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APP PREFERENCES AND EXPERIENCES OF RECREATIONAL RUNNERS, CYCLISTS AND WALKERS
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Introduction

A huge amount of applications (apps) for running, cycling and walking is available in the App Stores. As recreational athlete, it is hard to choose the best app that matches personal wishes and goals. In the development of a decision tool for sport-app choice, it is important to understand the opinion of individual, recreational athletes about apps. Therefore, the aim of this study is to gain insight in app preferences and experiences of recreational runners, cyclists and walkers.

Methods

First, online surveys were sent to participants of a recreational running, cycling and walking event 2-3 days after the events. The following issues were addressed: frequency and goal of app use, satisfaction and preference for app functions. Frequency analyses were performed. Cluster analyses were performed as well to determine profiles of app and function preferences. Second, the mostly used sport-apps were tested by recreational athletes by means of a participatory action research (Koshy, 2005). In focus groups, their experiences were evaluated. A thematic analysis was conducted.

Results

A large amount of data was collected about app preferences in recreational runners (n=6.019, 14%), cyclists (n=939, 23%) and walkers (n=2.876, 25%). First results show that use of sport-apps ranged from 44% in walkers to 63% in cyclists and 75% in runners (p<0.001). Mostly used apps were Runkeeper for running (23%) and walking (26%) and Strava (61%) for cycling. For all athletes the most important goal of app use was monitoring and gaining insight in performance, however cyclists (93%) indicated this more often than walkers and runners (85%; 64%, respectively, p<0.001). A large group of athletes was (very) satisfied about the app they used (93% cyclists, 92% runners, 82% walkers).

Discussion

We will elaborate on the distinctive athlete profiles based on the cluster analysis. Additionally, based on the focus groups, experiences with sport-apps such as Runkeeper and Nike+ Run Club will be discussed. The outcomes are relevant for recreational athletes to choose the best app matching their personal wishes and goals, sport professionals to gain insight in what their clients prefer, and developers of sport-apps to fit the wishes and needs of recreational athletes.

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References

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