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## **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERCULTURAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT IN TAIWAN AND HUNGARY**

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## **Abstract**

This paper is a progress report in a continuing research project on intercultural issues in the Republic of China (referred to as Taiwan) and the Republic of Hungary (referred to as Hungary) as experienced by the author during a study trip to Taiwan. This research covers recreational sports such as long-distance running, triathlons, bicycling and motor biking. The paper introduces a description of the Taiwanese ultra-running scene in terms of organizing and participation in comparison to some Hungarian data. An interview with sports managers of both countries will be provided.

The research was initiated on the basis of the assumption that Taiwanese event organizers are more sensitive to inter-cultural issues than their European counterparts. Similarities and differences on the Taiwanese and the Hungarian sporting event markets will be introduced by studying these sports disciplines. By bearing in mind the main driving forces of recreational athletes in Taiwan and Hungary, event organizers will be assisted in making smart choices when planning the upcoming editions of their events. In conclusion, intercultural sports management offers an area of research that can offer lessons for other intercultural event organizers and a fertile area of study for intercultural researchers.

**Key words:** *Taiwan, Hungary, intercultural sports management, ultra-running, recreational athletes.*

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **I. Background**

Intercultural sports management studies can be examined from a variety of perspectives. The motivation for the current study was based on three previous empirical experiences of the author. These experiences were the basis of the main hypothesis of the study, namely that Asian sport event organizers are more sensitive to intercultural issues. While these may seem to be affecting only niche group of people, intercultural sensitivity plays a significant role in the overall experience of foreign tourists. Tourism is an increasingly important contributor to the GDP of many nations due to the decreasing cost of travel relative to the income levels. While the following experiences are specific to sporting events, it is safe to assume that some of the conclusions are not specific to sports, but all areas of intercultural relations.

## **II. Problem statement**

Intercultural differences have a strong impact on the performance and well-being of international event participants. What is more, being familiar with the host culture of a competitive event or a conference can have a positive impact on the performance (Bércecs, 2004). The higher the cultural (and geographic) differences between international venues and the residence of participants, the higher risk they face in unusual circumstances. The purpose of the research is to compare the degree of intercultural sensitivity demonstrated of international event organizers in Taiwan and in Hungary. In this regard, the research will contribute to a better understanding of the South-East Asian region, which is in line with the mission of The Oriental Business and Innovation Center.

The topic of intercultural sports management, due to its interdisciplinary features, in Taiwanese - Hungarian relations has not been researched much, either in Europe or in Asia. The intercultural questions of the Taiwanese society have been researched by professor Judit Hidasi in her paper on the status of Taiwanese and Japanese women (Hidasi, 2016).

As far as research on Taiwan's economic challenges and achievements is concerned, professors Tamás Novák, Csaba Moldicz, György Neszmélyi and Pál Majoros have dealt with it (Novák, 2016; Moldicz, 2018; Neszmélyi, 2017; Majoros, n/d).

### **1. Case Number One**

The IUA 24 Hour World Championships were staged with the participation of Asian national teams in Wörschach, Austria in 2005. After high expectations from the well-reputed defending champion team, Japan it was shocking to realize that all their runners underperformed in spite of thorough preparation

in terms of training, acclimatization and traveling. When asked, the manager of the Japanese team, Dr. Aki Inoue explained that the team members had had no chance to eat their regular food, rice before race day. In spite of the fact the race director was very experienced by having staged ultra-running events in Austria for over 20 years, he lacked the empathy and the experience to think about offering rice.

## **2. Case Number Two**

By the year 2012 Hungary had become the major location for 6 day running events which meant that participants ran for 6 days in a row nonstop. Knowing that some Taiwanese runners had entered the race, the author of this paper politely recommended the chef of the race to also think about cooking rice for the Asian participants, her advice was rejected. This was inconsiderate to Asian participants on behalf of the chef and the whole organization of the 6-day race.

## **3. Case Number Three**

The seventh edition of the La Transe Gaule, race, an ultramarathon that traverses France from Roschoff, is a stage race that covers over 1151 km in 18 stages.

The event had two Taiwanese participants. One male and one female, the latter named Shu-Jung Chiu who completed the race as second placed woman behind Japan's Hiroko Okiyama in 125 hours seven minutes and twenty-four seconds. Shu-Jung's bad luck was that the blisters she had grown over the long run had become infected. Probably due to lack of communication between that race doctor and other French participants and Taiwan's Shu-Jng, the infection was not treated professionally and thus lead her to a coma from which she woke up to the fact that her leg had been amputated (Mail and Guardian, 2008). Runner has legs amputated after ultra-marathon.<sup>1</sup>

The three above examples led the author to start an investigation in intercultural management issues involving Asian and European athletes.

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<sup>1</sup> [online] <https://mg.co.za/article/2008-09-09-runner-has-both-legs-amputated-after-ultramarathon>

**Figure 1.** Top six Female finishers of Transe Gaule in 2008

Rank	Performance	Original name Surname, first name	Club	Nat.	YOB	M/F	Rank M/F
5	108:49:34 h	Okiyama, Hiroko (Yuko)	Higashiyamato	JPN	1962	F	1
17	125:07:24 h	Chiu, Shu-Jung		TPE	1957	F	2
35	158:42:05 h	Ngamkam, Angela	Bautzener LV Rot-Weiß 90	GER	1966	F	3
38	166:27:35 h	Eichner, Sigrid	100 Marathon Club	GER	1940	F	4
40	167:23:48 h	Simons, Marie-Jeanne	Ea Aubusson	FRA	1957	F	5
43	175:24:52 h	van Geene, Regina	GVAC	NED	1954	F	6

Source: Schoch 2008 DUV Ultra.marathon Statistics<sup>2</sup>

### III. Definitions and Acronyms

For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to define the terms used in the title of the paper as defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary or other relevant references.

- **intercultural** (adjective)  
Definition of intercultural: occurring between or involving two or more cultures.  
In the present case the adjective intercultural can be interpreted as between Hungarian and Taiwanese cultures.
- **cross-cultural** (adjective)  
Definition of cross-cultural: dealing with or offering comparison between two or more different cultures or cultural areas
- **sport** is defined in the Oxford Online Dictionary as:  
An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment.
- **management** is defined in the Oxford Online Dictionary as:  
The process of dealing with or controlling things or people.
- **ultra-marathon**  
Definition: an extremely long distance covered in a running event by going beyond physical means (Kouros)
- **IAAF**  
International Association of Athletics Federations: the worldwide governing body of track and field
- **IAU**  
International Association of Ultrarunners: The international governing body of ultra-runners under the aegis of IAAF.
- **CTAU**  
Chinese Taipei Association of Ultra-runners: the governing athletic body of ultramarathons in Taiwan.

<sup>2</sup> [online]: <https://statistik.d-u-v.org/getresultevent.php?event=1496&cat=W&country=all&speed=1&aktype=2&Submit.x=24&Submit.y=10>

## **IV. Methodology**

Qualitative research was conducted based on observation, interviews with sporting events organizers and participants, developing relationships and unstructured interviews with participants, and documentary photography. Quantitative Research was conducted based on a bilingual questionnaire and examination of data sources (DUV, IMF, OECD, GWR) Qualitative research included reading, observation, field visits, drafting surveys, interviews with event managers and participants, data analysis, drafting (observation, interviewing, professional networking, documentary photography). The gained information based on qualitative research has turned out to be a good start for the planning and implementation of a quantitative, survey based research which can be implemented via IC tools. The quantitative part of the research was mainly based on secondary sources such as DUV statistics, IMF or OECD.

## **V. Sports Management and Sports Geography**

Sport is a crucial segment of human culture and it also serves as a social-economic environment. Geography also belongs to this context. Sport performances closely relate to our geographic environment which interacts with both geography and nature. It is known that geography plays a crucial role in humans' genetics as well as the development of our biological functions. Sports also supported us by taming the forces of nature, fighting off distances and conquering height and depth. Actually geographic environment is indispensable for all of us to stay alive. Its elements that affect humans' life are amplified by sports (M. Bánhidi, 2011). When we analyze and compare the geography of Taiwan and Hungary we can identify geography specific challenges in each country.

### **Geographical Features**

While Taiwan takes pride in its over 260 mountain peaks over 3000 meters, Hungary's highest geographical point is Kékes with its 1015 meters. As a result, as we found it out from Ibi, an aboriginal judo coach in Wan Xian, climbing 100 peaks can be considered as a personal athletic challenge for a Taiwanese athlete. Obviously, there is no comparison to such feats in Hungary, but you can follow Mátyás Szarvas on his charity run from Hungary's lowest point, Békéscsaba, to its highest at Kékestető (1014 m) (Mozgásvilág, 2005).

- **Run Across Taiwan (246 km footrace)**

Run Across Taiwan (RAT) belongs to the annual events organized by the Chinese Taipei Association of Ultra-runners. The three-day nonstop course traverses the island from the east through the breathtaking Zhongbu Cross- island Highway. The runners have to face a 9,000 meter climb, and extreme weather conditions. (To read about RAT 2019 See Appendix 2).

When comparing the geography of Taiwan and Hungary, the second striking differences lies in the difference their coastline length. While Taiwan, being an island, has a coastline of over 1,500 kilometers, Hungary is landlocked. At the same time the length of the Danube in Hungary is 417 km and that of its second longest river, Tisza is 211 km (Kocsis, 2018). These rivers, in addition to other smaller water ways, are not only important transportation and fishing areas, but also offer venues for sporting events such as kayaking and canoeing. When it comes to Lake Balaton, it takes well over 200 kilometers to go around it, depending on the route.

- **Sun Moon Lake 日月潭.**

Nantou is Taiwan's only inland county but it is home to the well-known Sun Moon Lake, its largest freshwater lake with a length of 15.2 km. It attracts visitors from every corner of the world and it is an essential tourist destination. In addition to scenic beauty, the unique landscape has made it an excellent place for bike riding, running, and an annual swimming competition, which is the area's biggest and longest-running event. An additional attractions of the lake is the presence of Thao tribe, one of Taiwan's numerous aboriginal tribes.

- **Sun Moon Lake Swimming Carnival (3.3 km)**

At the Mid-Autumn Festival, swimmers from around Taiwan or abroad gather at Zhaowu Wharf to participate in one of the world's top open water swims, a 3.3 km point o to point swim that attracts 25,000 participants annually, which ranks as the world's largest mass participation open water swim (Open Water Swimming 2015, 2018). According to data from 2009 only 42% of Taiwanese students claimed to be able to swim (Chu, 2018). This is why Sun Moon Lake Swimming Carnival has great significance from the point of view of awareness raising as regards to swimming. From the marketing perspective it is interesting to note that Sun Moon Lake Swimming Carnival has been organized under the leadership of ac academian, National Taiwan University' professor Morrie Chiang since 1983. In 2002 it was officially included among the world's top 50 open water swimming competitions, which is also due to good marketing management (Open Water Swimming News, 2013).

- **Lake Balaton 匈牙利語**

Hungary's Lake Balaton, the largest lake in Central Europe which offers a variety of endurance feats to both recreational and elite athletes.

- **Swim Across Lake Balaton (Révfülöp- Balatonboglár, 5.2km)**

One of its three cultural capitals (Keszthely, Siófok and Balatonfüred, the latter hosted the open water swimming events of the FINA World Championships in 2017. For recreational swimmers the most traditional and greatest challenge is the 5.2 km Swim Across Lake Balaton, an annual event between Révfülöp and Balatonboglár, with close to 10,000 participants (Xpatloop, 2019). Historically speaking Nantou's Sun Moon Lake Swimming Carnival dates back to 1983 while the first Swim Across Lake Balaton between Révfülök and Balatonboglár dates back to the 1970's, what is more the first swim across Lake Balaton between Balatonfüred and Siófok took place in 1880.

- **Paddle Across Lake Balaton (Fonyód- Badacsony - Fonyód, 10 km)**

For those who prefer crossing the lake by boat, can do so between Fonyód and Badacsony under the aegis of the Hungarian Canoe Federation as they did in 2018 with close to 1500 participants (Fonyód, 2018).

- **Tour de Pelso**

The 200km tour de Pelso or Balaton Marathon is a race with a 10 hour cut-off time. For those wishing to take more time while riding around can cover the distance (Tour, 2019). For those wishing to take more time while riding around can cover the distance by participating in Balaton Maraton Szabadon, an organized ride with a softer, 12 hour time limit. Moreover, riding around Lake Balaton within one day is also a challenge for many Hungarian motor bikers as well.

- **Nonstop Run Around Lake Balaton (Ultrabalaton, 220 km nonstop)**

Due to the current running boom, a 220km non-stop run with a 32hour cut-off time around Lake Balaton, called Ultrabalaton, has become the country's most popular ultramarathon event. With over 100 individual finishers in 2019 the event has seen a twenty-fold increase since the first edition in 2000 (Schoch, 2019ab). Due to this exponential participation growth, the author of this paper found it crucial to interview the current race director (and business owner) about his managerial background and philosophy (See Interview 2).



- **Taipei 101 Up Run (2,046 steps)**

Taipei 101 Up Run is an excellent example for the way well-known buildings can become iconic sporting venues and attract more visitors with a purpose of more than just being tourists. It is an annual event run by the Taipei City Government and Taipei Financial Center Corporation. The challenge includes the climb 91 floors (Total of 2,046 steps) (Taipei 101, 2019). It is interesting to note that the author and Taipei 101 as the world's tallest green office building have one thing in common. They both have been featured in the Guinness World Records since 2004 (Guinness, 2019).

- **Soochow University 24Hour Ultra-marathon**

The year 2019 marks the twentieth year of the involvement of Soochow University in ultramarathon running. The Soochow University 24Hour Ultra-marathon is an annual track event organized by the Physical Education Department of the University in partnership with the Chinese Taipei Association of Ultra-runners and the university administration. On several occasions the event also served as the IAU 24Hour Asian Championship and has also seen several records fall both in terms of continental and global best performances. To be invited to Soochow University as an international runner is a great honor which all ultra-runners are dreaming about.

Race founder and director Frank Kuo believes that hosting an international ultramarathon on university grounds is certainly a win-win situation. On the one hand the students who witness the world's leading athletes perform their best will no doubt be touched by the athletes' hard work and strong perseverance. On the other hand, the participants in the race, who are always a group of carefully selected runners from among the international elite, can also be energized and inspired by the enthusiastic student volunteers, spectators and organizers.

## **VI. Interview 1.**

The present interview was conducted with the general secretary of the Chinese Taipei Association of Ultra-runners Frank Kuo who is an associate professor of IT, management and physical education at Soochow University. He holds a degree from California State University in information technology. He is also a member of the International Association of Ultra-runners Technical and Communications Committee.

In addition to teaching information technology, management and physical education, he also organizes eight international level ultra-marathon events with the IAU label annually. Though he is very modest about his sports organizational achievements, he has quite a few world events under his belt. His university hosted the IAU Asian 24 hour Championship in 2002. In 2003 he staged the IAU

100 km World Championships in Tainan and the IAU 24 Hour world Championships in Taipei in 2006. As a result, his students also had the opportunity to meet Hungary's top ultra-runners, namely János Bogár, Gábor Domán, Gábor Tresó, Szilvia Lubics, and the author. From the Hungarian perspective the year 2003 meant the most memorable edition of the Soochow University 24hour ultra-marathon due to Hungarian victory with a course record. As a result, the Hungarian winner's shoes were displayed in the show case of the department of physical education at Soochow University and winner was invited to coach the Taiwanese ultra-running team at high altitudes prior to the 2003 IAU 100 km world championships.

The author of this paper has known the interviewee for twenty years. They met at the 100 km IAU World Championships in Belgium. The replies will be presented without the questions.

"I organized my first ultra-running event in Taiwan in 1998. It was the Taipei Expressway 100 km event. What attracts me to ultra-running is the spirit of the sport. It shows the noble characters of human being. Besides ultra-running I've been engaged in triathlons both in terms of coaching and organizing.

It was the year 2000 when I was invited to work for the technical committee of the IAU. Later on in 2018 I also joined the communication committee. As for the Chinese Taipei Ultra-running Association (CTU), which was established with government support in 2011, we have five full time employees. First of all, I do not consider myself successful. But the key to success, in my view is composed of the following elements: enthusiasm, persistence, focus and management skill. My greatest challenge is to overcome the difficulty of fulfilling the interests of all aspects. You organize eight IAU-labelled events per year. What's your motivation behind... By organizing eight IAU-labelled events annually I simply do what a national government body of ultrarunning should do. As regards to foreign languages I speak little bit of Japanese and English, of course. I have seen many international events around the world. In comparison I can say that the races I organize fully comply with IAU regulations. All 8 races are IAU label races. Most of the race organizers are amateurs, we cannot expect a "perfect" race in terms of event management. But many races have their own characters which I admire. I would you like to learn from ultra-events in other countries. For example, the Jingu-gaien 24h race in Tokyo is a good race. Its simplicity and being green are what I hope to adopt in my race. If Hungary organized a major IAU event, the greatest challenge for the Taiwanese team would be food, perhaps. On the other hand, for Hungary it would be a big challenge to provide travel grants for delegations. Regarding organizing, I think my strength is that I create an atmosphere of intensive competitiveness for Soochow 24h race, so that the elite runners will run at their best in the race. The greatest challenge for the Taiwanese team at the 24hr world championships in France in October may be lack of crew members to help the runners around the clock. In what way do I contribute to the comfort and success

of invited runners at Soochow University? I simply let them feel they are respected and honored to be here in Taipei. The most challenging part of my job as an organizer of high-profile events is to recruit the sponsorship and balance the budget. My motto is "the man who is willing to devote himself to work for his ideals, instead of just dreaming, is the most lucky one."

**Figure 2.** Finishers of the Soochow University Ultra-marathon in 2003

Rank	Performance	Original name Surname, first name	Nat.	YOB	M/F	Rank M/F	Cat	Cat. Rank
1	273.828 km	Nunes, Valmir	BRA	1964	M	1		M35
2	261.640 km	Sekiya, Ryoichi	JPN	1967	M	2	M35	2
3	244.835 km	Chen, Chun-Yen	TPE	1967	M	3	M35	3
4	235.294 km	Otaki, Masayuki	JPN	1964	M	4	M35	4
5	231.880 km	Sakurai, Kaname	JPN	1964	M	5	M35	5
6	229.135 km	Okiyama, Kenji	JPN	1965	M	6	M35	6
7	227.777 km	Berces, Edit	HUN		F	1	W35	1
8	224.810 km	Chen, Chin-Tsai	TPE	1965	M	7	M35	7
9	224.469 km	Okiyama, Hiroko (Yuko)	JPN	1962	F	2	W40	1
10	223.947 km	Kuo, Tsong-Chi	TPE	1953	M	8	M50	1
11	221.012 km	Yaegashi, Tomohiko	JPN	1946	M	9	M55	1
12	220.797 km	Noto, Kimie	JPN	1952	F	3	W50	1
13	212.697 km	Maeda, Tatsuya	JPN	1965	M	10	M35	8
14	204.302 km	Sata, Fumie	JPN	1962	F	4	W40	2
15	204.283 km	Wu, Sheng-Ming	TPE	1961	M	11	M40	1
16	201.373 km	Chen, Ching-Hui	TPE	1956	M	12	M45	1
17	194.147 km	Tanner, Peter	GBR	1945	M	13	M55	2
18	180.740 km	Lu, Chih-Ping	TPE	1957	M	14	M45	2
19	175.634 km	Chang, Mei-Lian	TPE	1957	F	5	W45	1
20	175.463 km	Yang, Hsing-Fu	TPE	1947	M	15	M55	3
21	172.845 km	Li, Chin-Chao	TPE	1966	M	16	M35	9
22	164.498 km	Lien, Wu-Chung	TPE	1967	M	17	M35	10
23	157.844 km	Kuroda, Muneharu	JPN	1949	M	18	M50	2
24	153.226 km	Kuo, Ming-Shu	TPE	1958	M	19	M40	2
25	148.219 km	Yang, Yu-Min	TPE	1952	M	20	M50	3

Source: Schoch 2003<sup>3</sup>

**Photo 1.** CTUA, General secretary Frank Kuo



**Photo 2.** Miklós Zelcsényi brand owner and race director



<sup>3</sup> [online]: <https://statistik.d-u-v.org/getresultevent.php?event=5770&cat=all&country=all&speed=1&aktype=2&Submit.x=26&Submit.y=6>

## VII. The Chinese Taipei Association of Ultrarunners

閱讀更多：<http://www.ctau.org.tw/en/about-us/history-mission/>

The national governing body on Taiwan's ultra-runners, the Chinese Taipei Association of Ultrarunners (CTAU) was established by Ministry of the Interior in July, 2011.

The CTAU's vision is to connect Taiwan's ultrarunning to the international world of ultra-running. As a member of the International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU for short) CTAU adheres to standards and rules of the IAU when organizing races. The association is responsible for ultra-marathon related events in Taiwan. CTAU also acts as a bridge between Taiwan and the international ultra-running society.

The Chinese Taipei Association of Ultrarunners, CTAU was established by Ministry of the Interior in July, 2011. The main source of information presented here is the Association's website.

CTAU's vision is "Connecting Taiwan's ultrarunning to the Global Society". As a member of the International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU for short) CTAU adheres to standards and rules of the IAU when holding races. The association is responsible for the ultra-marathon related events in Taiwan. CTAU also act as connection between Taiwan and the international ultra-running society.

### Vision

*"Connecting Taiwan's Ultrarunning to the Global Society"*

### Mission

- *promoting ultrarunning in Taiwan*
- *encouraging children to run*
- *exercising for the community through charities and donations*
- *keeping the events eco-friendly*

### Logo

**Figure 3.** CTUA logo



### Colors

Purple represents the long history of the ultra-marathons. The very first ultra-marathon was held in 490 B.C., and continues thriving now, after 2,500 years. Green stands for nature. Ultra-running is part of the environment. Not only do CTAU aims to unite with our environment, but also so help it. White symbolizes the purity of ultra-running. The purpose of ultra-running is neither winning nor gaining advantages, but simply aim for self-actualized.

## Art

The CTAU logo symbolizes a runner throwing his hands up with accomplishment while crossing the finish line. CTAU values and respects and serves its runners. CTAU was established by runners who worked hard to bring a safe and utmost life challenging experience to all ultra-running lovers. CTAU members hope that every runner will be able to run to their triumph.

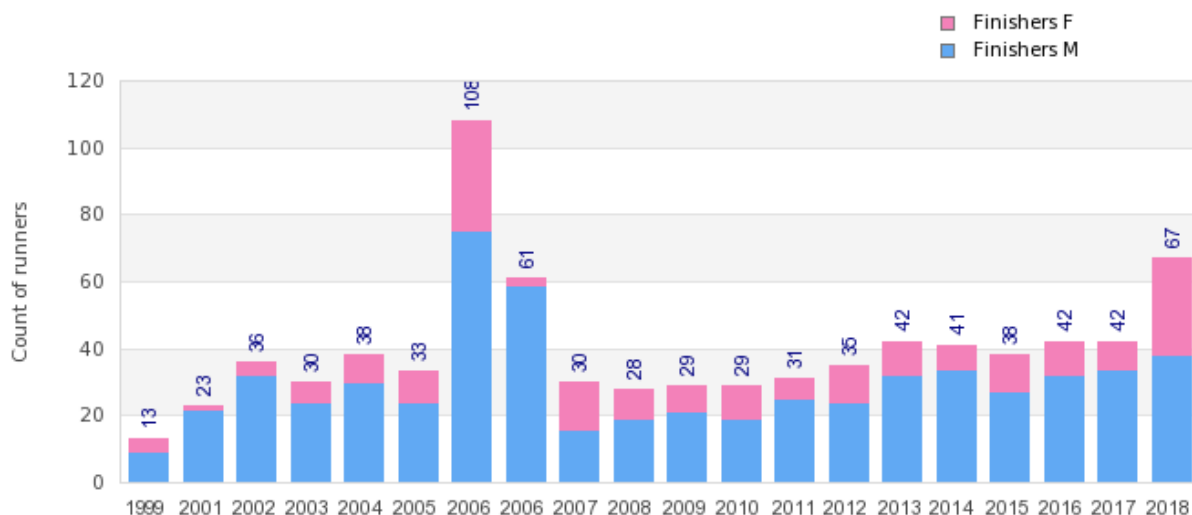
## Events

The CTAU organizes eight IAU labelled ultra-marathon events annually. The most prestigious race is the annual Soochow University 24 hour Ultra-marathon which is a track event. The multitude of students along the track throughout the 24 hours of the race is unmatched. In addition, international runners are assisted by teams of two students before and during the race. No wonder the Soochow track has seen several national, continental and even world's best performances. The most important records to mention are the course records.

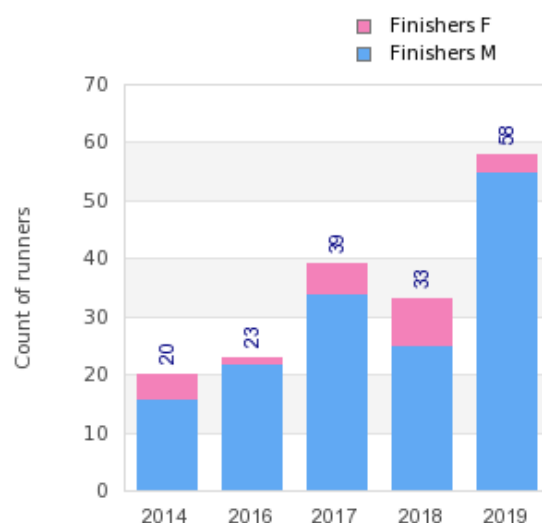
All-time results of the event show that the course record is held by Japan's Yoshikazu Hara who in 2014 improved the previous long-standing record set by Yiannis Kouros in 2002. In the women's all-time ranking is led by Courtney Dauwalter with 256.405 km followed by the former world record holder Mami Kudo with 255.303 km, set in 2011 (See Figure).

In addition to the interview with the secretary general of the Chinese Taipei Association of Ultrarunners, two major events need to be mentioned: the Soochow University 24 Hour Ultra-marathon and the Race Across Taiwan (RAT) (see Figures 4, 5 and RAT Race Report in Appendix 3).

**Figure 4.** Participation in the Soochow University 24 hour Ultra-marathon



**Figure 5.** Participation figures in the Run Across Taiwan (2014-2019)



**Figure 6.** Run logo of the Run Across Taiwan 2019



## VIII. Interview 2.

Interview 2 was conducted with the owner of Balatonman Kft, organizer and owner of Ultrabalaton, Miklós Zelcsényi.

"In 2012 I was invited by Peter Nagy to manage an aid station at Ultrabalaton in Tihany. The following year I returned again. Another important event in my organizing career was the first edition of Balatonman Triathlon Festival, In 2014 Peter called me and asked me if I was willing to continue organizing Ultrabalaton. This UB event was the first ultra-running event I organized.

I have become familiar with ultra-running gradually, especially through interpersonal relations. There are about fifty ultra-runners who belong to my circle of friends. I felt privileged to meet such runners as János Bogár, Szilvia Lubics, István Lengyel, a multiple finisher of UltraBalaton, and Balázs Simonyi are also among them. The longest run I have ever completed is the standard marathon of 42.196 meters. In addition, I have also gained some experience in the ironman triathlon events, boxing and

squash. I have completed the Ironman distance triathlons. We organize several events. One of our latest projects is Ultrabalaton Trail. As for Ultrabalaton, it has become a brand since 2007. We do not work with volunteers but with paid staff only. Success by my standards is when the race is full within a short period of time. It is general interest that matters. The place has to be surrounded by some hype. We organize six running events which operate as preparatory races for Ultrabalaton. These are: Generali Runners World Run, Primavera Balatonman Kenese, Polar Kenese Futam, Generali Night Run Budapest, UPC Ultra Tiszta-Tó, Burger King UB Trail.

We do not aim to put on a cheap event with low quality organization. On the contrary, we want to offer the best possible product with the highest possible return on investment for the event. We offer value for money.

The key to success is perseverance. We also have to choose our suppliers carefully. Event organizing is just like ultra-running. You can get as much out of it as much you put into it first. You have to give all you can. We operate with about 8 staff members whom the author of this paper has known for about 20 years. I have worked in enterprise ever since I grew up. Long lasting relationships matter a lot. The key to success is the greatest challenge. It's like a 500-piece puzzle where if one piece is misplaced, the whole project can collapse. Each piece is important. Our long-term goal is to grow to become the number one prestigious continental ultra-running event in Europe, and then in the world.

At this point we serve as a qualifying event for the race from Athens to Sparta. But we do not want to be a qualifying event in the long run. We want to be the premium race. We're very proud to have seen a 50 percent increase in the number of individual participants, which as we know is also due to the latest ultra-running boom. It's a developing sports discipline.

As for lessons from international races go, I'd like to go to Sparta to see what's going on there as I consider it the world's most iconic ultra-event.

I do not particularly care about the IAU label as I know very little about them. I have run the Berlin marathon, New York and also completed the Ironman distance triathlon in Nagyatád on two occasions, and Hawaii once. They all serve as role model events. There are many good races that we can learn from. For example, I learned about the outlet garden or breakfast garden in New York. As race organizers we also have to satisfy the needs of the sponsors. At the same time, it is important to also be an athlete in order to better understand and serve our clients. There are certain standards we always try to meet. For example, we offer hot tea during the night but on hot days we also offer ice at our aid stations. In addition, it's also important to secure and provide traffic-free roads. The security of the course and the plethora of refreshments at aid stations are of key importance. From the participants' point of view, it's not a good idea to have a nicely decorated aid station with lukewarm water at it on a hot day...It's important to experience the services we offer from the point of view of

the clients (athletes). Race organization is a service for me where the runners are my clients. Obviously, there should be no distinction between the race favorites and middle of the pack runners. In addition, just because somebody is a friend, they do not deserve special treatment. I consider the participants as my business clients. As regards to what I'd like to learn from other race organizers, I think the best way for progress is by traveling and participating in events in a way of mystery shopping...This is why I have gone all the way to Ironman in Hawaii, Berlin Marathon or New York. I also try to meet the needs of the participants as much as possible. For example, above 20 degrees C I offer ice, but on cold nights we reschedule our kitchen activities and offer tea instead. We have to serve both the sponsors and the athletes. The former finds appearance and visuals more important while athletes want their physical and emotional needs to be met. For an athlete a well secured and safe course with rich refreshments points is the most important concern. What is an aid station with nice decoration and visuals worth if it offers lukewarm drinks in hot weather? Not even when I worked in catering did I like the idea of serving the restaurant owner better than the regular customers

I do not think organizing a sporting event in another country would make a difference. We use the same script everywhere. At the same time, I have no ambitions to organize IAU labeled events. Actually, I have already been invited to organize several sporting series on another continent. However, I want to do my thing first by getting as much out of my current major event as possible.

We do not work with volunteers. All our staff are paid for their full-time jobs. As I said, I do not care about organizing major IAU races. For me the point is to see how fast an event is sold out. Obviously, organizing national championships is not an issue at all. For me organizing the greatest ultramarathon event in the country in terms of participation, means success. If the race sells out in 22 minutes or less, which was the case I, I consider it success. For example, Budapest Night Run is a good event to prove that even the capital is fit for night time sporting events. Our Balatonman Kenese Triathlon is also a success for me. Financial supporters are crucial. I think, financial supporters are vital. It is possible to stage events without them, but the level won't be as high. You need three things: cash, cash and more cash for a good event. The sponsors will be thankful if they are made happy. And we need a lot of them. In addition to getting started and signing a contract with a sponsor, it is just as important or even more important to keep them for the future.

As for my education, I never went to university in spite of the fact that both my folks did. However, the respected and understood that I wanted to and could make a living without a university degree. There is only one thing I missed. Taking English classes. Nowadays you cannot do business without speaking English fluently.



Regarding awards for the individual participants, I do not think they would attract more star runners, this was the case also back in 2014 when we offered HUF1 million for podium finishers but there was no real competition. We want to raise the prestige of the race in a different way.

For example, it is important to note that we do not give finishers' medals to those who fail to meet the cut-off time. Our events are not hiking or fun runs but prestigious athletic events. Unfortunately, last year we had a female finisher at Tisza-tó who completed the 113 km within cut-off time but her last 10km split was much better than the first. Obviously, she had accepted a ride on her crew's bicycle which prevented her from completing the race on her own. Of course, she was disqualified for a lifetime from our events. Obviously, we cannot tolerate this kind of unfair behavior. Once we celebrate our finishers with special attention, I think it is also important to call attention to those who have gone astray by cutting the course or finishing the race with outside help.

The question of introducing doping tests is worth thinking about. This way we could also make sure our winners win clean. Luckily, using illegal substances is less common among ultra –runners than in the circle of sprinters or weightlifters,

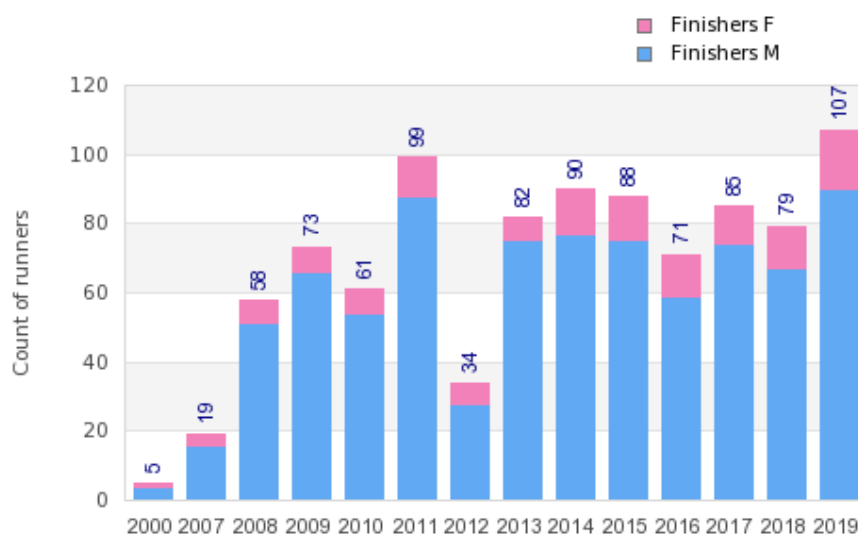
Most of my colleagues are female and they always feel bad about not presenting a late finisher with a medal and the finishing tape with their name. But I insist on celebrating only those who finish within the cut-off time.

We have a 32-hour cut-off time for the 215 km distance at Ultrabalaton. We have to emphasize that this is a running event and not a hike for charity.

My motto is something I've learned from my friend's father and it goes like this:

*"Be tough in the fight, lose with pride and win with grace..."*

**Figure 7.** Participation increase in Ultrabalaton participation 2000- 2019



Source: Schoch (2019) [online]: <https://statistik.d-u-v.org/eventdetail.php?event=52586>

## **IX. Findings**

Based on the non-representative methods used up to now have supported the idea that Taiwanese people are more sensitive to intercultural differences. The interviews conducted with two iconic event organizers demonstrate the different aspects of sports management and organizing philosophy. At the same time it can be stated that the comfort and well-being of guests from far – away places have higher priority with Asians. Based on the data collected so far it is not for sure that language proficiency can help communication. The better an athlete or sports manager is versed in the local language of the sporting events they participate in, the better outcomes they can count on.

It comes as a surprise that Taiwanese people tend to be more likely to speak or learn foreign languages than Hungarians. The question of sustainability is also a very important issue for Taiwanese organizers. Moreover, Taiwanese people have less reservations regarding other languages such as Hungarian. Moreover, Taiwanese people are more afraid of climatic differences between Taiwan and Hungary as opposed to language problems when thinking about Hungary as a travel destination. At the same time the observed high respect for the German language, culture can be explained by Germany's strong economy.

## **X. Research Dissemination**

The OBIC scholarship recipient has recently participated in the following dissemination activities:

- April 25th Talk on Wonderful Taiwan to Senior Citizens (Senior Akadémia, BBS, ZFBA)
- May 2-3 Budapest, Hungary OBIC Conference 2019. The V4 in East Asia and East Asia in the V4. The Present of Economic and Political Relations between the Visegrád Four Countries and East Asia Paper presentation and chairing (BBS)
- May 24, 2019 - Interregional Conference on Teaching Specific Languages, BBS ZFBA
- May 29th, 2019 Research Workshop for Applied Linguistics, BBS ZFBA
- June 7th, 2019 Hungarian Association for Sports Science Congress, Nyíregyháza

## **XI. Conclusions**

In conclusion we can say that the above mentioned data demonstrate the interdisciplinary features of the topic and urges researchers to keep exploring the values Taiwan and Hungary have to offer to each other in the field of scientific collaboration, professional relations, sporting events and cultural activities.

The author has made an attempt to describe and compare the Hungarian and the Taiwanese approach to sports organizing and management. One of the most practical outcomes of the research was the

participation of a Taiwanese athlete in a rural Hungarian running event held in May 2019. We have to emphasize that the athlete decided to travel to Hungary without having met the researcher in Taiwan.

Another positive outcome may be the decision of a Taiwanese university instructor to spend her sabbatical year in Hungary teaching Chinese as a foreign language. To reach this goal she has completed a Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language course in addition to her background in applied linguistics.

Intercultural sensitivity plays an important role in the quality of experience of participants in International sporting events. This experience plays a role in the opinion formed about the host country, which in turn can influence the people who turn to these participants for travel advice. Since international travel has become an increasing fraction of gross domestic product due to extended leisure time and low-cost airlines, countries that show high level of intercultural sensitivity will be more competitive in attracting tourists not only to sporting events. Recommendation for future research includes the analysis of sports clubs and coach training programs, websites of recreational sports clubs from the point of view of sensitivity to sustainability questions, motivation of participants, and fair play.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### 調查問卷

#### SURVEY SHEET

#### 超跑中的跨文化體育管理

#### Intercultural sports management in ultra-running

親愛的運動員！

Dear Athlete,

我很榮幸代表布達佩斯商學院 在東方商業創新中心的支持下來台灣進行短期研究。

It is my privilege to represent the Budapest Business School here in Taiwan under the aegis of the Oriental Business Innovation Center.

我研究的一部分是 想了解更多關於台灣休閒運動員的信息 以及關於台灣賽會籌備者的事  
。

As part of my research, I would like to know more about Taiwanese recreational athletes and event organizers. 請花幾分鐘時間用國語或英語回答我的問題。

Please take a few minutes to answer my questions either in mandarin or in English.

您自願和匿名參與調查 肯定會為未來國際體育賽事的成功做出貢獻。

Your voluntary and anonymous participation in the survey will definitely contribute to the success of future international sporting events. 非常感謝您的回復。

Thank you very much for your responses. 願你在未來的挑戰中幸福，成功，無傷害。

May you be happy, successful and injury-free in your future challenges.

如果你有任何請求，請通過電子郵件與我聯繫。Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me by e-mail.

Edit Bérces, PhD

100公里/ 24小時世 界冠軍和歐洲冠軍

超級馬拉松選手

100km/24 hr world and European champion ultra-marathon runner

副教授

associate professor

請讓我更多地了解你。我們希望改善亞洲參與者的國際競爭條件。回答以下問題需要15分鐘。非常感謝您為更好的國際運行環境做出的貢獻。請用英語或國語回答。別擔心。去做就對了。

Let me know more about you. We hope to improve international competition conditions for Asian participants. It will take 15 minutes to answer the following questions. Please answer in English or mandarin Chinese. Thank you very much for your contribution to a better international running environment.

## Part One

- What is your greatest accomplishment in sports (result and place)?

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## 第二部分 Part Two

1. 請告訴我你的第一次參加比賽的經驗：

請告訴我你的第一次參加比賽的經驗：

Please tell me about your first organized sporting experience:

比賽的名稱 比賽賽事 Event	結果 Result	地點 Location	日期 Date

僅限跑步者 For runners only.

2. 你個人最好的表現是什麼？ PB (personal best performances):

比賽賽事 Event	結果 Result	比賽的名稱 Name of the race
5公里5km		
10公里10km		
半程馬拉松 21 km (half marathon)		
42.195公里 馬拉松42.195km (Marathon)		
100公里 100km		
24小時 24 hours		
48小時 48 hours		
6天		



6 days		
其他事件 Other		

3. 你在超跑中的夢想是什麼？為什麼？

What is your dream race in ultra-running and why?

你想在體育運動中取得什麼成就？What would you like to accomplish in sports?

你在運動中的目標是什麼？What is your goal in sports?

4. 您在哪些國家參加超級馬拉松比賽？

In which countries have you competed in ultramarathons?

5. 您參加哪些國家的體育比賽？

In which countries have you participated in sports?

6. 你會考慮參加匈牙利（歐洲）的比賽嗎？

Would you consider participating in a competition in Hungary (Europe)?

7. 你想參加匈牙利的體育賽事嗎？

Would you like to participate in a sporting event in Hungary?

是的，我會的Yes, because \_\_\_\_\_

不，我不會因為No, because \_\_\_\_\_

### 第三部分 Part Three

8. 您的跑步經費來自何處？who finances your running expenses? Please circle.

- A. 我支付我自己的費用。I myself.
- B. 我的公司支付我的費用。My company.
- C. 我的俱樂部支付我的費用My club.
- D. 我的朋友支付我的費用。My friends.
- E. 我的贊助商 支付我的費用。My sponsor.
- F. 其他來源Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. 你在運動方面的支出占收入的比例如何？

**How much of your income do you spend on sports?**

我花钱（钱）I spend

✓				
	不到我收入的10%less than 10 % of my income	我收入的11%到30 % 11 to 30 % percent of my income	我将31%至50%的 收入用于体育运动 31-50%	超过50% more than 50%

10. 你花的錢最多的項目是什麼？請給答案編號。

What are most of your running expenses related to?

11. 请按顺序排列答案。Please rank order the answers

1=the most, 5 = the least

	rank
跑鞋 shoes, 運動裝備 sporting gear	
參賽或運動時特別補給品或食物運行食物special food	
按摩massage	

旅行 traveling	
報名費 entry fees	
其他費用Other expenses: _____	

**12. 选择比赛时你最担心的是什么？ What are your main questions when choosing a race?**

**请选择三个。 Please choose three items.**

	✓
风景怎么样？ Can I get on the IAU rankings?	
我可以赢得比赛吗？ Can I win the race?	
我可以完成比赛吗？ Can I finish the race?	
我可以代表我的国家吗？ Can I represent my country?	
这个很贵吗？ Is it expensive?	
我可以说当地语言吗？ Can I speak the local language?	
它是环保的吗？ Is it environmentally friendly?	
它适合家庭吗？ Is it family friendly?	
我熟悉當地文化嗎？ Is the culture familiar to me?	
什么时候 When is it?	
我必须远行才能参加吗？ Do I have to travel far to participate in it?	
有没有女性参与者？ Are there many female participants?	
其他担忧： Other:	

**13. 你在體育運動中的座右銘（諺語）是什麼？**

(What is your motto 8proverb) in sports?你在超跑中的个人座右铭（谚语）是什么？

What is your motto (proverb) in ultra-running?

--

14. 24小时世界锦标赛将于2019年10月在法国阿尔比举行。

台湾选手要克服的最大挑战是什么？

The 24 hour world championships will be in Albi, France in October 2019. What will be the greatest challenge for Taiwanese runners to overcome?

15. 您在多大程度上同意這些陳述？

To what extent do you agree with these statements?

請標記句子1到5的比例1是最低的，5是最高的

Please mark the sentences on a 1 to 5 scale 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest. 1 =完全沒有/從不;1 = not at all /never ; 2 =很少2 = rarely ; 3 =偶爾;3 = occasionally; 4 =經常, 4 = often; 5 =總是, 5 = always

1. 在新環境中運動有助於取得更好的結果。 Sporting in a new environment helps to achieve better results.	
2. 我喜歡獨自鍛煉。I enjoy exercising all by myself.	
3. 我喜歡和10個人以上的團體一起鍛煉。I enjoy exercising with more than 10 people together.	

4. 我喜歡和我的夥伴一起鍛煉（僅限1人）. I enjoy exercising with my partner (1 person only).	
5. 當地食物決定了我的體能表現。Local food determines the success of my physical performance.	
6. 當我能說出當地語言時，我的表現會更好。When I can speak the local language, my physical performance is better.	
7. 我喜歡在比賽前嘗試新食物。I like to try new food before competition.	
8. 我喜歡在比賽中穿新裝。I like to wear new gear during races.	
9. 當我在比賽中感到痛苦時，我馬上停下來。When I feel pain during competition, I stop immediately.	
10. 當我在比賽中感到痛苦時，我會看醫生。When I feel pain during competition, I see the race doctor.	
11. 當我在比賽中感到痛苦時， 我會持續努力克服。When I feel pain during competition, I keep working hard.	
12. 當我在比賽中感到痛苦時，我會按摩自己。When I feel pain during competition, I give myself a massage.	
13. 當我在比賽中感到痛苦時，我會服用了一些止痛藥。 When I feel pain during competition, I take some pain killers.	
15. 當競爭對手切西瓜時，我也會跟著切西瓜。When a competitor cuts the course in a race I cut the corner too.	
16. 當競爭對手切西瓜時，我會向裁判報告。When a competitor cuts the course in a race, I report him to the referee.	
17. 當競爭對手在比賽中切西瓜時，我會退出了比賽。 When a competitor cuts the course in a race I pull out of the competition.	
18. 當競爭對手在比賽中切西瓜時，我會告訴他或她不要如此。When a competitor cuts the course in a race I tell him or her not to cut the course.	
19. 運動運動鍛鍊的目的是不惜一切代價贏得勝利。The point of physical exercise is to win at all costs.	
20. 運動運動鍛鍊的目的是欣賞風景。The point of running long distances is to enjoy the scenery.	
21. 運動鍛鍊的目的是與朋友們共度美好時光。The point of running long distances is to have a good time with my friends.	
22. 運動鍛鍊的目的是做我以前沒做過的事情。The point of running long distances is to do something I have not done before.	
23. 運動鍛鍊的目的是保持健康。The point of running long distances is to stay healthy.	

24. 運動鍛鍊的目的是成名。The point of sports is to become well-known.	
25. 運動鍛鍊的目的是在國際賽事中代表我的國家。The point of sports is to represent my country at international competitions.	
26. 運動鍛鍊的目的是結交朋友（遇見像我這樣的人）。The point of running long distances is to make friends (meet more people like me).	
27. 運動鍛鍊的目的是成為一個更好的人。The point of running long distances is to become a better person.	
28. 運動鍛鍊的重點是減肥。The point of physical exercise is to lose weight.	
29. 運動鍛鍊的目的是看起來更有運動員的感覺。The point of running long distances is to look more athletic.	
30. 運動鍛鍊的目的是賺錢。The point of running long distances is to make money.	
31. 運動鍛鍊的目的是參加慈善活動。The point of running long distances is to participate in charity events.	
32. 我可以通過參加運動活動來謀生。	
跑步時聽音樂是危險的。Running with music is dangerous.	
33. 與我的狗一起跑步是一個好主意。Running with my dog in a competition is a good idea.	
34. 我訓練的時候會帶到我的手機。I have my cell phone with me during workouts.	
35. 在比賽期間，我會帶上我的手機。I have my cell phone with me during competition.	
36. 通過運動，我可以更了解自己。Through sports I can learn about myself.	
37. 通過運動，我可以了解其他文化。Through running I can learn about other cultures.	

16. 您在多大程度上同意這些陳述？

To what extent do you agree with these statements?

請標記句子1到5的比例1是最低的，5是最高的

Please mark the sentences on a 1 to 5 scale 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest. 1 =完全沒有/從不; 1 = not at all /never ; 2 =很少 2 = rarely ; 3 =偶爾; 3 = occasionally; 4 =經常, 4 = often; 5 =總是, 5 = always

我覺得在跑步時最大的成就是.....

**I feel most successful in running when...**

1) 我是唯一的完賽者 I'm the only finisher.

☐

2) 我學習了一項新技能，這讓我想要練習更多 I learn a new skill and it makes me want to practice more	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) 我比朋友做得更好I can do better than my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) 其他人不能做到我能做的The others cannot do as well as me	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) 我學到了很有趣的事情I learn something that is fun to do	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) 其他人退賽並受傷，但我沒有 Others drop out and get injured, but I don't	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) 我努力學習新跑步技能 I learn a new skill by trying hard	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) 我很努力 I work really hard	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) 我是勝利者。 I'm the winner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) 我學到了一些讓我想要練習更多的新東西。I learn something new that makes me want to go practice more.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) 我最厲害。 I am the best	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) 學習新東西覺得很棒。 Learning something new really feels good.	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) 我會盡力跑 I run my very best	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: MACKENZIE, B. (2005) TEOSQ [WWW] Available from:  
<https://www.brianmac.co.uk/teosq.htm> [Accessed 21/3/2019]

17. 當另一名選手在比賽中切西瓜時你會怎麼做？

What do you do when another runner cuts the course in a competition?

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18. 在比賽中感到疼痛時你會怎麼做？

What do you do when you feel pain during a competition?

19. 如果您發現您的跑步夥伴服用增強運動性能藥物時您會怎麼辦？

20. What would do if your found your running partner taking performance enhancing drugs?

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21. 如果你的跑步夥伴在興奮劑檢測中檢測出陽性，你會怎麼做？

What would you do if your running buddy tested positive in a doping test?

22. 我最喜歡的國家運動員是\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite national athlete is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

23. 我最喜歡的國際運動員是

My favorite international athlete is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

24. 當我被非跑步者問到為什麼我跑步時，我總是回答

When I'm asked by non-runners why I run I always say

25. „我跑是因為 \_\_\_\_\_ ”

"I run \_\_\_\_\_ "

26. 我應該還要問你什麼問題？

What have I forgotten to ask you about?

通過回答以上所有問題 你已經表現出了非凡的心理承受力。

恭喜！願你在下一場超級馬拉松比賽中充滿活力。謝謝

By answering the above questions you've demonstrated extraordinary mental endurance. Congratulations! Thank you.

如果您有興趣參加歐洲的體育活動，請告訴我。

我很樂意幫助你。

Please let me know if you're interested in participating in sports in Europe. Perhaps I can help you.

如果您有任何疑問，可以通過以下電子郵件地址與我聯繫：.....

If you have questions, you can contact me at the following e-mail address:....



## **Appendix 2**

### **Interview Questions for event organizers \***

1. When did you organize the first ultra-running event in Taiwan?
2. What was the first ultra-event you organized?
3. What attracts you to ultra-running? (What do you like about it in general)?
4. What sports have you been engaged in, in addition to running?
5. When were you invited to work for the IAU and what are your responsibilities?
6. How many office workers do you have in the CTU?
7. What do you think the key to your success is?
8. What do you consider your greatest ultra-challenge?
9. You organize 8 IAU-labelled events per year. What's your motivation behind...
10. Do you speak Japanese or Korean or any other languages?
11. You've seen many international events around the world. In what way are your international events different from 'Taiwanese only' races?
12. Besides your organization, where else did you see excellent event management and organization?
13. What would you like to learn from ultra-events in other countries, if at all?
14. If Hungary organized a major IAU event, what would mean the greatest challenge for your team?
15. What do you think would be the greatest challenge for the Hungarian hosts if Hungary organized a major IAU event?
17. What do you consider your greatest success in organizing? Which of your events do you find the most successful?
18. What will be the greatest challenge for the Taiwanese team at the 24hr world championships in France in October?
19. In what way do you contribute to the comfort and success of invited runners at Soochow University?
20. What is the most challenging part of your job as an organizer of high-profile events?
21. What is your motto (or slogan)?

\*These questions were re-worded for the Hungarian event organizer as necessary.

## Appendix 3

### **Race report on Run Across Taiwan: 246 km on the road from Taichung Harbor to Hualien April 13-14, 2019 by Edit Bércecs**

#### **The race**

Run Across Taiwan is much more than an international athletic feat. It offers three activities in one: running, sightseeing and charity.

#### **CUMA and ALS**

The Chinese Ultra-marathon Association has a history of several years in cooperating with the Taiwan Motor Neuron Disease Foundation. Their relationship does not only mean fundraising for the treatment of those unfortunate patients who lose their ability to walk and sometimes even to talk, but also reminds us runners how fortunate we are simply due to the fact that we can walk and talk without difficulty. The newly elected president of the Taiwan Motor Neuron Disease Association foundation personally reaches out and touches the hearts of all involved in the ultramarathon events organized by the CTPE Ultra-marathon association.



In the first edition of the Run Across Taiwan the weather conditions permitted for the patients to follow the race and cheer on the runners along the road. This the president of the Taiwan Motor Neuron Disease Association was entrusted with handling the starting gun and the presentation of the awards on the podium

#### **The participants**

The fifth edition of Run Across Taiwan (RAT) started from Taichung Harbor at dusk on Friday, April 12. Besides local Taiwanese runners, international athletes from Hong Kong, China, Malaysia and Japan toed the starting line.

#### **Course and equipment**

The scenic course between Taichung and Hualien passes by Taiwan's most popular tourist destinations such as Qingjing Farm, Puli, and Taroko National Park. Moreover, it also tests the runners stamina via an elevation gain of over 9000 meters (cca. 30, 000ft) up to altitudes of over 300 meters and a 46 hour cut-off time. Mandatory race gear is not confined to shorts and shoes, but also includes a dough jacket, flashlights, and a helmet in the last leg of the course.

#### **Aid stations and weather**

Well stocked aid stations, staffed with local running clubs cheered on the runners throughout the course, regardless of rain, sunshine, daylight, foggy weather or night.

### **RD and race mascot**

Race director Frank Kuo is not only an excellent organizer, but also has a good sense of humor. Due to his creativity, this year's oldest participant ...Tsai .. His mascot was carried by a relay of experienced marathon runners throughout the way.

### **Language services**

Considering the language needs of the event, it is very considerate of the organizers to label everything bilingually in Chinese and English. In addition, Japanese runners were provided personalized real-time Japanese language service if needed. Mr. Kuo Jr was ready to interpret questions or information throughout the 46 hours of the race. In addition, most volunteers could speak English fluently.

### **The finish line**

The finish line experience of RAT is a show of its own kind. RAT uses three different kinds of tapes: winner, best smile, etc. In addition, the finishers are welcomed by two local beauties dressed in aboriginal clothing.

### **Food and culture**

After finishing, all hungry and exhausted runners could choose from local culinary masterpieces such as ..... fruit and deserts. The local food experience was enriched by the music of local aboriginal singers in the last two hours leading to the cut-off time.

### **First to finish**

Victory in such a race presupposes hard physical work, mental strength and experience. Nomoto had them all. The Japanese lead the field from start to finish in a record winning time of 28:27:37. The former course record (30 hours 01 minute and 45 seconds) was held by Takayoshi Shigemi (壳木村), JPN). Nomoto was followed by Kai-Pong Law (羅啟邦) from Hong Kong and Ting-Jui Kang from Taiwan.

The ladies' race was won by Hongkongese Wai-Han Lau in a time of 36 hours 19 minutes and 5 seconds, followed by Taiwan's Wen-Hsuan Hsiang and Chau-Mei (Grace) Leung from Hong Kong. RAT also offered shorter sub-events such as 55 km, 110km and a 165km, starting at Qingjing Farm and Puli.

### **Over the finish line**

Run Across Taiwan is one of the numerous events organized by the Chinese Taipei Ultramarathon Association. The next ultra race to be staged by RAT in Taiwan is the Kaoshiung 24h Track UltraMarathon in November. For those who have run across America, Australia or Europe, Run Across Taiwan is a good start for your Asian adventure running experience. Hopefully the race will take place in 2020 again.

Hualien, Taiwan, April 14, 2019

Official race website for RAT: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a6KTV\\_0D74D8V1--sBplhWRdl8eacDXOLY52FadXEt8/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a6KTV_0D74D8V1--sBplhWRdl8eacDXOLY52FadXEt8/edit)