

Social Media Marketing and Participation Decision in Sport Run Events: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of sport tourism, particularly in running events, has positioned social media as a primary platform for digital promotion and participant engagement. However, limited research has examined how the dimensions of social media marketing—content quality, interactivity, and influencer credibility—simultaneously influence participants' motivation and trust within the context of sport tourism. This study aims to analyze the effects of these dimensions on participation decisions in running events, using Self-Determination Theory as the theoretical framework. The research employed a quantitative explanatory approach involving 303 active social media users who had participated in or planned to join running events such as the Jakarta Marathon, Borobudur Marathon, and Bali Marathon. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SmartPLS 4). The results indicate that content quality significantly influences motivation, while interactivity and influencer credibility have significant effects on trust. Both motivation and trust positively influence participation decisions and serve as mediating variables between social media marketing and behavioral intention. Conversely, content and interactivity do not have direct effects on participation decisions. This study emphasizes that effective digital marketing strategies in sport tourism should integrate emotional content, interactive communication, and credible influencers to strengthen participants' intrinsic motivation and trust.

Keywords: social media marketing; content; interactivity; influencer; motivation; trust; sport tourism; participation decision

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INTRODUCTION

The world of sports has undergone significant transformations before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to social distancing policies and the closure of public facilities such as gyms, swimming pools, and recreational parks during the pandemic, various physical activities were restricted. However, since the lifting of pandemic restrictions in 2022, sports have become an essential part of the modern lifestyle. They are increasingly viewed as a long-term health investment rather than merely a recreational activity, driven by heightened awareness of the importance of maintaining the body's immune system (Nugraha et al., 2022).

In this context, the most notable phenomenon is the rising popularity of running. According to Garmin Connect data (2024), there were more than 80,000 active runners in Indonesia as of May 2024, a sharp increase from 35,000 in the previous year. This trend aligns with the growing global awareness of healthy lifestyles and the social encouragement fostered by online communities. Running is perceived as an affordable, accessible form of exercise with strong potential to create social bonds. Moreover, the



“FOMO running culture”—the fear of missing out on communal running events—has emerged as a new social phenomenon in major cities.

The sport tourism industry has been greatly influenced by these developments. According to (Filipe, 2019), sport tourism encompasses travel undertaken by individuals to participate in sporting events, either as athletes or spectators (Hinch & Higham, n.d.). Marathons such as the Jakarta Marathon, Bali Marathon, and Borobudur Marathon have become flagship events in Indonesia, blending sports, tourism, and local traditions. Sandiaga Uno, Indonesia’s Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, projected that the country’s sport tourism sector would reach a value of IDR 18.79 trillion in 2024, driving economic growth and generating substantial employment opportunities.

In Indonesia, the growth of sport tourism is driven by improved facilities and government support for community-based events, particularly the emergence of running communities, as well as the expanding reach of promotions through digital media. In this context, social media has become the primary channel for fostering emotional engagement and attracting participant interest. It has evolved into a vital ecosystem for communication, promotion, and influencing participation behavior, with more than 4.2 billion users globally (Social, 2022) and approximately 160 million users in Indonesia (Kemp, 2021).

Social media enables event organizers to interact directly with participants and build active online communities in real time. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube facilitate the sharing of visual content, live broadcasts, and intensive interactions. According to (Wilopo & Nuralam, 2025), user satisfaction and their willingness to engage in sports-based events are directly influenced by the interactivity of social media.

In social media marketing, the three main dimensions are content, interactivity, and influencer credibility. These elements serve as the core structure in shaping the perceptions, motivation, and beliefs of individuals participating in sporting events (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

First, content quality greatly influences participants’ trust and motivation. Engaging, informative, and authentic content can enhance user engagement (Wang et al., 2023). (Yellys et al., 2024) found that high-quality tourism content on social media increases trust and the desire to visit. Similarly, stated that exposure to emotionally curated sport tourism content can strengthen young participants’ intention to revisit. Visual content—such as runners’ personal stories, inspirational videos, and testimonials from previous participants—plays a crucial role in driving engagement in running event promotions (Izhaan et al., 2024).

Second, event organizers and prospective participants can communicate with each other through social media interactivity. Trust and a sense of social connectedness increase when direct interactions occur through polls, comments, private messages, or live streaming (Sheeran, 2005). According to (Wang et al., 2023), interactive engagement enhances customer satisfaction and their willingness to participate in sport-based tourism destinations. In running events such as the Yogyakarta Marathon, Instagram’s live Q&A features are used to build relationships between well-known runners and the general public while fostering a sense of community solidarity (Septiawan et al., 2023)

Third, influencer marketing plays a crucial role in building reputation and a positive brand image. Influencers act as a “trust bridge” between organizers and audiences, as the trust placed in them can be transferred to the brand or event they endorse (Almahdi et al., 2022). According to (Durau et al., 2022), influencer credibility has a significant impact on

consumer trust and their willingness to participate (Hofeditz et al., 2022). Similarly, research by (Helal et al., 2023) found that influencer credibility moderates the relationship between user engagement and content quality.

Previous studies have shown that social media can enhance consumer interest. However, there remains a lack of research examining how factors such as content, interactivity, and influencers simultaneously influence individuals' motivation and trust when participating in athletic events (Kikelomo Fadilat Anjorin et al., 2024). Earlier research has predominantly focused on the general tourism or e-commerce industries rather than on community-based sports that involve psychological motivation (Gdonteli et al., 2024)

This study employs the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) framework developed by (Ryan & Deci, 2000), to understand the psychological mechanisms underlying participation. SDT posits that when individuals fulfill their three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—their intrinsic motivation drives voluntary behavior. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, arises from external sources such as rewards, social recognition, or digital validation. Conversely, personal satisfaction and challenge foster participation driven by intrinsic motivation (Ntoumanis & Moller, 2025). In running events, inspiring content and supportive online communities can enhance runners' sense of competence and social connectedness, thereby generating a strong intrinsic drive to participate.

In addition to motivation, trust is a crucial factor in shaping participation intentions. According to (McKnight et al., 2002) dan (Gefen et al., n.d.), individuals' perceptions of an organizer's credibility, integrity, and competence form the basis of trust. In the digital environment, trust can be cultivated through influencer reputation, information transparency, and communication consistency (Elshaer et al., 2024). Studi (Koay & Ahmed, 2025) found that trust mediates the relationship between content quality and users' participation decisions. Similarly, (Vučković et al., 2023). revealed that two-way communication on social media enhances trust and fosters loyalty toward events.

In explaining participation behavior, the two mediating variables—motivation and trust—complement each other. Motivation serves as an internal psychological factor that drives action, while trust functions as a social mechanism that reduces perceived risk and enhances comfort in participation. The combination of these factors is believed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how social media marketing tactics influence individuals' decisions to participate in sporting events.

This study employs three theoretical frameworks. The first is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which explains the relationship between attitudes, intentions, and behavior (Ajzen, 1991); the second is the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which emphasizes users' motivations for choosing specific media (Katz, 1974); and the third is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which explains the process of forming internal motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The integration of these three theories provides a strong conceptual foundation for explaining how exposure to social media—through content, interaction, and social influence—shapes intentions and decisions to participate in athletic events.

Contemporary methods are supported by previous research (Kasirye, 2022) found that consumer satisfaction and tourist engagement increase with digital interactivity. According to (Durau et al., 2022), trust and participation intentions are influenced by influencer credibility. (Ntoumanis & Moller, 2025), argued that fulfilling the psychological needs outlined in SDT enhances individuals' intrinsic motivation to engage in physical

activities. Meanwhile, (Elshaer et al., 2024) confirmed that digital trust is a critical component in sustaining tourist participation. Collectively, these findings strengthen the empirical understanding that successful social media strategies depend on content quality, interactivity level, and influencer credibility. Motivation and trust serve as psychological bridges between digital exposure and actual behavior.

This study formulates its research problem based on the following theoretical and empirical contexts: how social media elements—content, interactivity, and influencers—affect the motivation and trust of prospective participants; how motivation and trust influence participation decisions; and how these two variables mediate the relationship between social media marketing activities and individuals' decisions to participate in athletic events.

The objectives of this study are as follows: (1) to analyze the influence of content, interactivity, and influencers on participants' motivation; (2) to assess the effects of these variables on participants' trust; (3) to examine the impact of motivation and trust on participation decisions; and (4) to identify the mediating roles of motivation and trust in the relationship between social media marketing and participation decisions.

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it enriches the existing literature by integrating concepts of motivational psychology, social trust, and digital marketing within the context of sport tourism. The proposed model positions motivation and trust as dual mediators and explains how digital marketing strategies influence participation decisions, thereby extending the application of Self-Determination Theory to the realm of social media-based promotion. Practically, the findings are expected to provide valuable guidance for event organizers and industry practitioners in developing more human-centered and effective communication strategies, such as selecting relevant and authentic influencers, enhancing online interactivity, and creating inspiring content.

This study is expected to make a significant contribution to the advancement of sport tourism in Indonesia. Social media serve as more than just promotional tools; they have the potential to foster participants' motivation, trust, and loyalty toward community-based sporting activities. Ultimately, digital communication methods that emphasize social and emotional value possess the capacity to accelerate the growth of national sport tourism and strengthen Indonesia's image as a leading sport tourism destination in Asia.

METHOD

The type of research

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory design, aiming to examine the causal relationships among variables within the formulated conceptual framework. The quantitative approach was chosen for its ability to produce objective and measurable analyses, while the explanatory design is used to explain the extent to which the independent variables—social media marketing dimensions encompassing content, interactivity, and influencers—affect the dependent variable, namely participation decision, with motivation and trust serving as mediating variables. This approach is deemed most appropriate for understanding the psychological and behavioral mechanisms underlying participation decisions in the rapidly evolving context of digital promotion.

Time and Location

This study was conducted from May to August 2025, coinciding with the resurgence of sport run tourism activities in Indonesia following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research was non-spatial in nature, as data were collected online through social media platforms and digital survey systems, enabling the researcher to reach respondents from various regions across Indonesia. The use of an online survey method was chosen for its efficiency and its alignment with the characteristics of the target population—active social media users engaged in recreational sports such as running. This approach also offered advantages in accessing respondents relevant to the research phenomenon while accurately reflecting the digital context that constitutes the core focus of the study.

Objectives or Goals

The primary objective of this study is to empirically analyze the influence of social media marketing dimensions on individuals' decisions to participate in running events, with motivation and trust considered as mediating variables. The study population comprises individuals who have participated in or plan to participate in various running events such as the Jakarta Marathon, Borobudur Marathon, Bali Marathon, and Jogja Marathon. The research subjects are active social media users aged between 18 and 45 years, as this age group is considered the most responsive to digital marketing campaigns and the most actively engaged in community-based sports activities.

The sampling technique employed in this study was purposive sampling, with the following inclusion criteria: (1) individuals who have participated in or plan to participate in a running event within the past year; (2) individuals who are active social media users and have been exposed to promotional content related to running events; and (3) individuals aged 18–45 years, representing the most active group of social media users with a high interest in sports. This approach was considered appropriate for obtaining participants with direct experience interacting with digital promotional content for running events. Based on these criteria, a total of 303 valid respondents were obtained, meeting the minimum sample size requirement for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis—at least 200 respondents—to ensure a high level of analytical reliability (Hair et al., 2021).

Research procedure

The research procedure consisted of three main stages: planning, data collection, and data analysis. The planning stage included developing the conceptual model, designing the questionnaire, and conducting a pilot test to ensure the instrument's validity and reliability. The data collection stage was carried out by distributing online questionnaires through platforms such as Google Forms, Instagram, and digital running communities. The data analysis stage employed SmartPLS 4 software to test both the measurement model and the structural model. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach was chosen because it allows for the analysis of both direct and indirect relationships among variables and enables the examination of mediation effects within complex models (Hair et al., 2021).

Instrument

The research instrument consisted of a closed-ended questionnaire developed based on theoretical indicators from previous studies. The questionnaire comprised two main sections. The first section included demographic questions such as age, gender, education level, and experience in participating in running events. The second section contained statements related to the research variables, which included social media

content, interactivity, influencer, motivation, trust, and participation decision. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The instrument was constructed by referring to well-established literature with proven validity and reliability, Ryan dan Deci (2000) for motivation, (McKnight et al., 2002) dan (Gefen et al., n.d.) for trust , and (Kim et al., 2020) as well as or social media marketing variables. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, while convergent and discriminant validity were assessed through factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, in accordance with the recommended thresholds ((Hair et al., 2021).

Data collection technique

The data collection technique employed an online survey method, as this approach allows for broad participation and aligns with the characteristics of respondents who are active on social media. The survey was conducted anonymously to ensure data confidentiality and to minimize potential social desirability bias. In addition to primary data, this study also utilized secondary data from scholarly journals, industry reports, and official publications of running event organizers to strengthen the empirical and theoretical context of the research.

Data analysis technique

Data analysis was conducted in two stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The outer model evaluation was performed to assess construct validity and reliability, with criteria of factor loading ≥ 0.5 and AVE ≥ 0.5 serving as indicators of convergent validity. Meanwhile, the inner model evaluation focused on testing the relationships among variables through analysis of path coefficients, R-square, and Q-square values to measure the model's predictive strength. The significance test was based on the p-value (< 0.05), indicating statistically significant relationships between variables.

Overall, the research methodology was designed to ensure the validity and reliability of the study's findings. The combination of an explanatory design, quantitative approach, and multivariate analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) provides a comprehensive understanding of how social media marketing influences motivation, trust, and participation decisions in sport run events in Indonesia. This methodological approach not only contributes theoretically to the development of literature in digital marketing and Self-Determination Theory but also offers practical implications for event organizers and sports marketers in designing communication strategies that are more effective, adaptive, and oriented toward increasing public participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The characteristics of the respondents in this study include gender, age, education level, and occupation of individuals who participated in running events. The data were obtained from a total of 303 respondents. The results of the respondent analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

| No | Characteristic | Category | Frequency | Persentase (%) |
|----|----------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1 | Gender | Male | 208 | 68,7 |
| | | Female | 95 | 31,4 |
| 2 | Age | < 18 years | 5 | 1,7 |
| | | 18–27 years | 85 | 28,1 |
| | | 28–37 years | 176 | 58,1 |
| | | 38–45 years | 37 | 12,2 |
| 3 | Education | Senior High School | 72 | 23,8 |
| | | Diploma | 31 | 10,2 |
| | | Bachelor’s Degree | 168 | 55,5 |
| | | Master’s Degree | 32 | 10,6 |
| 4 | Occupation | Private Employee | 149 | 49,2 |
| | | Civil Servant (PNS) | 35 | 11,6 |
| | | Entrepreneur | 35 | 11,6 |
| | | Student | 20 | 6,6 |
| | | Others | 64 | 21,1 |

Outer Model Evaluation

The outer model analysis was conducted to ensure that the measurement instruments used in this study were appropriate and valid for assessing each construct. The outer model represents the measurement framework consisting of indicators and the paths linking them to their respective latent factors. This evaluation aims to verify that the measurement instruments meet the established criteria for validity and reliability. The figure below presents the results of the outer model evaluation using SmartPLS 4.0, illustrating the relationships between indicators and their corresponding latent variables.

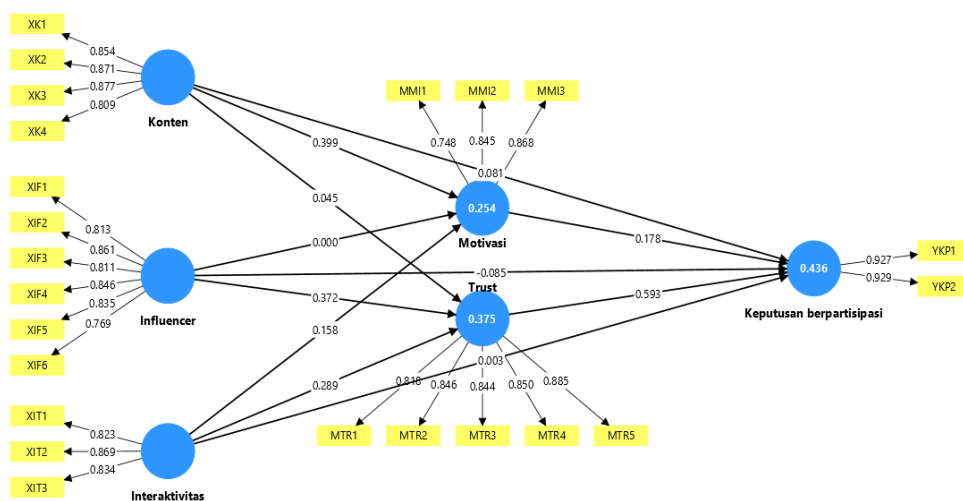


Figure 1. Outer Model

Validity testing is used to assess the extent to which a questionnaire accurately measures what it is intended to measure. An instrument is considered valid if the statements or items it contains truly reflect the construct being studied. In this research, validity testing includes convergent validity and discriminant validity. The results of the validity test presented in Table 2 show that all outer loading values exceed 0.50. Therefore, it can be concluded that all questionnaire items are valid and can be used as appropriate measurement instruments in this study.

Table 2. Results of Outer Loadings Validity Test

| Variable | Indicator | Outer Loading | Description |
|------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| Social Media Content | XK1 | 0,854 | Valid |
| | XK2 | 0,871 | Valid |
| | XK3 | 0,877 | Valid |
| | XK4 | 0,809 | Valid |
| Interactivity | XIT1 | 0,823 | Valid |
| | XIT2 | 0,869 | Valid |
| | XIT3 | 0,834 | Valid |
| Influencer Credibility | XIF1 | 0,813 | Valid |
| | XIF2 | 0,861 | Valid |
| | XIF3 | 0,811 | Valid |
| | XIF4 | 0,846 | Valid |
| | XIF5 | 0,835 | Valid |
| | XIF6 | 0,769 | Valid |
| Motivation | MM1 | 0,748 | Valid |
| | MM2 | 0,845 | Valid |
| | MM3 | 0,868 | Valid |
| Trust | MTR1 | 0,818 | Valid |
| | MTR2 | 0,846 | Valid |
| | MTR3 | 0,844 | Valid |
| | MTR4 | 0,850 | Valid |
| | MTR5 | 0,885 | Valid |
| Participation Decision | YKP1 | 0,927 | Valid |
| | YKP2 | 0,929 | Valid |

Source: Processed Research Data, 2025

The results of the validity test presented in Table 4.2 show that all outer loading values exceed 0.50. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items are valid as measurement instruments in this study. In addition to using outer loadings, validity can also be assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. A construct is considered to have good validity if the AVE value is ≥ 0.50 (Muktamar et al., 2023)

Based on Table 3, it is evident that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all variables are greater than 0.50. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items are valid and suitable to be used as measurement instruments in this study. Reliability testing was conducted to ensure that no issues occurred in the measurement process. The reliability assessment was carried out using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Social Media Content | 0,876 | 0,880 | 0,729 |
| Interactivity | 0,795 | 0,799 | 0,709 |
| Influencer Credibility | 0,904 | 0,905 | 0,677 |
| Motivation | 0,759 | 0,777 | 0,676 |
| Trust | 0,903 | 0,905 | 0,721 |
| Participation Decision | 0,838 | 0,839 | 0,861 |

Source: Processed Research Data, 2025

Based on Table 3, the results of the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha tests indicate that the research instrument meets the reliability criteria. This is evidenced by all latent variables having Composite Reliability values ≥ 0.7 and Cronbach's Alpha values ≥ 0.6 . Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study are reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Results of the Inner Model Evaluation

The inner model or structural model analysis was used to evaluate the relationships among latent variables in the study. This evaluation aims to determine the accuracy and adequacy of the structural model in explaining the relationships between constructs. According to (Hair et al., 2019), the evaluation of the inner model is generally conducted through several stages, namely:

This model evaluation was conducted using the Coefficient of Determination (R^2), Goodness of Fit, and Hypothesis Testing, which includes both Direct Effects and Indirect Effects. The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) is used to assess the extent to which endogenous constructs can be explained by exogenous constructs within the model.

Table 4. Results of Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

| Endogenous Variable | R-square | Description |
|------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Motivation | 0,254 | Low |
| Trust | 0,375 | Moderate |
| Participation Decision | 0,436 | Moderate |

Source: Processed Research Data, 2025

Hypothesis Testing

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted by examining both direct effects and indirect effects. The path coefficient test was used to determine the strength and significance of the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. This analysis helps to identify whether the relationships among constructs in the proposed model are statistically significant and in accordance with the formulated hypotheses.

Table 5. Results of Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing

| | Hypotesis | Original Sample (O) | T Statistics (O/STDEV) | P Values | Result | Conclusion |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
| H ₁ | Content -> Motivtion | 0,399 | 4,739 | 0,000 | Significant | Accepted |
| H ₂ | Content -> Trust | 0,045 | 0,524 | 0,601 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H ₃ | Content -> Participation Decision | 0,081 | 1,179 | 0,238 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H ₄ | Interaktivty -> Motivation | 0,158 | 1,865 | 0,062 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H ₅ | Interaktivty -> Trust | 0,289 | 3,881 | 0,000 | Significant | Accepted |
| H ₆ | Interaktivty>Participation Decision | 0,003 | 0,046 | 0,963 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H ₇ | Influencer -> Motivation | 0,000 | 0,007 | 0,994 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H ₈ | Influencer -> Trust | 0,372 | 4,794 | 0,000 | Significant | Accepted |
| H ₉ | Influencer->Participation Decision | -0,085 | 1,323 | 0,186 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H ₁₀ | Motivation -> Participation Decision | 0,178 | 3,132 | 0,002 | Significant | Accepted |
| H ₁₁ | Trust -> Participation Decision | 0,593 | 8,411 | 0,000 | Significant | Accepted |

Source: Processed Research Data, 2025

The indirect effect analysis was conducted to test hypotheses concerning the indirect influence of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable that is mediated by an intervening (mediating) variable. This analysis aims to determine whether motivation and trust function as mediators in the relationship between social media marketing dimensions—content, interactivity, and influencer credibility—and participation decisions in running events.

Table 6. Results of indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing

| | Hypotesis | Original Sample (O) | T Statistics (O/STDEV) | P Values | Result | Conclusion |
|------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
| H _{12a} | Content-> Motivation-> Participation Decision | 0,071 | 2,818 | 0,005 | Significant | Accepted |
| H _{12b} | Interaktivty-> Motivation-> Participation Decision | 0,028 | 1,479 | 0,139 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H _{12c} | Influencer-> Motivation-> Participation Decision | 0,000 | 0,007 | 0,995 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H _{13a} | Content-> Trust-> Participation Decision | 0,026 | 0,531 | 0,595 | Not Significant | Rejected |
| H _{13b} | Interaktivty-> Trust-> Participation Decision | 0,171 | 3,893 | 0,000 | Significant | Accepted |
| H _{13c} | Influencer-> Trust-> Participation Decision | 0,220 | 4,176 | 0,000 | Significant | Accepted |

Source: Processed Research Data, 2025

H1. The Effect of Content on Motivation (Accepted, Significant)

The results of the study indicate that the hypothesis is accepted, as content has a positive and significant effect on motivation, with a T-statistic value of 4.739 and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This finding suggests that the more engaging, relevant, and informative the social media content shared by event organizers, the greater the participants' motivation to join running events. This result aligns with the findings of (Ghadernejad et al., 2024), who stated that sports-related content that fulfills basic psychological needs such as autonomy and competence enhances autonomous motivation to participate in community-based sports activities.

H2. The Effect of Influencer on Motivation (Rejected, Not Significant)

The test results show that influencers do not have a significant effect on motivation, with a T-statistic value of 0.007 and a P-value of 0.994, indicating that the hypothesis is rejected. This finding suggests that influencers do not directly drive participants' motivation to join running events. Instead, their role is more strongly associated with influencing trust and brand integrity rather than internal motivation. This aligns with the study by (Ünalmiş et al., 2024), which found that the value of influencer advertising content affects trust and perceptions of authenticity, rather than motivational factors.

H3. The Effect of Interactivity on Motivation (Rejected, Not Significant)

With a T-statistic value of 1.865 and a P-value of 0.062 (> 0.05), the hypothesis is rejected. The results indicate that the level of interaction on social media is not yet strong enough to enhance participants' intrinsic motivation, even though interactivity can improve user experience. However, this finding differs from the study by (Aitamurto & Saldivar, 2017), which emphasized that interactivity plays a crucial role in maintaining engagement; participants who actively comment and interact with others are more likely

to remain motivated and involved, suggesting that interactivity may help sustain motivation over time.

H4. The Effect of Content on Trust (Rejected, Not Significant)

The hypothesis is rejected because the test results show that content does not have a significant effect on trust, with a T-statistic value of 0.524 and a P-value of 0.601 (> 0.05). This indicates that while content is important for capturing audience attention, it is not sufficient to build trust in event organizers. Trust requires source credibility, consistent communication, and informational transparency. However, this finding contrasts with the study by (Sari, 2025), which found that user-generated content enhances trust through perceived authenticity and relevance—factors that play a crucial role in fostering consumer trust in the context of e-commerce.

H5. The Effect of Influencers on Trust (Accepted, Significant)

The results of the study indicate that the hypothesis is accepted, as influencers have a positive and significant effect on trust, with a T-statistic value of 4.794 and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). The credibility and authenticity of influencers play a crucial role in fostering audience trust toward the promoted event or product. Followers tend to trust messages more when influencers are perceived as reliable and sincere. Similarly, (Hidayat et al., 2021), found that trust in influencers positively affects followers' self-esteem, engagement expectations, and loyalty—indicating that influencer trust can lead to stronger follower–influencer relationships.

H6. The Effect of Interactivity on Trust (Accepted, Significant)

With a T-statistic value of 3.881 and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), this study demonstrates that interactivity has a positive and significant effect on trust. Active and communicative social media interactions between organizers and participants are proven to enhance trust. Users tend to have greater confidence in organizers who are more responsive and approachable. This finding is supported by (Akdim et al., 2022), who stated that trust is a key component influencing participation in virtual communities and is positively affected by satisfaction with prior interactions and the frequency of communication within the community.

H7. The Effect of Content on Participation Decision (Rejected, Not Significant)

The hypothesis is rejected because the analysis results show that content does not have a significant effect on participation decisions, with a T-statistic value of 1.179 and a P-value of 0.238 (> 0.05). This finding indicates that although engaging content may attract attention, it is not sufficient to influence participants' decisions to join an event. Individual motivation, social support, and prior experiences play a more decisive role in shaping participation behavior. Other factors such as incentives, social dynamics, and personal motivation often exert a stronger influence on individuals' participation decisions. This suggests that while content remains important, understanding and leveraging these additional factors may be more effective in encouraging participation (Lundelius, 2005).

H8. The Effect of Influencers on Participation Decision (Rejected, Not Significant)

With a T-statistic value of 1.323 and a P-value of 0.186 (> 0.05), the hypothesis is rejected. Although influencers have the ability to create positive images and promote healthy behaviors, their influence on individuals' decisions to participate in sporting events remains minimal. This finding suggests that internal factors such as personal motivation and self-belief play a more significant role in participation decisions. The impact of fitness influencers is more evident in promoting general health-related behaviors rather than participation in specific events. Participation in sporting events is often driven more by intrinsic factors than by external encouragement from influencers (Raihanna et al., 2023).

H9. The Effect of Interactivity on Participation Decision (Rejected, Not Significant)

The hypothesis is rejected because the statistical test results show that interactivity does not have a significant effect on participation decisions, with a T-statistic value of 0.046 and a P-value of 0.963 (> 0.05). Although interactivity enhances social relationships and user experience, it does not directly influence the final decision to participate. In the study by, it was found that in the context of live fitness streaming, interactivity positively affects emotional attachment, which in turn impacts user participation. This indicates that while interactivity strengthens emotional connections, it is the emotional attachment itself that directly influences participation.

H10. The Effect of Motivation on Participation Decision (Accepted, Significant)

The results of the study indicate that the hypothesis is accepted, as motivation has a positive and significant effect on participants' decisions, with a T-statistic value of 3.132 and a P-value of 0.002 (< 0.05). This finding supports the notion that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are key components driving individuals to participate in sports activities. Participants are more likely to engage voluntarily when driven by enjoyment, fitness, and personal achievement. Intrinsic motivation—participation in sports for pleasure, entertainment, and personal satisfaction—serves as a major factor encouraging involvement in physical activities. Previous studies have demonstrated that intrinsic goals, such as maintaining health, developing skills, and building social affiliation, are positively correlated with perceived achievement in an event and post-event motivation (Bhatnagar & Karageorghis, 2008).

H11. The Effect of Trust on Participation Decision (Accepted, Significant)

The results of the study indicate that the hypothesis is accepted, as trust has a positive and significant effect on participants' decisions, with a T-statistic value of 8.411 and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Participants' confidence in the organizer's credibility and the quality of event execution is a key component that enhances their intention to participate. When participants believe that an event is transparent, professional, and reputable, they are more likely to return in the future. Well-organized events accompanied by clear communication and positive experiences contribute to higher satisfaction, stronger loyalty, and increased repeat participation. Furthermore, the prestige of an event has been shown to strengthen participants' confidence in its quality, thereby influencing their decision to participate (Lewis et al., 2024).

H12a. The Mediating Role of Motivation in the Effect of Content on Participation Decision (Accepted, Significant)

The study shows that motivation positively and significantly mediates the effect of content on participants' decisions, with a T-statistic value of 2.818 and a P-value of 0.005 (< 0.05). This means that engaging content can effectively encourage participants to take part in running events. Sports-related content has also been shown to enhance motivation. (Choi et al., 2023) found that digital sports content, such as YouTube videos, can provide aesthetic experiences and a sense of escapism that serve as forms of intrinsic motivation, thereby fostering sustained audience participation.

H12b. The Mediating Role of Motivation in the Effect of Influencers on Participation Decision (Rejected, Not Significant)

The hypothesis is rejected because the test results show that motivation does not significantly mediate the effect of influencers on participation decisions, with a T-statistic value of 0.007 and a P-value of 0.995 (> 0.05). This finding indicates that influencers alone are not sufficient to drive actual participation. While interactivity may enhance consumer engagement and involvement, existing literature has not extensively discussed its direct influence on participation decisions when mediated by motivation. Few studies have examined the mediating role between interactivity and sports participation, even though motivation is a crucial component of sports involvement. For instance, (Lin et al., 2022) found that motivation serves as a mediator between travel style and engagement in small-scale sporting events, but not directly between interactivity and participation.

H12c. The Mediating Role of Motivation in the Effect of Interactivity on Participation Decision (Rejected, Not Significant)

The analysis results show that motivation does not significantly mediate the effect of interactivity on participation decisions. With a T-statistic value of 1.489 and a P-value of 0.139 (> 0.05), the hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that although interactivity can enhance user engagement, its indirect effect on participation decisions through motivation remains weak. While motivation is a crucial factor in sports participation, the mediating role between interactivity and participation has not been substantially supported by existing research. For instance, (Priporas et al., 2018) found that in small-scale sporting events, motivation acts as a mediator between travel style and engagement but not directly between interactivity and participation.

H13a. The Mediating Role of Trust in the Effect of Content on Participation Decision (Rejected, Not Significant)

The results of the study indicate that the hypothesis is rejected, as trust does not significantly mediate the effect of content on participation decisions, with a T-statistic value of 0.531 and a P-value of 0.595 (> 0.05). Although content may create a positive impression of event organizers, its effect on trust is not strong enough to influence participation decisions. Other studies have shown that trust can serve as a significant mediator between content and participation intention. For example, in the context of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives by sports teams, trust has been found to mediate the relationship between perceptions of CSR efforts and fans' participation intentions—particularly among individuals with lower psychological attachment to the team (Choi et al., 2023).

H13b. The Mediating Role of Trust in the Effect of Influencers on Participation Decision (Accepted, Significant)

This study shows that trust significantly mediates the effect of influencers on participation decisions, with a T-statistic value of 4.176 and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Influencers can enhance audience trust in the events or brands they promote, which in turn increases the intention to participate. The credibility of influencers—comprising trustworthiness, competence, and attractiveness—substantially affects followers' levels of trust. This credibility can mediate the relationship between influencer endorsements and consumer behavior, including participation in sports events (Najar et al., 2024).

H13c. The Mediating Role of Trust in the Effect of Interactivity on Participation Decision (Accepted, Significant)

The results of the study indicate that the hypothesis is accepted, as trust positively and significantly mediates the effect of interactivity on participants' decisions, with a T-statistic value of 3.893 and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This finding suggests that building trust through active digital interaction can enhance participant engagement in sporting events. Trust has been identified as a significant mediator in the relationship between interactivity and user engagement within the sports context. In the setting of social multimedia networks, both trust and interactivity have been shown to positively influence user satisfaction and prosumer activity—forms of participatory behavior that can be regarded as engagement in sports events (Bali et al., 2023)(Bali et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study, grounded in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), finds that two psychological components—motivation and trust—indirectly influence individuals' decisions to participate in running events. While relevant and informative content enhances motivation, interactivity and influencers strengthen trust. The success of digital promotion, therefore, depends largely on the ability of content and interaction to foster intrinsic motivation and build trust toward event organizers. However, none of these three dimensions—content, interactivity, or influencer—has a direct impact on participation decisions.

With a limited sample size of 303 respondents, this study does not fully represent all runners in Indonesia, particularly those outside the island of Java; therefore, its findings should be generalized with caution. Moreover, the independent variables were restricted to content, interactivity, and influencer, while other potentially relevant factors—such as facilities, ticket prices, event quality, and socio-economic conditions—were not included. Additionally, the use of self-reported questionnaires is prone to perceptual biases, such as social desirability and recall bias. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design limits the study's ability to capture changes over time, as the dynamics of the digital ecosystem evolve rapidly.

To foster trust, event organizers are advised to prioritize high-quality content that stimulates intrinsic motivation, such as real-life stories and health-related benefits. They should also enhance two-way communication through methods such as Q&A sessions, live interactions, and prompt responses. Additionally, selecting reliable influencers who are relevant to the running community is essential.

For academic researchers, it is recommended to expand the model by incorporating contextual variables, broadening the geographical scope of the study, and employing mixed-method or qualitative approaches to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying psychological mechanisms.

From the consumer perspective, making well-informed and sustainable participation decisions requires evaluating the organizer's track record, ensuring information transparency, considering participant testimonials, and maintaining a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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