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PARTICIPATION IN STREET RUNNING EVENTS ORGANIZED
BY THE BUCHAREST RUNNING CLUB ASSOCIATION

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Abstract

Bucharest Running Club is a sports association that organizes and implements concepts related to mass sports events on the Romanian market, in full compliance with the international sports norms and standards. The calendar of organized events includes three of the major street running competitions in Bucharest, namely 10K & Family Run, Bucharest Half Marathon and Bucharest Marathon. All Bucharest Running Club competitions are accredited and listed in the AIMS and IAAF international calendar. This paper aims to analyse how street running events are organized and conducted by the Bucharest Running Club Association. The appropriateness of the topic lies in the growing impact of the participation in running sports competitions on both adults and children. At the same time, we want to synthesise the evolution of the participation of different categories of population in this type of sports events. The method used is the comparative study based on the information collected since 2008, from the first edition of Bucharest Marathon up today. The goal of the association is to develop and organize, in the future, sports events at an international level. It also aims at enabling individuals, communities and companies to achieve their own goals through sport and to choose a balanced lifestyle in harmony with social requirements. From the analysis carried out, we can conclude that the number of events has increased and the promotion system has been improved, which has led to an increase in the number of participants.

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Keywords: Marathon, sports events, participants.



1. Introduction

Street running is an expanding social phenomenon, a form of addiction that millions of participants feel acutely and “consume” with tenacity, pleasure and immense benefits (Bota, 2007).

Running, as both a style and a way of working, is in full development, although it is essentially one of the most natural movements. Nowadays, we have the opportunity to see more and more frequently running competitions dedicated to both children and adults.

Long-distance run has a history that begins in ancient times with the famous race of the Greek soldier Philippides, from Marathon to Athens, to announce that the Persians had been defeated in the Battle of Marathon. In the light of this event, the athletic marathon race was included in the programme of the 1896 Olympic Games held in Athens. (Martin & Gynn, 2000)

Inspired by the success of the 1896 Olympic marathon, the first amateur street running race was organized in Boston, in 1897 (Clerici, 2014)

In Romania, over 90 amateur running competitions are currently organized (Alergare, 2018).

The topicality of the issue lies in the necessity to adopt a healthy lifestyle, where movement and the participation in running events have a primordial role. At the same time, the experience in developing and organizing sports events can help us to identify the importance and need to promote such activities. It is essential to encourage adults, but also children, to participate in running activities, so that they understand the provided opportunities to improve their physical and mental condition, as well as socialisation.

2. Problem Statement

Bucharest Running Club is a sports association that organizes and implements concepts related to mass sports events on the Romanian market, in full compliance with the international sports norms and standards (Bucharest Running Club, 2017).

The association was founded in 2008, the year when Constantina Diță became the first Olympic marathon champion, at the initiative of Valeria Răcilă, a multiple Olympic rowing champion.

BRC is the first NGO to start a sports volunteering platform in Romania (*Voluntar în sport*, 2012) and currently collaborates with over 1,000 active volunteers involved in sports projects and events. BRC organizes its own competitions, but also mass sports events for companies and NGOs. Since it was established, BRC has organized over 100 events focused on running, outdoor movement, mass sports, volunteering, education, communication, community development.

Since 2008, Bucharest has been included into the international marathon circuit, all BRC competitions being accredited and listed in the international calendar at the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

The goal of the BRC Association is to develop and organize, in the future, sports events at an international level. It also aims at enabling individuals, communities and companies to achieve their own goals through sport and to choose a balanced lifestyle in harmony with social requirements.

The calendar of organized events includes three of the major street running competitions in Bucharest, namely 10K & Family Run, Bucharest Half Marathon and Bucharest Marathon.

In 2018, the Marathon Race within the Bucharest Marathon event has the Bronze Label status, a certification awarded by the IAAF. We emphasise that the marathon organized in Bucharest is currently the only race in Romania to have this certificate.

3. Research Questions

How has the participation in the events organized by Bucharest Running Club evolved?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the paper is to analyse how street running events are organized and conducted by the BRC Association. The appropriateness of the topic lies in the growing impact of the participation in running sports competitions on the adult population, but also on children. At the same time, we want to synthesize the evolution of the participation of different categories of population in this type of sports events.

Our objective, through the analysis carried out, is to encourage the population to participate in running races and to promote street running events organized by the Bucharest Running Club Association among the population, in order to increase the number of participants by age and gender groups.

5. Research Methods

The method used is that of the comparative study based on the information collected in the BRC database since 2008, from the first edition of Bucharest Marathon to the present time.

The analysis of the results was performed using the mathematical and statistical method, through the ENDU registration platform. The data belong to the BRC Association.

The subjects are participants in the events organized by BRC, namely: 10K & Family Run, Bucharest Half Marathon and Bucharest Marathon. Table 01 shows the number of participants per year.

Table 01. Number of participants per year

Event/ Year	Bucharest Marathon	Bucharest Half Marathon	10K & Family Run
2008	800	-	-
2009	4000	-	-
2010	5000	-	-
2011	6000	-	-
2012	7000	3000	-
2013	8000	6000	-
2014	9000	8000	-
2015	11000	12000	-
2016	14000	14745	5000
2017	16000	15000	6000
2018			5000

6. Findings

The statistically analysed results are organized in several categories of descriptive data.

6.1. General descriptive data of participants in the running events organized by BRC

Age distribution for the entire sample of subjects participating in the three events organized annually by BRC (Figure 01) shows that 25% are young people between 18 and 29 years, 70% are adults between 30 and 49 years and only 5% are older people.

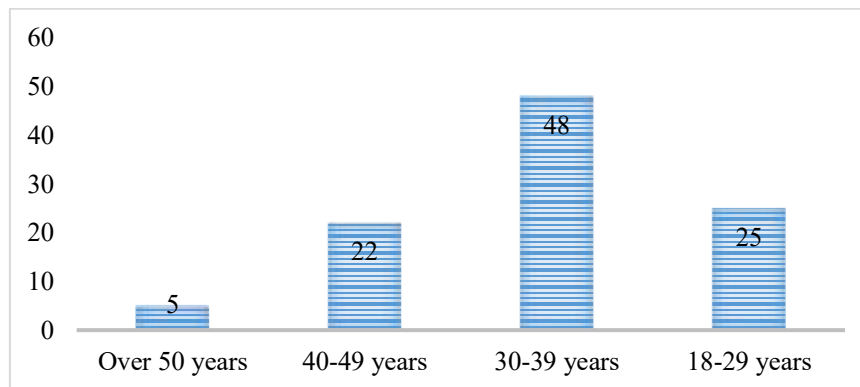


Figure 01. Age distribution of participants in the sports events organized by BRC

The male gender is predominant in each age group, with percentages highlighted in Figure 02.

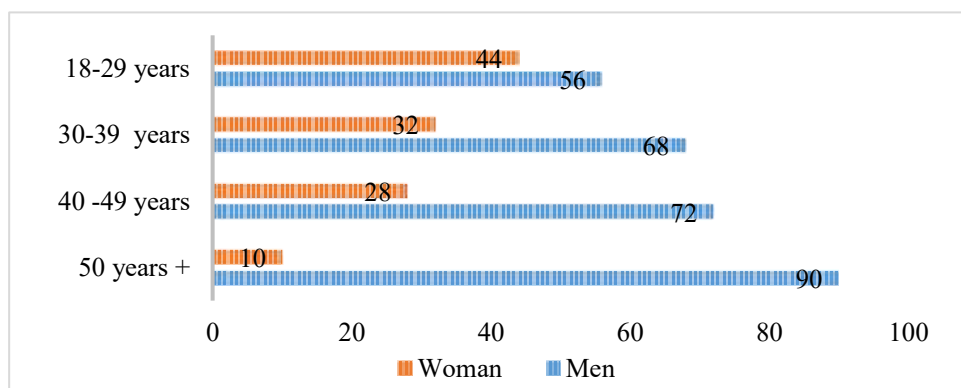


Figure 02. Age and gender distribution of participants in the sports events organized by BRC

It is found that 67% of all participants are men and only 33% are women, as shown in Figure 03.

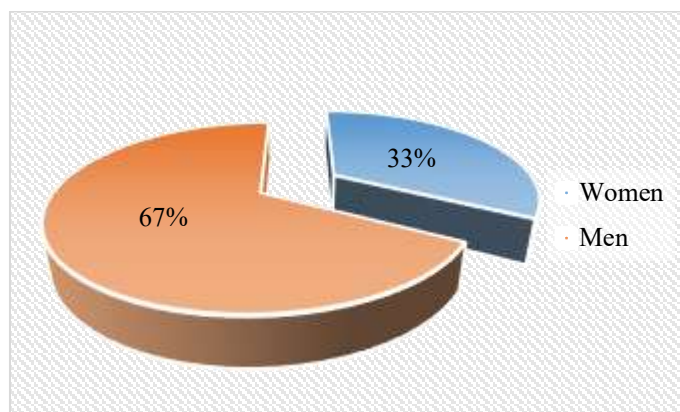


Figure 03. Gender distribution of participants in the sports events organized by BRC

By comparison with events of the same kind organized at European level, we find that there is a balance between the two genders in terms of participation, the data being shown in Table 02 (Capablo, 2017).

Table 02. Age distribution of participants in the sports events organized at European level

	Men	Women
Until 18 years	2.60%	4.10%
18-25 years	17.90%	22.30%
26-34 years	30.70%	32.40%
35-45 years	34.10%	30.60%
46-55 years	9 %	7.10%
56 years +	3.50%	3.50%

6.2. Descriptive data of participants in the Bucharest Marathon

The Bucharest Marathon event was organized for the first time in 2008 and 10 editions were held up to 2017. The 11th edition will take place on 14 October 2018.

Within the event, several races dedicated to both children and adults are organized on different distances. Currently, the following races are organized: Kids' Race, Popular Race, Teens' Race, 10K Race, Half Marathon, Marathon and Relay (4x10km).

The evolution of BRC, but also of Bucharest Marathon, has been organic; if, in 2008, there were several hundred participants in the only event of this kind in the country, there are now thousands of participants from all over the world. The impact of organizing such events on the population has made all major cities in Romania start organizing street running competitions on longer or shorter distances.

As can be seen in Figure 04, the number of participants in the Bucharest Marathon has constantly increased, from 800 participants in the first edition to 16,000 in the 10th edition held in 2017.

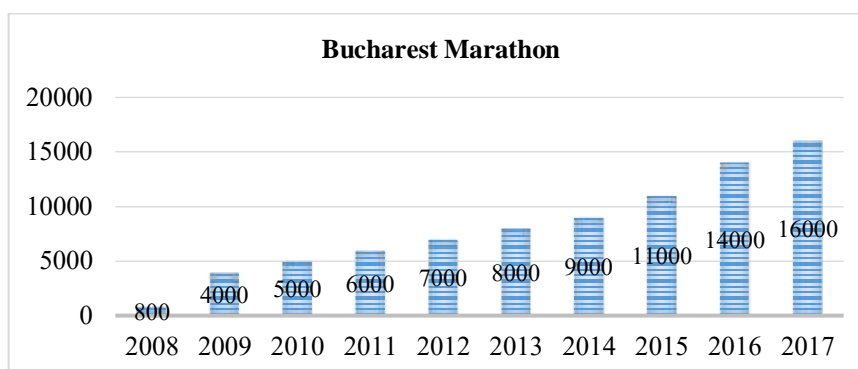


Figure 04. Evolution of the participation in the Bucharest Marathon event

If we only refer to the latest edition of Bucharest Marathon, we see, from the data presented in Table 03, that middle-distance races are preferred, namely the 21km Race and the 4x10km Relay.

Table 03. Number of participants in the 10th edition of Bucharest Marathon

Total runners			
Popular Race	21K	Relay	42K
1553	3310	2072	1328

The age and gender analysis performed for the latest edition of Bucharest Marathon highlights again the predominance of male participants. The data in Table 04 show the participation by age and gender group. We notice the prevalence of male participation in long-distance races and the improvement of women's participation in short-distance races.

Table 04. Age and gender distribution of participants in the 2017 Bucharest Marathon event

Age groups – Popular Race											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
134	498	263	85	18	6	57	234	174	60	15	7
Age groups – Half Marathon											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
47	518	310	95	23	4	109	890	931	274	83	28
Age groups – Relay											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
65	378	231	45	14	64	92	569	345	85	17	103
Age groups – Marathon											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
14	87	59	36	12	0	48	337	461	188	66	26
Age groups – 10K Individual Race											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
110	671	306	45	14	2	124	635	431	98	20	3

This is also confirmed by other running events, where the predominance of female participants is noticed in short-distance races (Table 05) (Capablo, 2017).

Table 05. Distribution of participants by running race at European level

	Men	Women
Up to 5 km	15%	33%
5-10 km	47%	53%
10-15 km	31%	13%
15-30 km	6%	1%
Over 30 km	1%	0%

6.3. Descriptive data of participants in the Bucharest Half Marathon

The Bucharest Half Marathon was organized for the first time in 2012, and its 7th edition took place on 13 May 2018.

Within the event, several races dedicated to both children and adults are organized over various distances. Currently, the following races are organized: Kids' Race, Popular Race, Teens' Race, 10K Race, Half Marathon and Relay (3x7km). As can be seen in Figure 05, the number of participants constantly increased, from 3,000 in the first edition of 2012 to 15,000 in the 6th edition held in 2017. The Bucharest Half Marathon is a sports event that has the highest number of registered participants and the most spectacular evolution regarding the number of participants that have finished the race.

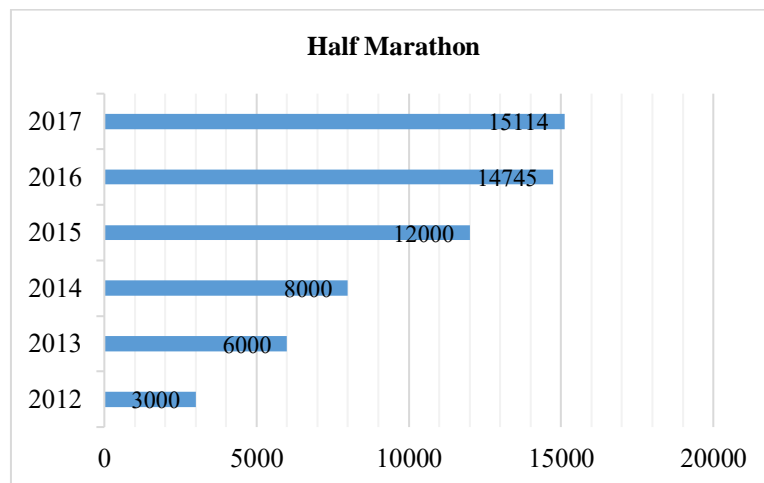


Figure 05. Evolution of the participation in the Bucharest Half Marathon event

The comparative analysis of the participation by gender group highlights again the women's preference for short-distance races. Most females took part in the 3K Popular Race (1229), where they exceeded the number of men, as in the 10K Race (1590) (Table 06).

Table 06. Gender distribution of participants in the 2017 Bucharest Half Marathon event

Total runners				Popular race		10K		Relay		21K	
Popular	10K	Relay	21K	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1854	3508	1659	3432	625	1229	1918	1590	904	755	2576	856

Age distribution of participants in the Half Marathon event, shown in Table 07, ranks the majority of runners in the 25-44 adult age groups. The participation of older age groups, from 55 to over 65 years, both men and women, in each of the races is both interesting and pleasing. It should be noted that, at these ages, motor activities become factors that can influence the evolution of ageing, since they act positively on both the physical and mental levels (Fontaine, 2008; Marcu & Matei, 2005).

Table 07. Age distribution of participants in the 2017 Bucharest Half Marathon event

Age groups – 3K Popular Race											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
139	578	310	108	23	55	60	254	196	57	14	20
Age groups – 10K Individual Race											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
119	884	418	92	20	52	157	937	600	155	29	33
Age groups – Relay											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
67	439	172	27	7	25	71	455	222	62	6	58
Age groups – Half Marathon											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
63	419	273	77	11	15	153	938	1040	306	86	52

6.3. Descriptive data of participants in the Bucharest 10K & Family Run

The Bucharest 10K & Family Run event combines performance – through the 10km race (Individual 10K and Relay), accredited and included in international calendars, with family fun – through the Family Run, where children, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, in-laws, cousins and grandchildren are invited to run together.

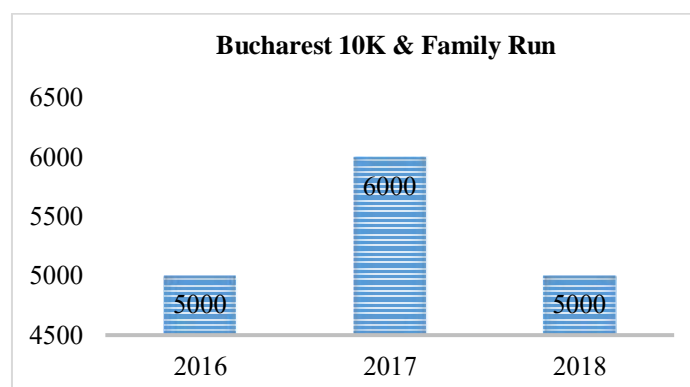


Figure 06. Evolution of the participation in the Bucharest 10K & Family Run event

As can be seen in Figure 06, the number of participants in the 10K & Family Run increased from the first to the second edition, but at the 2018 event, a smaller number of participants was recorded, one of the causes being the elimination of kids' races, but also the bad weather on the day of the event.

Regarding the gender and age distribution of participants in the event, Table 08 reveals that, in competitive races (Relay and 10K), there is a balance between the number of male and female participants, which can be explained by the short-distance races involved.

Table 08. Age distribution of participants in the 2017 races within the 10K & Family Run event

Age groups – 10K											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
28	232	144	48	5	7	33	318	345	102	28	11
Age groups – Relay											
Women						Men					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
9	86	48	12	0	1	16	54	40	13	2	1

7. Conclusion

The analysis carried out highlights an obvious increase in the number of participants, in relation to both the gender component and the age groups.

We believe that an important role in this evolution has also been played by the promotion system used for each event, involving online promotion both nationally and internationally. Another particular role has been given to promoting the events in schools, in order to attract as many teenagers as possible.

International promotion has made it possible to increase the number of participants from different countries, in parallel with an improvement in the tourism sector.

Due to these promotion actions and organizational arrangements, the events organized by BRC have started to gain international recognition. This is proven by the Bronze Label title awarded by the IAAF to the Marathon Race within the Bucharest Marathon event.

Regarding the participation by gender group, we notice the increasing involvement of women in middle-distance races. We also emphasise the positive way in which the participation of older people has evolved, the motor activity at this age being crucial to maintain optimal physical fitness.

Acknowledgments

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed equally to this article and should be considered as main authors.

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