to participation in relation to gender with the following question: RQ2: Do constraint correlates and negotiation correlates predict levels of participation differently for men and women?

**METHOD**

A survey research design was used to gather data from a sample of individuals who participated in a marathon and half marathon event that took place in the Southeastern United States in early 2012. An online survey was developed and distributed to participants via email using registration data provided by the race organizers. The survey was sent to 23,793 registered runners with valid e-mail addresses who completed the event. A total of 3,453 marathon and half marathon participants completed the 20-minute survey for a response rate of 14.6%. The sample was found to be representative of the race population in terms of race type, gender, ethnicity, and age. These analyses allow the findings within this sample to be generalized to the entire race population.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Within the overall sample of 3,453 respondents, 50.2% were female. The majority of respondents (63%) were ages 25–44, 61% were married or living with a partner, 82% had a degree from a four-year college or higher, and 69% had incomes over $75,000. In terms of race and ethnicity, 58% were Caucasian, 32% were Hispanic/Latino, 4% were African American, and 3% were Asian. Respondents were then separated into those who had participated in a full marathon (n = 1305) and those who had not (n = 1129). A complete demographic and behavioral table of participants is presented in Table 1.

Results showed that women who had marathon experience were older, more likely to be married, have a higher income, and have greater levels of both negotiation-efficacy and perceived family support in comparison to women with only half marathon experience. Similar to women, men with marathon experience were more likely to be older, have a higher income, participate in more running events each year, and have greater levels of negotiation-efficacy when compared to men with only half marathon experience. These mirrored findings suggest that income, behavioral involvement (i.e., greater amounts of time commitment), and a greater perception in one’s ability to overcome barriers may be salient correlates for both men and women to move from the half marathon level to the full marathon level.

Non-significance in the number of children for women suggests that the barrier of having children may not be salient for women at this stage of involvement, particularly when viewed in conjunction with the high overall mean of perceived family support within this group.

**IMPLICATIONS**

To an extent, distance running has become a source of identity, as the activity is no longer gendered in the same way. However, the remaining significant differences across participation levels are still under researched. While results of this study found that gender is associated with different levels of participation, it does not actually inform the choice of which distance to run. Therefore, constraints may not be the answer to understanding why women run the full marathon at significantly lower rates than other distances. Women may simply define their serious leisure with distance running differently, such that the greater time commitment associated with longer distances does not equate to a more serious form of the activity for them.

**CONCLUSION**

Findings supported the general leisure constraint literature in suggesting that there may be different constraints at different levels of participation for men and women. Furthermore, women who are able to overcome barriers to participation have greater beliefs in their own ability to overcome constraints and also believe that their family supported them in their efforts to achieve this level. While the results of this study did not find gender to be significant in predicting event distance, they do suggest the existence of a more complex relationship between gender and serious leisure, and provide an initial conversation surrounding the facets affecting the serious leisure experience of distance running for women and men.