing of the vacation for these informants is more determined by the timing of the feeling of a need for a vacation, a pause from everyday life or the offer of the tour operators with a fitting themed week or fitting trainers. For these informants the opportunity to focus more intensely on the running whilst socialising with those with shared interests helps strengthen the feeling of community, and helped them in overcoming mental obstacles about their own capabilities (table 3). The vacation then, with the help of other participants and lecturers, acts as a motivational aid to keep up the work when back home, as well as strengthening their running identity and position in the running community.

*Sometimes when I come home from a fitness vacation I feel that what I usually do is not as good as I thought before the vacation. You get the opportunity to try many things out and it is a positive atmosphere, you meet a lot of new people and you speak to many. (Laila, 57)*

*You got caught up in it and feel like putting more focus and energy into your running, we had fun together and pushed each other. (Kerstin, 67)*

At first sight these motivations seem to be related to the extrinsic motivations of self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) as they have a clear purpose and practical goal to achieve. They however also are related to the identity of the runners as they clearly differ across the running career stages where less experienced runners (joggers) are drawn to commercial version of fitness tourism, and the more serious (runners) focused on fitness vacation created by themselves or their training club. The notion of arranging your own fitness vacation could arguably derive from a strong belief in oneself capabilities as a runner and your knowledge in the leisure activity. This feeling of competence is an important factor for the possibility to experience intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation, like flow of fun (table 4) found among the informants while running, are important for the running to be sustained over a long period (Iso-Ahola and St Clair, 2000), which is also shown in the attitude among the joggers when coming home in the way of a stronger desire to run. This could also be connected the value *energy* that

the informants experiences with fitness vacations (table 3).

Further, the persons they imagine they can meet as such vacations correspond well with their image of themselves. This supports the IBM model (Oyserman, 2009) as it suggests that social identity and the need to perform actions which puts one closer to one's perceived *in-group* can act as a motivator. A relevant concept here is the self-authentication which can be seen as a motivational driver. In the consumption of fitness vacations there are actions that fulfil two of the three personal goals used to achieve self-authentication through experiences (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010), where the first is regaining control. Consumers find ways to regain control of the fitness vacation either by making their own fitness vacation, rejecting the commercial alternative or in the case of the commercial alternative all informants report that there is freedom in choosing how to organise your day, what classes to take and how much to work out. One respondent even describes how she took a whole day off to go sight-seeing and also how she had wine at dinner while the majority of participants did not. This also relates to the theories of conformity and differentiation where consumers fulfil both needs by belonging to a group but also try to differentiate themselves (Chan et al, 2012), as for example by going on a fitness vacation with other runners but then personalizing the vacation once there.

The second personal goal on the road to self-authentication is being connected to important others. Once again this could be noted in respondents across the running career ladder, consumers of both commercial and non-commercial fitness vacations talked about important persons that the fitness vacation made them share some characteristics with. In the case of the non-commercial vacations the informants mentioned either other club members as they were seen as having a higher capacity than those participants of commercial fitness vacations or elite runners who also are known to partake in non-commercial fitness vacations. For the consumers of the commercial fitness vacation there were trainers and speakers on the vacation such as the well-known ultra-distance runner Rune Larsson. Having had dinner with him or met other

inspiring people on the trip is one of the things all the participants describe as a significant positive thing about the vacation.

## DISCUSSION

In order to fulfil the intent of this study we must first understand the term running identity and how it is influenced and expressed among the informants. We have presented four different components and situations where the running identity can be examined by studying runners' (1) perception of their own membership of the running community, (2) running behaviour at home, (3) use of symbols related to running, and finally, (4) perceived value of a fitness vacation. Each of these four was found to contribute to the way informants self-identified since these four components allowed them to compare themselves either through what they called themselves and others, through how they structured their training, how the equipment was used, and what they thought of a fitness vacation. The differentiation that this leads to enabled informants to view the running community through smaller subgroups, the two major ones being runners and joggers. This then permitted the informants to determine and communicate their own identity but it also acted as a tool in determining into which category to put other runners in the community.

However, the two terms, runner and jogger, are not fixed points with clear borders, but lie on a continuum, creating a spectrum with no clear borders between the two terms, as well as a lot of subterms connected to them such as athlete runner or happy jogger, creating an opportunity for a more cultivated career ladder. Hence, the perceived running career ladder, discussed throughout research in serious leisure (Green and Jones, 2005; Shipway and Jones, 2007, 2008; Getz and Andersson, 2010), might not be a fixed ladder, but one that alters depended on the persons involved. For the runners a fitness vacation was more seen as a tool in reaching the next objective, but not taking the form of a career marker (Shipway and Jones, 2008) since it does not affect their perceived running identity to a great extent and moves them up the ladder. However, for the joggers the fitness vacation had a greater impact on their running identity, and could hence, be seen as a possible career marker.

The findings also suggested a hierarchy between runners and joggers which is important when choosing to consume a fitness vacation. The choice of fitness vacation, as choices made in accordance to one's identity (Oyserman, 2009), acts as a symbolic differentiation factor within the community. The informants' that earlier identified as more serious, i.e. a runner, were drawn to non-commercial fitness vacations not organised by a tour operator. Once more, signs of self-authentication (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010) were present as the choice of fitness vacation type became a tool to differentiate from the deemed *out-group* and identify with the *in-group* of the running community. But also, for some, a way of changing one's perceived position in the running community. Runners, that were deemed as more serious focused on the performance results that could be reached through and after the fitness vacation, timing the vacation strategically before races or when a need for re-vitalisation occurred. Joggers, that were seen as less serious, were more motivated by the experience itself throughout the vacation, while describing the vacations joggers focused on the experience of socialising and trying new things rather than result related topics.

With the fitness vacation, irrespective of the type, informants report a re-vitalisation in regards to their running. This is described to be the result of an opportunity to recover from the cold of the winter or inspiration and motivation one gets from the trainers and other participants on the vacation. This result of the fitness vacation, then, in the case of runners often leads to the continuation of reaching goals in the form of personal records to beat and races to finish with good results. In the case of joggers it often leads to more running sessions per week or the signing up to a race one would not otherwise possibly have considered. In both cases the fitness vacation works as a possible tool to further the running career. With this process, confidence and immersion into the community are likely to rise which in turn is likely to have an impact on the personal identity.

### ***Implications for theory***

The different running identities (runner and jogger) had implications for the type of fitness vacation preferred with clear connections to the self-perception of the runner/jogger. This finding supports social-identity theory and in particular Oyserman's (2009) identity-based motivation model by showing that running identity was relevant when consuming a fitness vacation and thus can act as a motivator. Another theoretical contribution made by this study is the four suggested components of the running identity. The running identity is a previously used concept by some authors (Shipway and Jones, 2007, 2008), who discuss the running community within serious leisure. This study's components firstly support the use of this concept and also enable deeper analysis for authors wishing to connect the running identity to various concepts by providing specific components to look for.

The study's contribution to CCT is twofold. Firstly, it contributes to the body of work which is one of the main tenets of CCT, studying how consumers consume. Secondly, it contributes through the extended understanding of consumers' motivations as well as community membership which is also a focus of CCT (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Due to the nature of our subject which focuses on runners and fitness vacations the study also carries theoretical implications for serious leisure research. Also in this area the implications are twofold, firstly, we have responded to the call for further research in the evolvement of running identity (Shipway and Jones, 2008). Secondly, the study has expanded the serious leisure focus of exploring runners' motivation in competitions to another context, i.e. fitness vacations. Through this we have contributed to a deeper insight into the runners' culture and social world, helping to gain a richer discussion surrounding both active sport tourism as well as related cultures (Shipway and Jones, 2008).

### ***Implications for marketers***

The study also carries some implications for practitioners. Firstly, the finding that running identity of consumers is important when deciding to take part in a fitness vacation can provide marketers with an opportunity to position themselves accordingly. For example marketers aiming to reach joggers will need to

adapt the offerings to their goals and objectives. Secondly, informants that had and had not bought a commercial fitness vacation brought up the expensive price when discussing their views of the vacations. This was presented as a shortcoming and some were not prepared to sacrifice what they deemed to be a too great amount of money. This provides an implication for marketers in the field, which could see it as an opportunity to enter the market as a lower priced alternative, perhaps in a more local setting. Thirdly, by going through running clubs, the fitness vacations can be perceived as *more serious* than the today commercial fitness vacations, and thus target the more serious runners one finds in running clubs that are not so attracted by the commercial vacations. Lastly, the insights into how runners view themselves and their community can provide inspiration for advertising campaigns directed specifically towards this segment by both tour operators as well as marketers interested in reaching the segment with other offerings.

#### **Limitations and further research**

Running identity in this study was based partly on the product-specific values of fitness vacations, which was one of the four components in our running identity. This is a limitation in the sense that it limits the use of one of the four components for future studies which do not focus on fitness vacations and contributes thus mostly to the studies which are interested in our specific topic rather than runners in general. In this sense, the product-specific value must be adapted to fit the situation. Furthermore, with the time limit given, the number of informants interviewed reached nine, and were a mix of people that have been on different types of fitness vacations and perceived to have different positions in the running community. This was done in order to capture the multiple sides and complexity of the running community, as well as getting a broader view of the phenomenon of fitness vacations. Problems derived from this is that even though we got a good overview, a fuller knowledge about running identity evolvment and consumption of fitness vacation could have emerged if more informants had been interviewed in each segments, i.e. commercial fitness vacations,

fitness vacations arranged through clubs, or arrange by the informants himself/herself.

Throughout this study, smaller sidetracks have emerged which could be interesting to develop in future research. As seen, there are tendencies that implicate that events or experiences in the running community could shift in importance for people in different positions in the community in relation to their running career and running identity. A possible subject of interest could be the role of a fitness vacation as a career marker for runners and joggers, to further view its impact on running career and running identity. As explained, running identity is a previously used concept; however, researchers have failed to give a precise definition of it, as well as its components. Even though our study has strived to give some direction in the concept running identity, further research could develop the components further by providing measuring scales for example which could make it easier to place runners or joggers on the identity continuum to acknowledge more fully the complexity of a running identity.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study's intent was to explore the relationship between running identity, motivation, and fitness vacation, in order to create a better understanding of the relationship between running identity evolvment and consumption. The aim was reached by the findings which point towards identity not only playing a role of what motivates people to consume a fitness vacation, but also to what type of fitness vacation is being consumed. Runners search for a place where they mainly can improve their performance, which do not seemingly relate well with the commercial fitness vacation to the same extent as one created by the runner himself/herself, or arranged by his/her running club. Joggers were more driven by hedonic motivations (Batra and Athola, 1990; Khan et al., 2005) and search for a new experience, the atmosphere, as well as possibilities to explore other part of location.

#### **REFERENCES**

Arnould, E.J. and Thompson, C.J., 2005.  
Consumer culture theory (CCT): twenty

- years of research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(4), pp. 868-882.
- Batra, R. and Athola, O.T., 1991. Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian source of consumer attitudes. *Marketing Letters*, 2(2), pp. 159-170.
- Belk, R., 1988. Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(2), pp. 139-168.
- Bem, D.J., 1972. Self-perception theory. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 6, pp. 1-62.
- Beverland, M.B. and Farrelly, F.J. 2010. The quest for authenticity in consumption: consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(5), pp. 838-856.
- Bond, N. and Falk, J., 2012. Tourism and identity-related motivations: why am I here (and not there)? *International Journal of Tourism Research*, published online 15 Apr. 2012 (online version only)
- Bourdieu, P., 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E., 2005. *Företagsekonomiska forskningsmetoder*. Malmö: Liber AB.
- Celsi, R., Randall, R. and Thomas, L., 1993. An exploration of high-risk leisure consumption through skydiving. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(1), pp. 1-23.
- Chan, C., Berger, J., Van Boven, L., 2012. Identifiable but Not Identical: Combining Social Identity and Uniqueness Motives in Choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(3), pp. 561-573.
- Chen, J.S., Prebensen, N. and Huan, T.C., 2008. Determining the motivation of wellness travellers. *Anatolia: and International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 19(1), pp. 103-115.
- Collis, J. and Hussey, R. 2009. *Business research. A practical guide for undergraduate & postgraduate students*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Crompton, J.L., 1979. Motivations for pleasure vacations. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6(4), pp. 408-424.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., 1975. *Beyond boredom and anxiety*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., Rathunde, K., 1993. The measurement of flow in everyday life: toward a theory of emergent motivation. In: J.E. Jacobs, ed. 1993. *Developmental perspectives on motivation*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 57-97.
- Dann, G.M.S., 1981. Tourist motivation: an appraisal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8(2), pp. 187-219.
- Davidsson, M.P., 1992. *The consumerist manifesto: advertising in postmodern times*. London: Routledge.
- Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M., 1985. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- Decrop, A., 1999. Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 20(1), pp. 157-161.
- Douglas, M. and Isherwood, B., 1996. *The world of goods*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Elliott, R., 1997. Existential consumption and irrational desire. *European Journal of Marketing*, 34(4), pp. 285-296.
- Erlandson, D.A., Harris, E.L., Skipper, B.L. and Allen, S.D., 1993. *Doing naturalistic inquiry. A guide to methods*. SAGE Publications: Newbury park.
- Fodness, D., 1994. Measuring tourist motivation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(3), pp. 555-581.
- Freud, S., 1914. On narcissism: and introduction. In: S. Freud, ed. 1984, vol. 11. *On metapsychology: the theory of psychoanalysis: "beyond the pleasure", "ego and id" and other works*. Harmondsworth: Pelican Freud Library, pp. 59-97.
- Gabriel, Y. and Lang, T., 2006. *The unmanageable consumer: contemporary consumption and its fragmentations*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications.
- Getz, D. and Andersson, T.D., 2010. The event-tourist career trajectory: a study of high-involvement amateur distance runners. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 10(4), pp. 468-491.
- Gibson, H.J., 2005. Towards an understanding of 'why sport tourists do what they do. *Sport in Society*, 8(2), pp. 198-217.
- Giddens, A., 1991. *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Green, B.C. and Jones, I., 2005. Serious leisure, social identity and sport tourism. *Sport in Society*, 8(2), pp. 164-181.
- Haggard, L.M. and Williams, D.R., 1992. Identity affirmation through leisure activities: leisure symbols of the self.

- Journal of Leisure Research*, 24(1), pp. 1-18.
- Holbrook, M.B., 1999. *Consumer value*. London: Routledge.
- Holloway, I. and Todres, L., 2003. The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative Research*, 3(3), pp. 345-357.
- Iso-Ahola, S.E., and St Clair, B., 2000. Toward a theory of exercise motivation. *Quest*, 52(2), pp. 131-147.
- Jacobsson, L., 2013. Charter till toppform. *Lifestyle Fitness*, Nr 3 Mar. 2013, pp. 38-43.
- Keinan, A. and Kivetz, R., 2011. Productivity orientation and the consumption of collectable experiences. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(6), pp. 935-950.
- Khan, U., Dhar, R. and Wertenbroch, K., 2005. A behavioral decision theoretic perspective on hedonic and utilitarian choice. In: S. Ratneshwar and D.G. Mick, ed. 2005. *Inside consumption: consumer motives, goals, and desires*. New York: Routledge, pp. 144-165.
- Kleiven, J., 2009. *The Lillhammer scale: measuring common motives for vacation and leisure behaviour*. Ph.D. University of Bergen.
- Kozinets, R.V., 2001. Utopian enterprise: articulating the meaning of Star Trek's culture of consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(1), pp. 67-88.
- Leedy, M.G., 2000. Commitment to distance running: coping mechanism or addiction? *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 23(3), pp. 255-270.
- Maffesoli, M., 1996. *The time of tribes*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mannell, R.C., Zuzanek, J. and Larson, R., 1988. Leisure states and 'flow' experiences: testing perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation hypotheses. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 20(4), pp. 289-304.
- Masters, K.S., Ogles, B.M. and Jolton, J.A., 1993. The development of an instrument to measure motivation for marathon running: the motivations of marathoners scale (MOMS). *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 64(2), pp. 134-143.
- McCracken, G., 1988. Culture and consumption: a theoretical account of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(1), pp. 71-84.
- Moisander, J., Valtonen, A. and Hirsto, H., 2009. Personal interviews in cultural consumer research – post-structuralist challenges. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 12(4), pp. 329-348.
- Moisander, J. and Valton, A., 2006. *Qualitative marketing research: a cultural approach*. London: Sage.
- Ogles, B.M. and Masters, K.S., 2003. A typology of marathon runners based on cluster analysis of motivations. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 26(1), pp. 69-85.
- Oyserman, D., 2009. Identity-based motivation: Implication for action-readiness, procedural readiness and consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 19(3), pp. 250–260.
- Park, C.W. and Lessig, V.P., 1977. Students and housewives: differences in susceptibility to reference group influence. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 4(2), pp. 102-110.
- Pearce, P.L. and Lee, U-I., 2005. Developing the travel career approach to tourist motivation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(3), pp. 226-237.
- Prebensen, N.K., 2006. *A grammar of motives for understanding individual tourist behaviour*. Ph.D. Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration.
- Quester, P., Beverland, M., and Farrelly, F., 2006. Brand-personal values fit and brand meanings: exploring the role individual values play in ongoing brand loyalty in extreme sport subcultures. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 33(1), pp. 21-27.
- Ritchie, B.W., Tkaczynski, A. and Faulks, P., 2009. Understanding the motivation and travel behavior of cycle tourists using involvement profiles. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 27(4), pp. 409-425.
- Rohm, A.J., Milne, G.R. and McDonald, M.A., 2006. A mixed-method approach for developing market segmentation typologies in the sport industry. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 15(1), pp. 29-39.
- Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L., 2000. Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), pp. 68-78.
- Schouten, J.W. and McAlexander, J.H., 1995. Subcultures of consumption: an

- ethnography of the New Bikers. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(1), 43-61.
- Schüler, J. and Brunner, S. 2009. The rewarding effect of flow experience on performance in a marathon race. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 10(1), pp. 168-174.
- Shamir, B., 1992. Some correlations of leisure identity salience. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 24(4), pp. 301-323.
- Sherry, J.F., Kozinets, R.V., 2001. 'Qualitative Inquiry in Marketing and Consumer Research' in *Kellogg on Marketing*, ed. Dawn Iacobucci, New York: Wiley & Sons, pp. 165-94.
- Shipway, R. and Jones, I., 2007. Running away from home: understanding visitor experiences and behaviour at sport tourism events. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 9(5), pp. 373-383.
- Shipway, R. and Jones, I., 2008. The great suburban Everest: and 'insiders' perspective on experiences at the 2007 Flora London marathon. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 13(1), pp.61-77.
- Smith, S.L., 1998. Athletes, runners, and joggers: participant-group dynamics in sport of "individuals". *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 15(2), pp. 174-192.
- Solomon, M.R., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S. and Hogg, M.K., 2010. *Consumer behaviour. A European perspective*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Pearson Education.
- Spradley, J.P., 1979. *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Thompson, C.J., Pollio, H.R., Locander, W.B., 1994. The Spoken and the Unspoken: A Hermeneutic Approach to Understanding the Cultural Viewpoints That Underlie Consumers' Expressed Meanings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(3), pp. 432-453.
- Weed, M., 2006. Sports Tourism Research 2000-2004: A Systematic Review of Knowledge and a Meta-Evaluation of Methods. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 11(1), pp. 5-30.
- Zeithaml, V.A., 1988. Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality and Value: A Means-End Model and Synthesis of Evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, 52(3), pp. 2-22.