

## Women's Sport Communities: Communication, Motivations, and Self-Contentment Beyond the Finish Line of RunWMe

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### Abstract

Sport is an easy and accessible activity to individuals of all backgrounds which has indirectly fostered a sense of friendship and belonging, especially amongst women. Through sports communities, women forge bonds that create a safe space, enabling them to move freely in public spaces. This paper is aiming to understand several intersections between women, sports communities, and marketing strategies, as well as delving into the motives, experiences, and communication strategies of the women in RunWMe community. Through in-depth interviews with five selected participants, the study draws upon the Social Capital Theory which highlights the role of social networks in promoting collaboration and collective action to address shared challenges. The result showed deeper insights into community empowerment and women's personal experiences in achieving self-contentment through community engagement, and how the right sports communities can strengthen bonds and support among women in the community.

### Keywords

RunWMe; Social Capital Theory; Social Media Communication; Sport and Community; Women Empowerment

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dilnoza (2023) has seen sport not only as physical activity and game, but sport has been viewed as a training that promotes a person's development of good manners which is able to improve the physical and mental health as well. Similarly, Nima (2023) has stated that sport is a universal lifestyle through helping a person to socialise, giving people a sense of personal and social identity and belonging to a group. Jakpat (2024) on Jakpat Report 2024 revealed that people are participating and engaging in sports through both online and offline or in-person attendance. As a result, the concept of sport communities is arising nowadays, which is often viewed as an



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environment to balance training and socialisation, with the objective to also promote encouragement and motivation in participating. Hence, sport participation has been considered as one of the easiest ways to develop people which also has impacts on society, economy, and health.

The Indonesian mostly embrace the side of collectivism, activities conducted together are often perceived as more lively and enjoyable. Meaning relationships are highly valued and it demonstrates a fondness for gathering and socialising (Gupta & Sukanto, 2020), communities have become one of the most rapidly growing and arising trends in Indonesia. Similarly to others, communities have allowed individuals from shared backgrounds, hobbies, interests to gather and engage in discussion, sharing, and meetups (Arindita et al., 2021). Moreover, strengthened by Maxwell et al. (2013), the rise of sport communities and its participation are viewed as an opportunity to achieve social inclusion for improving the social connection opportunities.

In addition to the rise of sport communities, scholars have also discussed women, community, and sport for decades, noting the decline in women in sport leadership positions and defining sport's meaning to women (Anggorowati et al., 2023; Drummond et al., 2021; Evans & Pfister, 2020; Lebel et al., 2021; Seippel, 2006). Boxill (1984) revealed that beauty and gender are intertwined and shaped by societal expectations, while Lirgg (1992) emphasised how participation in sports fosters self-confidence in women, underscoring the evolving role of gender norms in athletic empowerment. However, it is noticed that the opportunities for young female athletes have been explored recently and made available in masculine sports (Berliana et al., 2021).

As opportunities for women in sports continue to expand yet understudied, female-targeted communities have emerged as crucial platforms for support and empowerment. These communities provide women with a sense of belonging, shared motivation, and being engaged in online and/or offline communities, Liu (2024) highlights that "running" has become a global sport activity contributing to community engagement, healthy lifestyles, and economic growth. Women's running communities in Jakarta have grown in response to a growing interest in fitness and female empowerment. These communities provide a supportive atmosphere for women of various running abilities, from beginners to seasoned marathoners. Beyond running, these communities frequently act as platforms for social connection and personal improvement, resulting in a thriving and increasingly visible female presence in Jakarta's running community.

Through marathons and fun runs -particularly female- targeted communities like "RunWMe," hosted by Narasi and Runhood at Gelora Bung Karno (GBK), has emerged as a popular event that attracts thousands of participants while providing a fun and supportive environment for women. This initiative not only promotes inclusivity and security within sports communities but also seeks to inspire women to come together and embrace an active and healthy lifestyle. By

fostering a collaborative atmosphere, RunWMe indirectly motivates female runners to establish new habits and engage in physical activity together.

Since the percentage of sport participation has increased among Indonesians, Katadata (2023) conducted a survey and reported that several reasons for participating in sports or starting to exercise, especially women, are not limited to; health maintenance (82.5%), weight management (40.1%), leisure (36.2%), appearance (35.5%), stress reduction (33.1%), hobbies, and job requirements. Jakpat (2024) in Jakpat Report 2024 had also reported that the popular sports among women are marathon running, badminton, gym, fitness, and yoga. However, around 22% of those actively participating reported that "badminton" and "soccer" are two most popular sports among both genders, while "running" and "volleyball" are more attractive for women. Prior finding highlighted participation disparities between men and women. Also strengthened by Waldvogel's (2019), women's performance in ultra-marathons improves with age, narrowing the performance gap with men, reflecting increasing endurance and competitiveness in long-distance running.

Identifying the needs and motivations of women in sport communities is important to successfully create a needs-oriented environment and how the community will cater to the needs by addressing safety, comfort, and potentially reducing distractions in a female-only setting, like what RunWMe has started and offered to its community members. In detail, a standout feature of RunWMe is "Coffee Miles," pre-run sessions building endurance and social connections. The security and community of RunWMe encourage more women to participate, promoting an active lifestyle. The success of RunWMe underscores the importance of understanding and catering to female athletes' preferences and concerns, highlighting the significance of female-only sports events in fostering community, safety, and participation.

Moreover, another challenge in the women's sport community is lacking visibility in the media spotlight. Although social media is a new tool yet it has become a powerful tool for sportswomen and women's sport communities to control the narrative and connect directly with fans (The Conversation, 2023) and prior articles have highlighted the marketing communication for women and sport communities, emphasising its role in increasing awareness and engagement. Strengthened by Kumari (2020), social media have transformed the communication process extensively by being a platform for women to discuss, communicate, voice their opinion, organise campaigns and online activism. As a result, women are being empowered and motivated to communicate and interact among one another in a community-environment setting.

Friedman's theory of Feminism and Community, supported by Communitarianism, explores the role of community in shaping identity and moral development (Brugger, 2004). Hamudy (2020) highlighted the community's role in communal living. Aizenberg (2014) and

Sahudin et al. (2023) elaborate that Social Capital Theory explains how external factors enhance social bonding, crucial for community participation and empowerment, especially for women's participation in sports.

Based on the above rationale, this study aims to shed light on several findings, which are; (1) examining the unspoken motives for women joining sport communities, (2) discovering the empowering impact among women in the sport communities, (3) identifying the communication delivered by RunWMe, and (4) identifying the self-contentment effect towards an individual.

As this research deepens the understanding of the intersections between women, sports communities, and marketing communication strategies, it informs targeted approaches for female audiences in the sports industry. The study will identify how RunWMe serves as a medium to facilitate beginner female runners in building self-confidence through the encouragement provided by their surrounding community.

## 2. METHODS

This study employed narrative inquiry, specifically utilising semi-structured interviews, to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of young women within the RunWMe community. We selected five participants as Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommended sample size until we reached a point of saturation or redundancy in our findings. Through our analysis of these five participants, we discovered notable differences in the personification of the audience being studied, as well as in the running experiences of the runners themselves. Hence, referring to table 1 below, interviews have targeted a total of five (5) informants in their twenties to thirties residing in the Jabodetabek area who were involved in at least one community. They are also college students or young professionals who have directly and/or indirectly experienced challenges during solo exercise. Data collection occurred by in depth interview via google meet, with interviews being audio-recorded with participants' consent or documented through detailed note-taking. The research has been done in period time 14-22 July 2024. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and insights within the transcribed and coded interview data. By contextualising these findings within the social dynamics and personal backgrounds of the participants, this research aims to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the motives, experiences, and communication within RunWMe community.

**Table 1.** List of Interview Informants

No	Informant	Informant Type	Age	Occupation
1.	TT	Interview	30 years old	Worker, Media
2.	PA	Interview	25 years old	Freelancing
3.	SM	Interview	25 years old	Worker, Tech/SaaS
4.	JP	Interview	26 years old	Worker, Banking
5.	JL	Interview	25 years old	Worker, Media

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section of this paper, the results derived from social capital theory and the Friedman communitarianism concept have been explored through several questions posed to informants. These insights are based on their personal experiences while being part of the “RunWMe” community. The following themes and categories summarise the interview results regarding the reasons or motives behind member participation in the RunWMe community, highlighting the various factors that influence and drive their engagement within the group. As shown in detail on the table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Themes & Categories of Interviews Result

No	Themes	Category	Summary
1.	Motives	Running Goal	Aim of having release work stress and better life quality
		Community engagement	Running together enhance energy and positive support
		Motivation in RunWMe	Sense of belongingness and positive social experienced support as the strength of RunWMe
		Discomfort experiences	Risk of having discomfort during solo run and resolved for safety running
2.	RunWMe's way of communication	Channel	Social media, peer influence, and FOMO drive participation.

		User Engagement	Community involvement fosters interaction and engagement.
		Information, Campaign and Movement	RunWMe uses persuasive techniques to influence decisions.
		Message representation	Participants felt safe and supported by RunWMe.
3.	Self-contentment	Barriers to exercise motivation	Workload becomes the main barrier/challenge to exercise
		RunWMe's enjoyable aspects	Seeking the experience and the opportunity to network
		Personal goals	Having goals for the next other race - either ambitious or not
		Community belonging	A sense of belonging within the community is not that high
		Personal achievement satisfaction	Runners have feeling a sense of personal achievement and satisfaction by participating in the RunWMe

Source: Data Analysis Results

### 3.1 Motives

#### 3.1.1 Running Goal

There are plenty of sports options to select from as healthy living becomes more popular. One of our informants enjoys running the most. Running is more than just a physical activity for many of them. Regular running has been shown to enhance mood, reduce weight, promote better sleep and relaxation, and enhance physical well-being (Thornton & Scott, 1995). For some people, establishing personal goals is essential to measuring metrics related to pace, better posture, and/or other goals. The majority of informants stated during the interview that they run to balance work-related stress in addition to other goals including weight loss, a healthier lifestyle, and better sleep.

*"I organise my daily runs because I find that they are a great way to let go of all the stress from life or work. Running, in my opinion, is a great way to spend time alone, relieve stress, and get better sleep."* (JP, personal interview, 20 July 2024).

### 3.1.2 Community Engagement

A community is defined as a collection of individuals who socialise within a defined geographic area and frequently exhibit similar beliefs and practices (Xie et al., 2019). Running social worlds gave runners the chance to create and celebrate a valued social/collective identity with other runners, as well as to build and validate their identity and sense of social fulfilment. Additionally, running social worlds promoted a sense of community among runners. The advantages of joining a community have been highlighted by the fact that the majority of respondents now have running partners and frequently communicate on WhatsApp groups, where members actively share information about upcoming races, running events, and other running-related activities. Whether they are pals they know from running events or coworkers, they frequently go jogging together. Even while running by yourself is fun, running with a partner or group of people may raise the energy and enjoyment.

*"I don't join many communities, but I do have a running group on WhatsApp with my friends. Some of these friends are new ones that I met through mutual acquaintances or from previous running events that we attended. We normally support each other's goals, establish a running plan or share information about upcoming events as a group of five or so." (SM, personal interview, 20 July 2024).*

### 3.1.3 Motivation in RunWMe

RunWMe stands out as an ideal community for those new to running. Its exclusive focus on women and its shorter distance option of 6 kilometres foster a casual and enjoyable atmosphere, further enhanced by the large number of female participants.

Choosing the right running community is crucial for beginner runners who are still gaining confidence in their pace. RunWMe is known for its supportive environment that refrains from putting excessive pressure on newcomers. The sense of belongingness and positive social experience supported runners' participation and enhanced their self-esteem. Additionally, the all-female nature of the community promotes self-assurance and provides opportunities to expand one's social circle.

*"Joining RunWMe is my first running event. My pace is still slow, so at first I was shy, but knowing that the group is made up exclusively of women gives me the courage to join. I get a lot of encouragement from people in this community, which stimulates me to pick up the pace. I enjoy an empowered environment and find it beneficial to grow my network of friends." (PA, personal interview, 19 July 2024).*

#### 3.1.4 Discomfort experiences

Achieving comfort during exercise is a universal desire. For women, however, concerns about safety and discomfort can be particularly acute, especially when running outdoors alone. In interviews conducted, every informant expressed their preference for running in well-populated areas that instill a sense of security, particularly when running alone. They also frequently adjusted their attire to avoid unwanted attention or experiences that could compromise their comfort during exercise. While not all informants had personally experienced such incidents, their level of alertness remained heightened. When running alone, they preferred well-frequented locations such as Gelora Bung Karno (GBK) Senayan or familiar areas around their residential complexes. Running with companions and joining running communities emerged as effective strategies for addressing these concerns and fostering a sense of comfort and safety during exercise.

*"Although my friend experiences discomfort, I don't, and hearing about it thrills me. Whenever I go for a solo run, I make sure to wear long running pants and a jacket to prevent unwanted attention. I also go the well-lit, busy, and safe path in a large street."* (JP, personal interview, 20 July 2024).

*"One time while out on a solo run, I felt uncomfortable. A guy gives me a strange look that concerns me, so I keep moving farther and faster away from him until I feel comfortable enough to slow down."* (PA, personal interview, 19 July 2024).

### 3.2 RunWMe's way of Communication

#### 3.2.1 Communication channel

Active social media users are frequently exposed to various calls to register for activities organised by different entities. However, users have become more selective in deciding to participate in such activities, and even more so in becoming part of a community. In interviews conducted, informants provided insights into the sources of calls to register for RunWMe and the impulsive considerations of each user.

Several key factors influence the participants' decision to join RunWMe. Periodic and massive advertisements serve as primary motivators, drawing users' interest and consideration for registration. Additionally, the desire to join RunWMe is fueled by users' inner circles who share a common interest in sports, particularly running. The fear of missing out (FOMO) is another strong motivator, as users do not want to miss the opportunity to be part of this activity. Moreover, RunWMe's active social media content, which consistently provides information about upcoming events, helps build enthusiasm and commitment among potential participants.



The content is perceived as informative and aligns with the users' preferences, prompting them to follow the account. Finally, the involvement and testimonials from other users, especially strangers who have actively participated in RunWMe, serve as additional motivation for users to register.

*"I have actively participated in various running events and communities in Jakarta. As a result, I have been exposed to RunWMe ads frequently appearing in my Instagram Stories and feeds. This exposure piqued my interest in learning more about RunWMe. Eventually, RunWMe became a topic of discussion in one of my WhatsApp groups, which includes runners from the events I have participated in. This led to an invitation and solidified my decision to join RunWMe."* (JP, personal interview, 20 July 2024).

### 3.2.2 User Engagement

The involvement of a member in a community typically shapes behaviour that makes them more comfortable interacting with other community members. In this research, informants agreed that they had no issues interacting with strangers in the comments section of RunWMe content. This behaviour included members asking and answering questions posed by others. They also sought information about running preparation, such as invitations to join group training sessions provided in RunWMe's content.

During the post-event phase, RunWMe highlighted previous activities by capturing the excitement and joy of participants. Female participants, in particular, enjoyed this content. Although a hiatus of over 10 months following the last event, RunWMe announced the reopening of registration, which was met with great enthusiasm by the community.

*"RunWMe's shared content encompasses all the necessary information about the activities and is presented in an engaging manner. The use of language and approach that strongly appeals to women encourages the audience to join the conversation without hesitation."* (JL, personal interview, 22 July 2024).

### 3.2.3 Information, campaign, and movement

RunWMe emphasises communication that invites women to run together, promoting a safe and comfortable running experience through their campaign *"Pergi Cantik, Pulang Cantik"*. This approach has garnered a positive and unique sentiment from their audience.

Persuasive techniques play a crucial role in the campaign to influence audience decisions. Emotional appeal, rational arguments, and non-verbal behaviour are employed to make the messages more convincing. Heuristics and biases, such as representative and availability heuristics, help the campaign leverage the natural decision-making tendencies of the audience, making the messages more memorable and relatable. The emotional impact,

whether positive or negative, significantly influences the audience's perception and response to the product or service offered, creating a sense of urgency or enhancing appeal. The combination of these elements makes the campaign more effective in shaping audience decisions. (Young, 2011)

*"One of the intriguing aspects of RunWMe is the campaign statement "Pergi Cantik, Pulang Cantik," which is consistently reiterated in their content and pre-run preparation activities. This is evident at their running events, where thousands of women gather, beautifully prepared and enthusiastic. After the run, booth activations are provided for participants to refresh and maintain their beauty, ensuring they do not look dishevelled as one might typically expect after exercising."* (TT, personal interview, 16 July 2024).

#### 3.2.4 Message representation

In the interviews conducted, we asked informants whether RunWMe adequately provides a sense of safety and comfort. They unanimously agreed that it does. The interactions facilitated through social media, the initial community meetings, the race pack pickup day, and the main running event all contributed to a strong feeling of being well-supported and facilitated. Additionally, during the main running event, the presence of running buddies on-site made a significant contribution to motivating participants to reach the finish line.

*"Being a woman is something I truly cherish. On RunWMe's social media interactions, we communicate as if we are old friends, even though we don't know each other personally. On the running route, we cheer each other on until we reach the finish line. What stands out most is the refreshment, bananas, and cold water available after crossing the finish line. It may seem simple, but such details are often overlooked in other running events."* (JL, personal interview, 22 July 2024).

### 3.3 Self-Contentment

#### 3.3.1 Barriers to exercise

In reference to the interview findings, the top two (2) major barriers to a regular exercise are a high workload and time constraints. These barriers are particularly recognised in consideration to the demanding nature of their professional and personal lives, leaving little room for physical activity (Teixeira et al., 2012). Despite these challenges, it is noteworthy that the majority of these individuals are newcomers to exercise and running specifically. The findings have indirectly revealed that these people showed a high level of motivation to engage in physical activities, which is driven by various factors such as a desire for improved health, stress relief, and social interaction. Strengthened by Othman et al. (2022), the main motivation or desire for people to incorporate exercise into their routines are its underlying

recognition, including health- and mental-benefit. Therefore, motivation mainly serves as a crucial element in their pursuit of a balanced lifestyle, demonstrating that even with significant time constraints, the aspiration to maintain a healthy and active life remains a powerful influence. As specifically said by the interviewee below.

*"Initially I started exercising for weight loss, but then I realised it didn't work on me. So now, I regularly exercise, especially running, for stress relief and to inhale the fresh air after working in front of a laptop for the whole day, or simply because I got burnt out with work."* (PA, personal interview, 19 July 2024).

*"For me running is the easiest and lightest exercise for me. I usually do exercise once or twice a week to release all the work stress, and to simply network with friends or new people. Sometimes, when I really get burnt out from work, I will run by myself to ease my mind."* (SM, personal interview, 20 July 2024).

### 3.3.2 RunWMe's enjoyable aspects

External factors play an important role in supporting the internal motivation of individuals towards exercising (Endozo & Oluyinka, 2019). Referring to the interview findings, it has concluded that there are several aspects of RunWMe which indirectly influence participants' motivation and enjoyment to participate in the event. One significant factor, which was mentioned by almost all informants, is the race pack –containing jerseys, personal care products, skincare products, vitamins and supplements, and snacks– which has created a sense of excitement and value for participants. Moreover, RunWMe has been fostering a sense of community and belonging through providing an excellent opportunity for participants to network. Additionally, a supporting atmosphere, where participants feel encouraged to and cheered on, further boosts their enthusiasm and drive, and ultimately contributes to increased self-esteem. Interestingly, the overall event experience, including well-organised and engaging activities, of RunWMe has contributed to enhance participants' enjoyment. In general, these aspects have created a positive and motivating environment, making RunWMe more than just a physical activity, and yet a memorable and impactful experience that encourages continued participation.

*"What I truly love about RunWMe was its race pack. Compared to what we have paid, we got a lot of things related to what we, as women, need. I mean, the race pack items include skincare, body mist, sanitary napkins, etc. I've been participating in some other races, but the race pack was not as attractive as what RunWMe gave."* (TT, personal interview, 16 July 2024).

### 3.3.3 Personal Goal

It is known that the majority of the informants have set their targeted goals in their mind for their next race, whether it is RunWMe or any other races, such as finishing within a certain time, pace average, or even participating in a half marathon type of race. Interestingly, setting a specific goal and being able to achieve it have been seen as a triumph for themselves, regardless of how competitive the goal might be. Interpreting a goal as an achievement for themselves has allowed them to appreciate their progress and celebrate their accomplishments without the pressure of comparison. For them, the journey towards reaching their target is as fulfilling as the goal itself, providing a sense of personal satisfaction and motivation to continue participating in future events. This balanced approach to goal-setting highlights a healthy mindset where personal growth and self-improvement are prioritised over competitive success.

*"Hmm yes, I might have set the target for the next race, although it won't be too ambitious since an ambitious goal will require higher commitment which I'm not really sure about my own capability now." (JL, personal interview, 22 July 2024).*

*"Yes, certainly I have a goal set for the next race. Not really sure whether it is too ambitious or not, but I would like to at least be able to participate in and finish in a half marathon type of race, because I think it would be a huge achievement for me." (SM, personal interview, 20 July 2024).*

### 3.3.4 Community Belonging

Baumeister & Leary (2017) highlighted that the need for belonging is a key psychological process affecting numerous aspects of emotions and activities throughout one's life, and having a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). From the interview findings, among the informants, some of them feel a strong sense of community during the event, enjoying the togetherness, and supporting each other. They experience a sense of belonging, which enhances their overall enjoyment and motivation to participate. This shared commitment to the event fosters connections and friendships, making the experience more meaningful. However, not all informants share this sense. Some informants do not feel as integrated into the community, which can affect their engagement and motivation. This gap suggests that while the event has the potential to create a supportive community, individual experiences of belonging can vary.

*"YES! I mean, of course the sense of community belonging is there and I am at my best self once I am joining a community, networking or making new friends with others. The support given from RunWMe for us is highly visible, especially for moms who want to exercise and have personal achievements with some limitations." (SM, personal interview, 20 July 2024).*

### 3.3.5 Personal Achievement Satisfaction

Gathering the findings from the interview, all of the informants expressed an important sense of personal achievement satisfaction from participating in the RunWMe' event. Regardless of their individual goals or the outcomes of their races, they all found self-contentment in the act of participating. For many, participating in the RunWMe is a significant milestone, symbolising their commitment to health and personal growth - which provides a deep sense of fulfilment and pride. RunWMe acts as a platform to push individuals' boundaries, set, and reach personal goals, and experience the joy of accomplishment. To conclude with, self-contentment and satisfaction are intrinsic, reflecting an utter personal reward that goes beyond medals or finishing times. It is this sense of personal achievement that drives them to continue participating and striving for self-improvement.

*"As a new beginner in running, I feel satisfied by participating in a 6K race and being able to finish it. In other words, I've challenged myself to do it, and I am able to prove to myself that I can do it" (TT, personal interview, 16 July 2024).*

### 3.4 Communication, Motivations, and Self-Contentment in RunWMe Community

As a result of the analysis above, combining social capital theory and Friedman's approach allows us to acquire a better understanding of why women join running communities. These communities have an abundance of social capital, encouraging bonding, bridging, and linking relationships. However, it is essential to acknowledge that individuals, including runners, possess unique personal objectives. The intriguing aspect, as Friedman's theory in highlighting the influence of social groups on individual behaviour; lies in aligning these personal goals with the specific running events they choose to participate in.

Individuals compare themselves to others to evaluate their own opinions and behaviours. In the context of running communities, women might compare themselves to other members in terms of running pace, distance, or appearance. This can influence their motivation, self-esteem, and overall satisfaction with their participation (Mawaddah, 2017). Selecting a suitable community can cultivate stronger bonds, fostering an environment of encouragement and support that can facilitate the attainment of personal objectives. Additionally, combining the insights from social capital theory and Friedman's approach, it can be concluded that the role of individual motivations, including encompassing the need for social support, personal goal achievement, and enjoyment of shared experiences, and community dynamics is crucial in fostering a supportive environment where women can thrive.

RunWMe, with its strongest point in providing pleasant and supportive new runners for women, ought to consider preserving the needs and motivations of their members in order to

establish deeper social connections for them. Together, these ideas shed light on the complicated ways in which social ties and group dynamics influence community growth and individual flourishing. In spite of all of it, RunWMe has successfully leveraged social media, especially Instagram, to engage with its community, which is admitted by runners/individuals that discover and engage with it through its Instagram presence.

The journey of individuals learning about RunWMe often involves multiple communication channels, such as Instagram, Word-of-Mouth recommendations, and other forums. In general, the use of social media has changed the dynamics of information sharing and led to interactive communication processes where engagement is viewed as a way to grow an online presence and fosters a supportive community (Maulina et al., 2023), especially in the context of RunWMe. Followers of the RunWMe Instagram page frequently cite the appealing and informative content as a significant factor in their decision to join. The engaging posts, which include inspirational stories, training tips, event highlights, and community testimonials, create a positive impression and foster a sense of anticipation and excitement among potential participants.

Friedman's approach highlights the importance of community in shaping identity and moral development, mirroring how RunWMe cultivates a sense of belonging and empowerment among its female participants. The *"Pergi Cantik, Pulang Cantik"* campaign not only ensures a safe and enjoyable running experience but also enhances positive self-identity and moral support, aligning with Friedman's view on the impact of community. Similarly, Social Capital Theory explains how social networks and community interactions strengthen social bonds and promote collective action (Utz & Muscanell, 2015). RunWMe's active social media engagement, supportive event atmosphere, and persuasive communication strategies illustrate the principles of social capital. By utilising emotional appeal, heuristics, and non-verbal communication particularly Instagram, RunWMe has effectively engage its audience and strengthened the community. The campaign's alignment with Friedman's theory and Social Capital Theory underscores the importance of social networks in promoting individual and collective well-being, making RunWMe a model for other women-focused sports communities.

Reflecting on the satisfaction gained by the runners from running races, specifically RunWMe, it can be concluded that the communal and supportive environment plays a pivotal role in fostering self-contentment of runners participating in the event. Although the impact is in fact beyond self-contentment itself since participating in a sports community has provided an impact to the overall well-being of the runner, such as physical health, mental health, and social life –which have been felt by the runners. More comprehensively, participating in the community has provided the

members/runners with a sense of direction that reinforces individuals' sense of purpose and satisfaction.

As the communal engagement is essential for fostering self-contentment, aligning personal aspirations with communal values, creating a synergistic environment where individual achievements are celebrated as collective successes, there exists also individuals/runners who prefer to exercise alone. Generally, individuals with personal goals to achieve or those who focus on health benefits would prefer to exercise alone since they are focusing on themselves only rather than gaining the other benefits and opportunities of exercising with others (Steltenpohl et al., 2019). In a context of the women's sport community, RunWMe has successfully promoted personal growth which embeds the individual accomplishments within a larger narrative of communal well-being, enhancing the overall sense of self-contentment among the runners.

Looking at the fact that RunWMe is the only, by this far, running event which provides an environment for women, specifically, by emphasising the importance of social networks, trust, and mutual reciprocity in enhancing individual and collective outcomes. Reflecting on the Social Capital theory, the generated regular interactions and shared experiences significantly contributes to individuals' self-contentment. Uniquely, the bonding social capital of RunWMe is characterised by strong and close-knit relationships within the community, providing emotional support and encouragement which are crucial for personal well-being.

Moreover, it has been seen and admitted that the environment created by RunWMe is able to connect individuals to broader networks outside their immediate circle, opening up new opportunities for personal and professional growth, further enhancing the sense of self-worth and achievement. The bonding social capital is observed from the personal goals often set by each individual, which drives their motivation and connects them with others who share similar aspirations, hence, it is not only enhancing the personal growth but also facilitates connections with broader running and professional communities. RunWMe has been allowing the runners, especially for a newcomer, to feel a sense of accomplishment by participating in the event, which indirectly boosts their self-esteem and encourages individuals to pursue further opportunities for growth and achievement.

In all, considering the rise of sports and community nowadays, it is obvious that the integration of physical activity within a communal setting is gaining popularity (Peterman et al., 2021). However, despite this increasing trend, there remains a noticeable gap in research, particularly concerning women's sports communities. Therefore, future studies should delve deeper into understanding the specific mechanisms through which social capital and communal engagement influence individual well-being and self-contentment in sports communities. It would be beneficial

to explore the long-term impacts of participation in running communities on various aspects of personal and professional growth. Additionally, studies could also compare the effectiveness of different communication strategies and community-building activities in enhancing member engagement and fostering a supportive environment. Finally, given the unique focus on women in the RunWMe, future research could explore how gender-specific programming and community initiatives impact participation and satisfaction, providing insights for developing more inclusive and supportive sports communities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The experiences shared by interviewees highlight the profound impact of running communities like RunWMe beyond just fun runs. Many women join not only for the physical benefits but also for the sense of belonging, motivation, and emotional support these communities provide. The sense of belonging built through shared training sessions, race day encouragement, and post-run reflections fosters a unique connection that keeps members engaged.

For many, RunWMe serves as a safe space where they can challenge themselves, celebrate milestones, and find inspiration from fellow runners. Some interviewees emphasized that the friendships formed within the community often extend beyond running, influencing their confidence and personal growth. To strengthen this dynamic, RunWMe could introduce more informal meet-ups, mentorship programs, and interactive platforms that encourage continuous engagement outside of official events. By prioritizing these community-driven experiences, RunWMe can further solidify its role as a transformative space for women in sports.



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