

## WHY (NOT) PARTICIPATE IN AN ADVENTURE MOTORCYCLE TOURISM EVENT?

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Individuals' participation in tourism recreation events can be constrained by a number of situational factors and can also be bolstered by key influences such as a desire for a particular social identity. This study extends the current body of research by investigating the effects of social identity, motivation, and perceived constraints on desire, and thus on the intent to participate in organized motorcycle tourism events. This research was carried out on a sample of participants at an internationally acclaimed motorbike event: the Transitalia Marathon. The results of the structural model indicate that social identity has a positive influence on motivation, the desire to participate, and the intent to participate. In addition, social identity has a negative, direct effect on perceived constraints, which in turn have a negative effect on motivation. This motivation has a positive, direct influence on the desire to participate. The practical and research implications of this study are presented herein.

**Key words: Motorcycle tourism; Social identity; Events; Event management; Destination management**

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### Introduction

While in the past, the motorcycle leisure sector was viewed by many audiences as a rebellious culture, it has since morphed into a mainstream hobby (Cater, 2017; Scol, 2016). A number of studies have reported on the growing popularity of motorcycle tourism (Cater, 2017; Dorocki, 2021; S. Kruger & Venter, 2020). Further, disposable income and the consequent spending profiles when touring

are higher than in many other travel sectors (Scol, 2016; Sykes & Kelly, 2016).

Despite its growing acceptance, popularity, and market potential, research on motorcycle tourism exhibits a number of gaps (Ramoia et al., 2021). While several authors have investigated the constraints on participation in other forms of recreational and leisurely activities, the motives of those who take part in organized motorbike tourism events are less known. Moreover, the key role

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of social identity in motorcyclist communities is also not well understood. There is a lack of studies on the role of social identity, motivation, and constraints in participation in motorcycle tourism activities.

From a global perspective, social identity transpires when one self-classifies with some kind of group based on economic, social, religious, or other type of common group identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). In a seminal study, Green and Jones (2005) explained that travel to participate in a leisure sport event provides individuals with a positive social identity. They also stressed that event-related travel can yield significant, extended contact with other participants including more experienced members of the particular subculture. In this context, sport events provide spaces for social identity formation and reinforcement. In the case of motorcycle sport events, these concepts have never been studied, neglecting the potential consequences on tourism activity.

Constraints have been described in the sport and leisure research as factors that individuals must overcome in order for participation to take place (Jackson & Rucks, 1995). They could negatively impact participation, satisfaction, emotional well-being, and quality of life (Kozak & Beaman, 2006; Shogan, 2002). To overcome constraints and participate in an activity, an individual must negotiate the constraint (Jackson et al., 1993).

Motivation to travel or to participate in some form of tourism event can be described as a set of needs and attitudes which predispose a person to act in a specific goal directed way (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2000). Consequently, it can be interpreted as the sense to respond to certain people, objects, or situations and it can be described as behavior towards travel goals. Consumer motivation identifies what people want to do or want to have, as well as the related intensity of desire. Different categories of travel motivations in the case of sport events have been proposed in a motorcycle tourism setting (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005).

Finally, several studies maintain that, in many circumstances, the intent to participate in a particular action or behavior is driven by the desire to do so. A number of studies (e.g., De Knop, 2004) noted that as interest and desire in sport grows within the

leisure sport industry, the intent of people to travel to participate in tourism motorcycle events will increase. Consumers in tourism sport event participation are not homogeneous. They possess myriad and complex desires (Shank, 2002) and, at times, make sports tourism decisions without really being cognizant of the underlying forces driving their final tourism event participation intent (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005).

Inspired by the work of Mueller et al. (2019), who examined the roles of social identity and constraints within the context of ultra-endurance gravel cycling, the impetus of the current study is to extend existing knowledge on the influences of social identity, motivation, and constraints on desire, and thus on the intent to participate in organized motorcycle tourism events. This research was carried out on a sample of participants at an internationally acclaimed adventure motorbike event—the Transitalia Marathon—and a structural model was built and tested to explore the relationships between social identity, perceived constraints, motivation, and participation.

To reiterate the above, the intended contributions of this study are important for several reasons. First, as already stated, motorcycle tourism is a growing pastime largely comprised of participants with high spending potential. Second, while social identity is known to play a key role in consumers' decision-making surrounding other hobbies, its role in recreation-oriented tourism decision processes has not been extensively researched. Third, while constraints, or barriers to participation, have been examined in a number of contexts, the existing research lacks strong theoretical anchoring (Jun & Kyle, 2011) and is not yet well understood within the domain of motorcycle tourism.

To accomplish the aforementioned objectives, the next section of this article employs existing research and theories as the foundation for offering a series of hypotheses. It will also be shown how these hypotheses interrelate to form the structural model for this study. Next, the research methods will be explained with regard to participants, procedures, and data analysis. The findings will then be presented, followed by a discussion of research and practical implications. Finally, the study's limitations and suggestions for future research will be offered.

## Literature Review

*The Influence of Social Identity*

The social identity concept is usually associated with the *group-based social identity* phenomenon (Hogg et al., 2017) and is often discussed in the literature within the context of social identity theory (SIT). SIT entails the notion that group membership manifests in diverse settings to varying degrees of inclusiveness and the identities it evokes (Abrams & Hogg, 2010; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As described by Abrams et al. (2021), the salience of these aspects is influenced by both cognitive (Turner et al., 1987) and motivational factors, such as self-enhancement (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In addition, an individual's quest for not only a sense of belonging, but also distinctiveness, often plays a role as well (Brewer, 2003). To summarize the above points, individuals' motives not only fall under the domain of psychology but also sociology, as SIT is grounded in a social context (Goodsell et al., 2013).

The literature applies SIT to numerous settings. For example, in the 1990s, a stream of studies explored the multifaceted roles of social identity in spectators' attachment to sports teams (Sutton et al., 1997; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). In the next decade, SIT was increasingly extended to the examination of one's own exercise habits and involvement in participatory sports (Miller et al., 2002; Strachan et al., 2009). More recently, Mueller et al. (2019) applied SIT at the intersection of outdoor recreation and tourism within the context of ultra-endurance gravel cycling. Similarly, Volgger and Demetz (2021) applied select aspects of social identity to describe the attachment of those within the tourism cycling community, termed by researchers a "cycling tourism tribe" (p. 177).

The underlying logic in these discussions is that a particular activity or pastime—motorcycle tourism in the case of this research—is associated with a certain level of shared or collective identity as being part of an in-group. In other words, there is a group-level self-definition and self-investment (Leach et al., 2008). Such collective identities can sometimes manifest in the fashion apparel and gear used by motorcyclists and in the terms/lingo used by the in-group (Algesheimer et al., 2005). The importance of social and shared experiences for

motorcyclists on the road is underscored by marketing messaging targeted at this population such as, "It is not the end of the road that counts; it is the road" (Scol, 2016, p. 4). Moreover, the key roles of social and shared experiences in motorcycle tourism are further underscored by research conducted by Frash and Blose (2019), which found the pastime to often be a form of serious leisure. "Serious leisure contrasts with casual leisure in that its participants are more committed to their pursuit, which can result in a more sustained benefit, achievement of a flow state, and enhance intention toward future travel" (Frash & Blose, 2019, p. 516).

In sum, using SIT as a theoretical foundation, the logic presented in this section of the article supports the notion that the social identity participants attach to motorcycle tourism influences their motivation, desire, and intent to participate (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Hence, we formulated the following hypotheses:

- H1:** Social identity has a positive, direct effect on motivation.
- H2:** Social identity has a positive, indirect impact on the desire to participate.
- H3:** Social identity has a positive, indirect impact on the intent to participate.

Extending this logic, the more social identity potential participants derive from an activity, the more they would likely work to minimize the perceived constraints associated with participation. According to this logic, the higher the value received from one's social identity, the more the perceived constraints will be managed so that they can be minimized as much as practically feasible. Hence, we developed the following hypothesis:

- H4:** Social identity has a negative, direct effect on perceived constraints.

*The Influence of Perceived Constraints*

In the tourism literature, travel constraint research derives from leisure constraints theory (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford et al., 1991). Whether within the context of tourism or more broadly within the context of any type of leisure activity, constraints are the factors that can

hinder participation (Karl et al., 2020). Furthermore, Jackson et al. (1993) posited that leisure constraints encompass the factors that not only impede participation but also hinder enjoyment of leisure activities. As such, this study predicts that if perceived constraints are high, they are more formidable, and consequently reduce motivation to participate. In line with this logic, we formed the following hypothesis:

**H5:** Perceived constraints have a negative, direct effect on motivation.

#### *The Influence of Motivation*

In the literature, motivation is sometimes conceptualized as a precursor to, or a condition needed for, desire. Papies, Barsalou, and Press (2015) defined desire as a “psychological state of motivation for a specific stimulus or experience that is anticipated to be rewarding” (p. 2). For example, if individuals become more driven to consume particular foods or to engage in casual sex, they become increasingly likely to choose appetitive stimuli, which in turn increase desire (Papies, Pronk et al., 2015; Seibt et al., 2007; Simpson & Gangestad, 1992). Described differently, motivational factors are sometimes formulated in anticipation of the fulfillment of desired needs (Cassidy & Pegg, 2008; Cheng-Fei, 2017; M. Kruger et al., 2016). In a context other than recreation or

tourism, Polas et al. (2021) recently demonstrated employees’ motivation as an indicator of the desire to continue working (Ramasamy & Yeung, 2020). Anchored with the above research, we developed the following hypothesis:

**H6:** Motivation has a positive, direct effect on the desire to participate.

#### *The Influence of Participation Desire*

In many circumstances, the intent to participate in a particular action or behavior is driven by the desire to do so. Theoretical anchoring for this assertion can be found in the belief–desire–intention (BDI) model (Bratman, 1987; Bratman et al., 1988), which encapsulates humans’ practical reasoning and serves as a theory-based rationale for the future-directed intent to perform an action. Stated differently, the BDI model is “designed to explain how people form a rational behavioral intention” (Koo et al., 2016, p. 1341).

The BDI model was utilized in a tourism context when Koo et al. (2016) employed the theory to investigate various effects of media exposure on destination travel intention (Barbini & Presutti, 2014; Moshin et al., 2017; Todd et al., 2015). Interestingly, similar to the current study, Chen and Lin (2019) identified social identity as an antecedent to the desire/intention causal path. More specifically, Chen and Lin (2019) found social identity

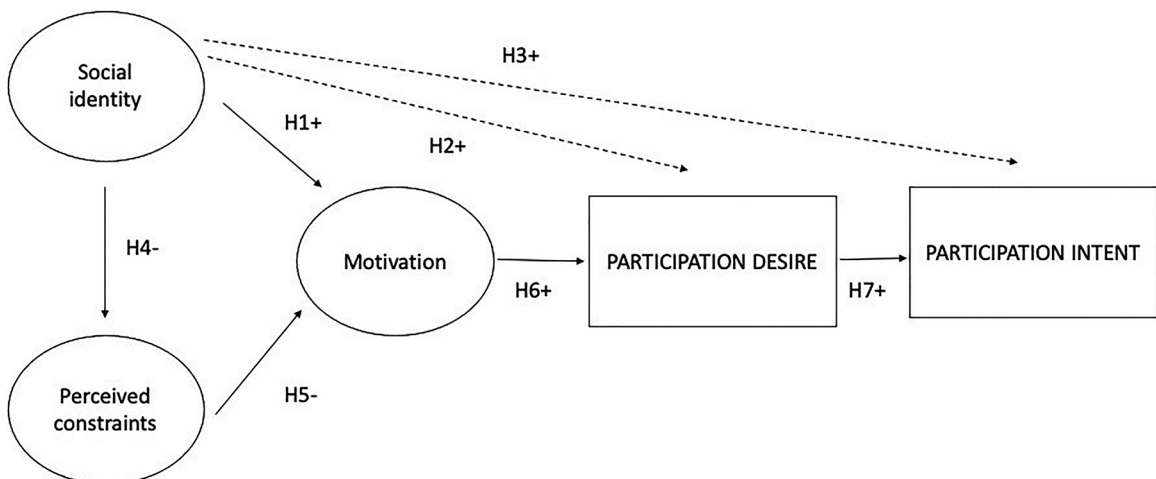


Figure 1. Hypothesized relationship structure.

to be an antecedent to the desire/intention causal path when studying instant messaging usage within the dynamics of group collaboration (Ayazlar & Yüksel, 2018; Liu et al., 2016).

With the BDI model serving as the rationale, we predicted that an individual's desire to participate in a motorcycle tourism event would lead to participation intent. Hence, we crafted the following hypothesis:

**H7:** The desire to participate has a positive, direct effect on the intent to participate.

Figure 1 depicts the relationship of the hypotheses.

### Methodology

This study was part of a broader research project aimed at identifying motorcycle tourists' preferences for tourism event management and "biker-friendly" accommodations. We collaborated with an Italian event organizer (the Minoa Group) to contact the members of a large community of motorcycle tourists (4,320 email contacts). The survey was published online on December 23, 2020 and remained available until January 18, 2021. The questionnaire was sent directly to Minoa Group's database with three reminders.

Only respondents who had taken part at least once in their lives in one of the main Italian adventure motorcycle tourism events (the Transitalia Marathon by the Minoa Group) could participate in this part of the research. The profiling question was the yes or no question: "Have you ever participated in the Transitalia Marathon?"

#### *The Transitalia Marathon*

The Transitalia Marathon is one of Italy's foremost motorcycle tourism events, attended by motorcyclists from around the world. It is organized by the Minoa Group and happened for the sixth time in 2020. The event falls within the calendar of the International Motorcycle Federation; specifically, it is part of the "adventuring" category. For this reason, during the event, the participants must cover 70% of the routes on dirt roads and 30% on asphalt ones.

According to Mirco Urbinati, the founder of Minoa Group:

The Transitalia Marathon is not a race, but rather a journey. It turns out to be an adventure to discover paths, villages, provinces, and regions that are sometimes forgotten by most and which are partially unknown to tourist guides. The objective of this event is to increase motorcycle tourism and related activities in Italy by attracting motorcyclists from all over the world, showing them our nation through the beauty of secondary and unusual itineraries. . . . The stages, selected and realized with routes of extraordinary beauty, allow any enthusiast to travel easily, enjoying unforgettable views and discovering an Italy made of traditions, flavors, and dialects through the affection and warm welcome shown by the people upon arrival at each stage.

Only three categories of motorcycles are allowed: A1 GLORIOUS, that is, motorcycles produced up to 1992 with roadbook navigation (a traditional navigation tool that uses diagrams) or GPS; cA2 Maxienduro Rally Moderne, excluding specialist endurance motorcycles, which always have roadbook or GPS navigation; and S1 TEAMS of at least three riders (with GPS navigation) of maxi-endure motorcycles and modern rallies, excluding specialist endurance motorcycles.

The regulation stipulates that only one person can get on each motorcycle, and no passengers are permitted. The 2020 edition was structured in four stages (Sansepolcro, Todi, Cascia, L'Aquila) for a total of about 1,200 km entirely authorized by local institutions, the authorities in charge, forestry corps, and park authorities. Over 100 municipalities sponsored and supported the event, and in 2020, the number of places available was 350; nevertheless, registration was closed after 25 min, and there were around 200 participants on the waiting list.

The participants at this international event were motorcyclists from Europe and across the globe; at the 2020 event, there were participants from 16 nations, the farthest from the US and South Africa.

#### *Data Collection*

As for the Transitalia participants interviewed, 236 out of 575 responded to the questionnaire. Of these respondents, 138 took part fully in the section related to this study, which was geared toward only motorcycle tourists who, at least once in their lives,

had participated in this internationally acclaimed adventure motorcycle event. Thus, the response rate in this research was 58.47%.

For the purposes of this part of the research, we adopted a quantitative method using a structured questionnaire to collect the required information. We received support from Federmoto [the Italian Motorcycle Federation (FMI)], recognized by the Olympic Committee as the only sports organization authorized to regulate and manage the sport of motorcycling in Italy. More specifically, the researchers stayed in touch with the Tourism Committee and worked with an organizer of the motorcycle tourism event (Minoa Group) to reach its database. The FMI supported the study with valuable suggestions and validation of the scale, and the motorcycle tourism event organizer provided the contact details of each motorcycle tourist in its database (4,320 contacts).

Finally, following the indications of the social psychology literature (Podsakoff et al., 2003), we took care to present sociodemographic questions at the end of the questionnaire.

### *Sample Characteristics*

Most participants in this survey expressed a strong passion for motorcycling and take motorbike tourism seriously. This can be deduced by the fact that the focal tourism event allows only motorbikes. They also travel a lot by motorbike; only 20% of respondents make fewer than 3 motorcycle trips, while 44% of motorbike tourists make 5 or more motorcycle trips on average in a year. Among all these trips, just 33% are not organized ones.

Motorcycle trips take on a variety of forms. Of the respondents, 52% spend more than 3 days traveling by motorbike with overnight stays, and 91% organize trips that last from 1 to more than 3 days. With respect to the destination, 79% of journeys are organized both abroad and in Italy. The respondents typically travel with friends (82%) or their partner (47%), and rarely alone (only 37%). Most motorbike tourists travel for leisure (97%), and among the trips, approximately half (45%) are done to participate in organized events.

Concerning age, the sample suggests that most people who engage in motorbike tourism are middle aged since 91% are between 41 and 70 years old.

In particular, 19% of the sample is between 41 and 50, 45% between 51 and 60, and 26% between 61 and 70. In terms of education, 41% of the motorbike tourists in the sample hold a bachelor's degree, while 33% have attained a graduate degree or higher.

Regarding income, the sample is widespread among the different categories, meaning that motorbike tourism is a passion and an activity for a wide audience. More specifically, just 4% of the sample has an income lower than €15,000, whereas the share of high-income people with an income greater than €75,000 is 21%. The rest is equally distributed among the other categories in between.

The interviewed sample represents the characteristics of motorbike tourists described in the literature (Cappelloni et al., 2019; Cater, 2017; Scol, 2016) and in national reports.

### *Measures*

*Social Identity.* To measure social identity, we adapted the in-group identification scale validated by Leach et al. (2008). The scale was generated by reviewing relevant literature and then validated through seven studies across multiple groups and cultures (Leach et al., 2008). We measured the two main factors of social identity, self-investment, and self-definition, using 14 items that have additional subdimensions. Respectively, self-investment includes solidarity, satisfaction, and centrality, whereas self-definition includes individual self-stereotyping and in-group homogeneity. We measured all items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *completely disagree*, 5 = *completely agree*). The Appendix contains specific statements for each factor, together with their Cronbach's alpha (CA) scores.

*Perceived Constraints.* We measured perceived constraints using the existing scales validated by Mueller et al. (2019) for the gravel cycle sport, and we adapted it to the context of organized motorcycle tourism events. We analyzed the scale along with the event organizer to ensure that it was shared by participants of the sport and represented a comprehensive list of perceived constraints that participants may face. We measured all 29 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *completely disagree*, 5 = *completely agree*).

*Motivation.* Due to the scarce literature on the motives to participate in organized motorcycle tourism events, we investigated why motorcycle tourists take part in adventure events using a modified version of Motivational Constructs of Cycling Participants (Kruger et al., 2016) and of gravel cycling participants (Mueller et al., 2019). In particular, we adapted the scale to the motorcycling context in light of pertinent literature (Cater, 2017; Scol, 2016; Weddell, 2014). In addition, we discussed the scale items with the event organizers to ensure that they resonated with participants and represented a comprehensive list of motives to participate in the event. We gauged motivation through 33 items on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = *not important at all* and 5 = *extremely important*.

*The Intent to Participate.* To establish the intent to participate, we asked the respondents to state if they planned to take part in the Transitalia Marathon in 2021 or in the future.

*The Desire to Participate.* To gauge the desire to participate, we asked the respondents whether, without any restrictions, they would like to take part in the Transitalia Marathon in 2021 or in the future. Adventure motorcycle tourism events are often scheduled early and occur annually. Signing up for an event such as the Transitalia Marathon requires significant training, commitment, and cost. Many riders map out their entire year ahead of time.

## Results

### Factor Analysis

To confirm the construct reliability, we computed the CA and composite reliability (CR) following the work of Hair et al. (2013), and we derived the average variance extracted (AVE) to verify the convergent validity. The models fulfill the construct reliability criteria, as both the CA and CR exceed 0.7 for all constructs (MacKenzie et al., 2011). The majority of AVE are above the threshold value of 0.5 indicated by Fornell and Larcker (1981), and factors with AVE values just below the threshold have good CA and CR results; hence there is

evidence of good convergence validity. These results are presented in detail in the Appendix.

We outlined the factors for motivation, social identity, and perceived constraints by considering only variables with factor loadings greater than or equal to 0.32 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The results of these analyses are detailed in the Appendix, together with each factor's summary statistics. Before proceeding with the structural equation model (SEM), we developed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for each measurement variable so that potential changes in the factors, encouraged by the CA, would be definitively confirmed. We assessed the CFA model fit and quality, as is typically done, through comparative fit indices such as the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI). We set the threshold values at 0.08 for the RMSEA and 0.9 for the CFI and TLI.

*Motivation.* Motorcycle tourism can be considered as a kind of planned event for several reasons that can be summarized with several factors. In particular, *recognition* refers to the desire to be acknowledged for motorcycling accomplishments such as reaching one's destination within the best time and winning the respect of peers, friends, and family. We grouped motivational aspects related to personal goal achievements, in terms of the desire to participate in order to challenge oneself in attaining milestones, under the factor *internal challenge*. *To be in nature* captures the desire to be in nature as a reason for participating in an adventure motorcycle tourism event, whereas *socialization* encompasses all the motives related to the desire to come into contact with new people. Further, while *event attractiveness and loyalty* capture motivation related to the attractiveness and loyalty of an event, *participation composition* includes motivational aspects related to the identification of the motorcycle tourist as a professional rider and part of a club. *Escape and relaxation* involves the desire to relax and to escape from routines as a reason for participation. Last, *skill mastery* refers to the diverse training and self-esteem-related benefits of participation.

The CFA results confirm the presence of these eight factors in measuring motivation.

The CA shows the fulfillment of the requirement for item retention. In other words, the threshold value of 0.70 suggested by Nunnally (1978) and Hair et al. (2010) is satisfied. The goodness of fit indices of the CFA, which indicate that the model has an overall good fit to the data, are: RMSEA = 0.078, SRMR = 0.067, CFI = 0.913, TLI = 0.895.

*Social Identity.* Motorcycle tourists who attend adventure motorcycle tourism events take part in an in-group activity. Many studies indicate a distinction between two general dimensions of in-group identification. The factors able to explain social identity can be split—as suggested by Leach et al. (2008) and Mueller et al. (2019)—into group-level *self-investment* and *self-definition*. The first includes factors such as *solidarity*, *satisfaction*, and *centrality*, while the latter contains *homogeneity* and *individual self-stereotyping*.

The group-level self-investment is manifested in motorcycle tourists' positive feelings about their in-group membership (accounted for by *satisfaction*) as well as in the sense that they share a bond with the in-group (*solidarity*) and the importance and salience of individuals' in-group membership (*centrality*).

The motorcycle tourist's self-definition refers to the individual's perception of himself/herself as similar to an in-group prototype (*homogeneity*) and manifests in the individual's perception of his/her in-group as sharing commonalities (*individual self-stereotyping*).

We confirmed this factor structure, outlined by Leach et al. (2008), using CFA, which produced an RMSEA of 0.108, a SRMS equal to 0.067 and a CFI and TLI equal to 0.94 and 0.91, respectively.

*Perceived Constraints.* There could be several reasons why a motorcyclist does not take part in a tourism event. Following Mueller et al. (2019), the latent variable *perceived constraints* can be represented by five factors related to *structural activity*, *intrapersonal*, *structural event*, *structural family*, and *interpersonal*. *Structural activity* constraints refer to the aspects of an activity that influence participation. *Intrapersonal* constraints are the facets of activities that influence the desire and intent to participate. *Structural event* constraints encompass

all aspects of an event, including the distance that may prevent one from taking part. *Interpersonal* constraints are related to the social relationships that influence one's ability to participate.

We confirmed this construct through the CFA, which agreed with the factor compositions and structures suggested by the literature (RMSEA of 0.074, SRMS of 0.067 and CFI and TLI equal to 0.921 and 0.903, respectively).

### Findings

After defining the factors needed to measure the three latent variables, we adopted a two-step approach for latent variable modeling. We conducted a prior CFA to validate each summated scale and we used these very same scales as first-order factors. Thereafter, as done by Mueller et al. (2019), we used motivation, social identity and perceived constraints as second-order latent factors so that the hypothesized relationship structure, introduced in Figure 1, could be tested.

A primary purpose of this analysis is to understand whether motivation, perceived constraints, and social identity—second-order latent variables that in turn are described by first-order factors—can influence the desire to participate in the Transitalia Marathon and consequently whether the respondents have the intent to take part in it.

We estimated a SEM through maximum likelihood estimation on a total of 138 observations. Even though the sample size is small compared to the number of parameters that need to be estimated, the threshold values imposed to verify model fit adequacy are satisfied if we take the model's complexity into account. Specifically, as done in the CFA, due to the biasedness of the chi-square test when sample size increases (Bentler & Bonett, 1980), the SEM's goodness of fit is judged using the RMSEA, the SRMR, the CFI, and the TLI, which take as values RMSEA = 0.068, 90% lower bound = 0.063, 90% upper bound = 0.072, SRMR = 0.09, CFI = 0.826, TLI = 0.816. This indicates an overall good fit of the model. A detailed representation of the results about the hypothesized relationship and the direct and indirect effects is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 summarizes the direct and indirect effects between the measures considered in this analysis.



Table 1  
SEM Results Direct and Indirect Effects

Independent Variable → Dependent Variable	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>z</i> Value	Std.lv	Std.all	Hypothesis
<b>Direct Effects</b>					
Social identity → Motivation	0.354 (0.111)	3.182***	0.378	0.378	H1 = Yes
Social identity → Perceived constraints	-0.176 (0.086)	-2.050**	-0.225	-0.225	H4 = Yes
Social identity → Participation desire	0.047 (0.047)	0.988	0.024	0.103	
Social identity → Participation intent	0.034 (0.057)	0.597	0.018	0.048	
Perceived constraints → Motivation	-0.404 (0.146)	-2.763***	-0.338	-0.338	H5 = Yes
Motivation → Participation desire	0.118 (0.054)	2.204**	0.057	0.245	H6 = Yes
Participation desire → Participation intent	0.751 (0.116)	6.456***	0.751	0.489	H7 = Yes
<b>Indirect Effects</b>					
Social identity → Motivation	0.071 (0.038)	1.887*	0.076	0.076	
Social identity → Participation desire	0.050 (0.025)	2.020**	0.026	0.111	H2 = Yes
Social identity → Participation intent	0.073 (0.034)	2.139**	0.038	0.105	H3 = Yes

As hypothesized, social identity has a direct, positive effect on motivation (H1). However, it also has an indirect effect, which means that the impact of social identity on motivation is mediated by the latent variable of perceived constraints. Moreover, we identified a negative relationship between social identity and perceived constraints, as suggested by H4.

At the same time, perceived constraints negatively influence motivation; thus, H5 is satisfied. Motivation is the only measurement that directly influences the desire to participate (H6), which in turn controls the intent to participate (H7). This means that motivation indirectly affects the intent to participate. H2 and H3 are supported in the sense

that social identity indirectly affects the desire and intent to participate in an organized motorcycle tourism event (Fig. 2).

## Discussion

Although motorcycle tourism is not a new phenomenon, strategic studies about this topic are rather limited. In particular, the analysis of active nonprofessional participants in relation to different issues (such as identity, motivation, or the intent to participate in an event) is an underinvestigated area. For instance, while social identity has already been examined as a critical variable for consumers' decision-making surrounding other hobbies, its role

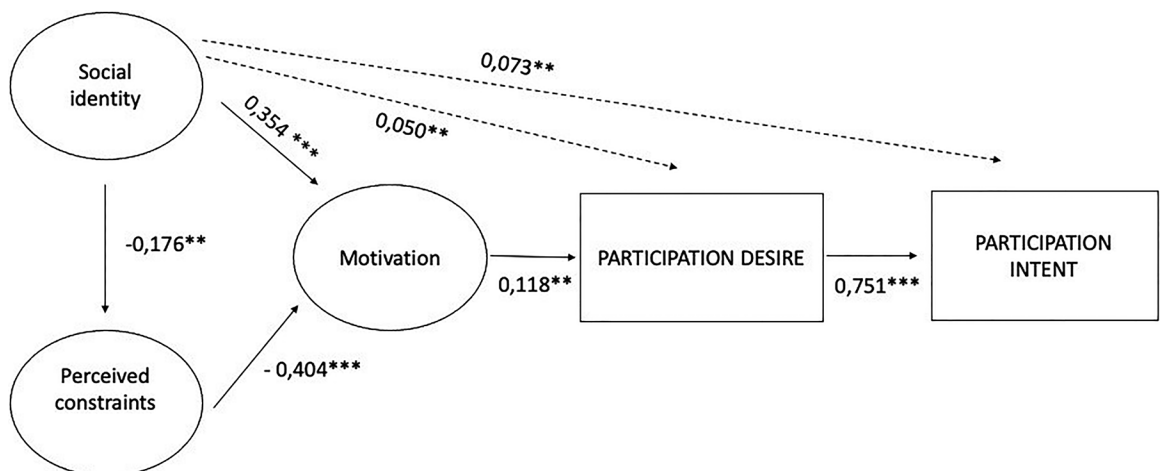


Figure 2. Verified relationship structure. Significance levels: \*\*\*0.01, \*\*0.05.

in the tourism industry has not been extensively researched. At the same time, while constraints have been explored in several empirical contexts without strong theoretical anchoring, they are not yet well understood in motorcycle tourism.

This study improves our knowledge of the influences of social identity, motivation, and perceived constraints on desire, and therefore on the intent to participate in organized motorcycle tourism events.

We empirically carried out this research on a sample of participants at an internationally acclaimed motorbike event, the Transitalia Marathon. Using a structural model, the results make an incremental contribution to the literature on motorcycle tourism. The research demonstrates the direct links between social identity, as well as motivation and perceived constraints and the relationships between them, which directly influence the desire to participate and ultimately impact the intent to participate again in the event. Consequently, social identity influences both the desire and intent to participate in an indirect way. In sum, all of our hypotheses are confirmed.

### *Theoretical Implications*

Since nonprofessional participants in organized motorcycle events are first and foremost motorcyclists, several studies have investigated their sense of social identity within the community (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Our research shows that this sense of belonging is also strongly felt in the niche of adventure motorcyclists. As suggested by SIT, in-group identification demonstrated a significant, positive relationship with perceptions of motivation. Social identity is an important driver that, through motivation, influences the desire to participate in an event and therefore the intent to participate in it. The more that individuals identify with motorbike tourists as a group of similar individuals, the stronger their motivation to participate in related events, and the stronger the effect of social identity on pertinent bonds; stated differently, the more that an individual values group-based social identity. As such, we also confirm that in this field of research, social identity is considered a key aspect for understanding group functioning toward more complex decisions; it can be seen as a motivated cognitive mechanism that influences participants'

self-perceptions based on their knowledge of their membership in a (social) group.

This study also indicates that motivation, empowered by both social identity and negatively impacted by perceived constraints, is the most important driver of the desire to participate in an event. Thus, as suggested in the literature, we confirm that if participants become more motivated regarding a particular event, they become increasingly likely to heighten their desire to participate in it (Papies, Pronk et al., 2015; Seibt et al., 2007). Along these lines, this research tells us that what motivates people to participate in events concerns many potential internal and external factors that range from a sense of recognition, personal challenge, socialization propensity to event attractiveness, and loyalty to the event involved. Factors also include the same composition of participants, the desire to relax and escape and, last but not least, skill mastery, which can also explain this level of motivation. Moreover, we confirmed the BDI model: the greater one's desire, the deeper one's intention to participate (Bratman, 1987; Bratman et al., 1988).

### *Practical Implications*

In terms of managerial implications, the findings related to social identity confirm the potential benefits for the event organizer to improve and reinforce moments of socialization during the event, and to stress the identification of those who participate (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011). However, these two outcomes can also be obtained by investing in efforts to achieve a strong sense of social identity before the event, thereby reinforcing moments of social interaction, and in particular a brand recognition activity aimed at creating a social community surrounding the motorcycle event. Thus, the final aim could be to create a real community of different participants with a shared social identity, which can be defined as "a group of people who share identity, common interests, and . . . beliefs" (Bakas et al., 2019, pp. 248–249). Thus, these events can give people a reason to celebrate, build social ties with others, and deliver symbolic messages about their sense of community (Bakas et al., 2019). After all, events of this kind strengthen the social structure and communal identity by enriching quality

of life; they also promote a positive image of the region where they are organized. Finally, they help to enhance the social spirit, sense of community, social interactions, social cohesion, and cooperation between different residents and event organizers (Bakas et al., 2019; Gibson et al., 2012; Glover & Hemingway, 2005).

Additionally, with regard to practical implications, in line with leisure constraint theory, this study finds that social identity has an inverse relationship with perceived constraints. The underpinning rationale is that the more social identity potential participants derive from an activity, the more they would likely work to minimize the perceived constraints associated with participation. This finding highlights the importance for event organizers to take steps to reinforce the sense of brand community associated with the event. Such building of brand community can have significant effects on a number of outcome variables such as participation and recommendation behavior (Algesheimer et al., 2005).

Last, from a practical angle, the supported framework illuminates both direct and indirect factors that influence the intent to participate in planned motorcycle tourist events. These findings underscore planning strategies for event organizers to encourage efforts to increase the desire to participate in a planned event. Several implications can also be derived to reach greater levels of social identity and motivation, while reducing perceived constraints. As such, both event organizers and destination marketing organizations are urged to manifest these dimensions in an effective way and to find a good fit between these dimensions, specifically the desire and intent to participate (Marques et al., 2021; Reynolds et al., 2022). For example, the key role of social identity can be reinforced through messaging on social media channels before, during, and after the event. Such social media efforts can take the form of organizer-to-participant messaging or participant-to-participant forums.

Thus, in terms of managerial implications, the BDI model could serve as a theory-based rationale for guiding future-directed intentions to undertake an action connected to a motorcycle event. Two main challenges could surface for an organizer to make the participants' intent to participate very efficient: on the one hand, to consider all potential

antecedents regarding the intent to participate in the event promotion activity, and on the other hand, to organize the event, including all the aforementioned factors (Getz, 2008). This study suggests considering the psychological aspect whereby the more that people value the desire to be recognized for their results, obtained throughout the individual stages of an event to win the respect of others, friends and family, the higher their intent to participate (Presutti et al., 2020). At the same time, the desire to come into contact with new people is also influenced by the desire to relax and to escape from one's daily routine; this can reinforce one's willingness to participate in an event. Of course, the attractiveness and loyalty of the same event and the identification of motorcycle tourists as professional riders and being part of a club can also be useful factors that drive demand.

### Conclusions

This is the first empirical study aimed at proposing an explicative framework capturing the influences of social identity, motivation, and perceived constraints on desire, and therefore on the intent to participate in organized motorcycle tourism events. Several managerial implications have been discussed in this research, which can be useful to event organizers, political stakeholders, and participants.

However, some limitations of this study must also be addressed to pinpoint opportunities for future research. First, this study was conducted on a sample of active, nonprofessional participants at a particular event in Italy. Second, we relied on self-reported data to measure EO and MO, creating the possibility of same-source bias. In fact, because of the difficulty of measuring these concepts, we employed self-reported measures due to their potential for concept-specific accuracy and the unavailability of other measures across the entire sample. Notably, this is a common problem with cross-sectional designs (Yli-Renko et al., 2001).

With regard to future research, it is pertinent to note that Jun and Kyle (2011) were critical of the literature on various forms of constraints due to what they viewed as thin theoretical foundations, making it difficult to hypothesize causality. The current study illuminates the need for a better understanding of the effects of perceived

constraints in tourism and recreation settings. That is, the scale employed in this study to operationalize the constraint construct is multifaceted; thus, further empirical examination might illuminate moderators and/or mediators that could influence some parts of the scale more/less than other parts.

Furthermore, in this research, we have treated motivation, perceived constraints, and social identity as reflective constructs (Hanafiah, 2020). Forthcoming studies could explore the extent to which the conceptualization of the construct (reflective vs. formative) influences the results of the model (i.e., conduct a sensitivity analysis).

Future research is also warranted that broadens these results with an in-depth analysis of social identity role, including a measure of identification with a specific brand community (Algesheimer et al., 2005). So doing, it could be interesting to

develop and estimate a conceptual model of how different aspects of customers' relationships with the brand community influence their intentions and behaviors, which in turn change the desire and intention to participate in an event.

Last, multidisciplinary research considering strategic, social, and organizational elements can be suggested by these outcomes. That is, because some of the constructs that have effects in this study's model have a heavy anchoring in psychology and sociology (such as social identity), future investigations that continue to cross-pollinate research streams from disparate disciplines (destination management, sociology, marketing) could advance this important area of inquiry. Such cross-pollination is particularly meaningful when outcome variables include the desire and intent to participate in diverse forms of recreational activities.

## Appendix

### **Motivation scale: CR = 0.77**

*Recognition (CA = 0.93, CR = 0.93, AVE = 0.68)*

1. To do a better time than my friends
2. To earn respect from peers
3. To earn respect from people in general
4. To make my family and friends proud of me
5. To bring me recognition
6. To get compliments from others

*Internal challenge (CA = 0.91, CR = 0.92, AVE = 0.65)*

7. The Transitalia Marathon is a huge challenge
8. To feel proud of myself and to feel a sense of achievement
9. I am pursuing a personal goal of participating in a certain number of cycling event
10. Participating at Transitalia Marathon is a personal challenge
11. To feel mentally in control of my body
12. To see what I can achieve

*To be in nature (CA = 0.90, CR = 0.91, AVE = 0.77)*

13. To visit natural surroundings
14. To enjoy the smells and sounds of nature
15. To stay in the natural surroundings

*Socialization (CA = 0.87, CR = 0.87, AVE = 0.78)*

16. To meet new people
17. It is a social event

*Event attractiveness and loyalty (CA = 0.77, CR = 0.77, AVE = 0.62)*

18. It is a "must do" event
19. I do it annually

*Participation composition (CA = 0.71, CR = 0.75, AVE = 0.61)*

20. Because I am a professional rider

21. Because I am participating as part of a club  
*Escape and relaxation (CA = 0.77, CR = 0.81, AVE = 0.69)*

22. To escape from my routine

23. To relax

*Skill mastery (CA = 0.84, CR = 0.84, AVE = 0.73)*

24. I am passionate about training and this event sets goals in my training

25. Because this event allows me to train, improve or prepare for other events

**Perceived constraint scale: CR = 0.75**

*Structural activity (CA = 0.83, CR = 0.83, AVE = 0.43)*

1. Lack of time to train

2. Lack of training partners

3. Lack of physical fitness

4. Lack of safe roads to train where I live

5. Lack of navigational abilities

6. Lack of proper equipment

7. Lack of information about the event

*Intrapersonal (CA = 0.85, CR = 0.86, AVE = 0.60)*

8. Fear of pain

9. I am not mentally strong enough

10. Lack of people to serve as a support crew

11. Lack of support from my friends

*Structural event (CA = 0.75, CR = 0.77, AVE = 0.54)*

12. I do not like the idea of participating to an organized motorcycle tourism event

13. It is not an event for people like me

14. I am not interested in that distance of travel

*Structural family (CA = 0.85, CR = 0.86, AVE = 0.75)*

15. Health of my family

16. Family responsibilities

*Interpersonal (CA = 0.84, CR = 0.84, AVE = 0.72)*

17. Lack of support from my family

18. Lack of support from my partner

**Social identity scale: CR = 0.78**

**Self-investment**

*Satisfaction (CA = 0.88, CR = 0.88, AVE = 0.65)*

1. I am glad to be a motorcycle tourist.

2. I think that motorcycle tourists have a lot to be proud of.

3. It is pleasant to be a motorcycle tourist.

4. Being a motorcycle tourist gives me a good feeling.

*Solidarity (CA = 0.89, CR = 0.89, AVE = 0.74)*

5. I feel a bond with motorcycle tourists.

6. I feel a sense of solidarity with motorcycle tourists.

7. I feel committed to motorcycle tourists.

*Centrality (CA = 0.92, CR = 0.92, AVE = 0.85)*

8. The fact that I am a motorcycle tourist is an important part of my identity.

9. I often think about the fact that I am a motorcycle tourist.

**Self-definition**

*Individual self-stereotyping (CA = 0.88, CR = 0.89, AVE = 0.79)*

10. I have a lot in common with the average motorcycle tourist.

11. I am similar to the average motorcycle tourist.

*In-group homogeneity* ( $CA = 0.85$ ,  $CR = 0.86$ ,  $AVE = 0.75$ )

12. Motorcycle tourists have a lot in common with each other.

13. Motorcycle tourists are very similar to each other.

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