

# Does being good at triathlon have a positive effect on your managerial performance?

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# 1. Abstract

Training for and competing in triathlons has grown in popularity among a variety of people recently. A major part of these individuals belongs to the business world. The impact of this involvement on a manager's physical and mental health, time management, and general job performance is unknown, though and holds a magnitude of interesting implications.

The purpose of this study is to look into how a manager's job performance, physical and mental well-being, and time management are directly affected by triathlon training and competition. This research paper will conduct a qualitative analysis, which will include a survey of managers who participate in triathlon events to obtain results about how the sport impacts their perceived managerial abilities.

The study will concentrate on how a manager's physical and mental health, including their level of energy, stress, and general well-being, are impacted by triathlon training and competition. The study will also look at how effective managers manage their triathlon training with their executive responsibilities and to what extent this has an impact on their managerial performance.

This study intends to offer insights into how business professionals can successfully reconcile their athletic hobbies with their professional responsibilities by looking at the effects of triathlon training and competition on a manager's time management and job performance. The title of this paper is “Does being good at triathlon have a positive effect on your managerial performance?” and is written by Luca Glahn.

**Keywords:** Triathlon, Performance, Achievements, Competencies

Os treinos e as competições de triatlo ganharam popularidade entre várias pessoas nos últimos tempos. Uma grande parte destas pessoas pertence ao mundo dos negócios. No entanto, o impacto deste envolvimento na saúde física e mental, na gestão do tempo e no desempenho profissional geral de um gestor é desconhecido e tem implicações muito interessantes.

O objectivo deste estudo é analisar a forma como o desempenho profissional, o bem-estar físico e mental e a gestão do tempo de um gestor são directamente afectados pelo treino e pela competição de triatlo. Este trabalho de investigação conduzirá uma análise qualitativa, que incluirá um inquérito a gestores que participam em eventos de triatlo para obter resultados sobre o impacto do desporto nas suas capacidades de gestão.

O estudo centrar-se-á na forma como a saúde física e mental de um gestor, incluindo o seu nível de energia, o stress e o bem-estar geral, são afectados pelo treino e pela competição de triatlo. O estudo também analisará a forma como os gestores eficazes gerem o seu treino de triatlo com as suas responsabilidades executivas e em que medida isso tem um impacto no seu desempenho de gestão.

Este estudo pretende oferecer uma visão sobre como os profissionais de negócios podem conciliar com sucesso os seus passatempos desportivos com as suas responsabilidades profissionais, analisando os efeitos do treino e da competição de triatlo na gestão do tempo e no desempenho profissional de um gestor. O título deste artigo é "Does being good at triathlon have a positive effect on your managerial performance?" e é da autoria de Luca Glahn.

Palavras-chave: Triatlo, Desempenho, Realizações, Competências

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## **2. Introduction**

This Master's thesis investigates the connection between triathlon participation and its effects on managers who participate in the sport. The study's goal is to investigate how a manager's physical and mental health, time management, and overall job performance are affected by triathlon training and competition. The purpose of the study is to shed light on the possible advantages of triathlon participation for managers and to offer insights into what kind of an effect it has on their working lives. Triathlon is one of the most labor-intensive and time-consuming sports in the world, and the question of whether and how people in important managerial positions manage to integrate this sport into their daily lives and, in the best case scenario, achieve possible benefits from practicing this sport is the fundamental question of this academic paper. It is already known that other sports have a positive influence on the physical and mental condition and development of individuals and, accordingly, managers, but the question of whether this is also true for the sport of triathlon is the aim of this academic work.

### **Background information on triathlon**

Triathlon races are usually long endurance events which require strong physical preparation and sometimes even a more profound mental preparation for the challenging demands that competitors will face during those races. Already during the time-consuming and physically and mentally challenging preparation for these events, athletes and participants develop a strong connection to themselves and develop tremendous mental and physical resilience, helping individuals discover themselves and experience tremendous excitement.

Participating in and preparing for these events provides participants with an enormous sense of accomplishment, achievement and triumph which they can use as a motivational boost in their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, skills such as autonomy and the development and perception of personal responsibility are also established during the participation in and training for these triathlon events (Atkinson, 2013).

Since it combines three physically strenuous activities (swimming, cycling, and running) into one competition, triathlon is sometimes regarded as one of the harshest sports in the world. Triathlons also frequently involve high levels of intensity and demand a lot of stamina, strength, and mental toughness. These elements work together to make triathlons a difficult and demanding sport. The following table provides an overview of the different types of triathlons, whereas this research paper will highlight the distinct mental and physical requirements of preparing, participating and finishing full Ironman races and, or, half Ironman (70.3) races and the resulting correlations that can be drawn from participation in this sport on management performance and also management behavior.

RACE TYPE	SWIM	BIKE	RUN	TOTAL
<b>Ironman</b>	<b>2.4m / 3.8km</b>	<b>112m / 180km</b>	<b>26.2 m / 42.2km</b>	<b>140.6m / 226km</b>
<b>Half Ironman / 70.3</b>	<b>1.2m / 1.9km</b>	<b>56m /90km</b>	<b>13.1m / 21.1km</b>	<b>70.3m / 113km</b>
World Triathlon/ITU long Course	2km	80km	20km	102km
Olympic	1.5km	40km	10km	51.5km
Sprint	750m	20km	5km	25.75km
Super Sprint	400m	10km	2.5km	12.9km
Super League	300m x3	4km x3	1.6km x3	17.7km
Arena Games Triathlon	200m x3	3km x3	1km x3	12.6km

(Leitch, 2021)

## **Background information on management**

According to the author Peter Drucker, management can be described as a task and furthermore a discipline. A pre-requisite for successful management is a well-planned plan regarding a variety of facets. Drucker states that a well designed plan includes specific goals, a clear time table with pre defined objectives and furthermore a method on how to track the achievements of those

objectives. Hence, planning is the key tool that effective managers must be able to demonstrate (Drucker, 1974).

In 2002, Margretta and Stone published an academic paper in which they agreed that management goes beyond the simple collection of theoretical methods and theoretical procedures, but more importantly includes a way of collecting and expressing thoughts about the world. Successful management includes the skills of precise goal-setting, decision making skills and strategic thinking, while balancing these key attributes in alignment with the respective key mission and corporate values of the specific entity. Furthermore, according to the authors, in order to be considered as an effective and successful manager, these individuals must prove to be able to inspire, lead and motivate their team, to establish meaningful relationships with their subordinates and stakeholders such as clients and suppliers and must demonstrate the key attribute to take on difficult decisions whenever necessary (Magretta and Stone, 2002).

Adding to this, the authors David Boddy and Steve Paton published a paper in 1998, illustrating the importance of controlling and organizing the respective resources of an organization in order to lead the entity to the desired corporate success and conclude that this overview is one of the key attributes of successful management. This overview must not end there, but furthermore must be extended to the overall environment in which the organization operates and what the long term mission, vision and value of the organization is and that planning must be done accordingly. In order to comply with this planning criteria, the strategy must be clearly formulated and shared among all involved stakeholders to achieve milestones. Specific measurements must be implemented and tracked on a recurring basis, so that the right direction is always provided and corporate milestones are achieved (Boddy and Paton, 1998).

## **Problem statement**

The main scope of this study is to understand how training for and participating in triathlon correlates with being a successful manager. Both activities incorporate many attributes that this paper aims to identify and furthermore link with each other.

Furthermore, it is intended to gain insights about which mental attributes managers gain from participating in such a demanding endurance sport and how it influences their managerial decision making and behavior. The question of whether or not involvement in this sport has only purely positive effects on the professional life of management positions, and if so, how this affects the formation of competencies and the resulting advantageous and purposeful orientation of the management style of individuals, will be dealt with and discussed in detail in the following paragraphs of this thesis.

The problem statement can be summarized as:

Do participants of the triathlon sport, who at the same time also hold high-ranking managerial positions, demonstrate special managerial skills and thereby manage to excel in their role?

In order to take a closer look at this question and to offer the reader of this academic thesis a fair and impressive insight into the world of triathlon and its connection to managerial performance, a detailed and well-practiced online survey was created as methodology. This survey was specifically sent only to pre-selected participants. The criteria that have to be fulfilled in order to answer the survey in a professional and insightful way and to participate in the survey are on the one hand that the respective person has to be actively involved in triathlon and on the other hand that he/she has to hold a higher managerial position in which he/she has leadership and decision-making competence in the strategic or operational business of different companies from different industries.

## **Purpose and significance of the study**

The purpose of this study is to determine whether being a good triathlete correlates with being a successful manager. A high level of physical fitness, mental toughness, time management, goal setting, and teamwork are all necessary for the challenging and complex sport of triathlon. On the other hand, managing people calls for a wide range of abilities, including motivation, leadership, communication, decision-making, and so forth. Despite what could seem to be disparities between the two fields, there may be a link between being a great triathlete and being

a successful manager. This study attempts to investigate this potential connection and shed light on any potential skill and attribute crossover between sports and management.

This study is significant in a number of ways. First, it adds to the body of work on sports management that has primarily concentrated on the commercial aspects of sports, such as marketing, financing, and governance, rather than on the abilities and performances of athletes and managers. This study broadens the focus of sports management research and sheds light on the possible function of sports as a source of managerial skills and growth by examining the relationship between triathlon and management.

On top of that, this academic paper aims to demonstrate a multitude of potential theoretical and practical applications for managers across all industries, organizations.

The impact on talent recruitment, retention, development and discovery could be tremendous for organizations across all industries if the findings support the above stated underlying hypothesis of this paper that excellent triathlon abilities directly translate to excellent managerial abilities. As an example, firms could hire and potentially focus on applicants or potential candidates that are engaged in triathlon sports in order to ensure they are already equipped with the necessary abilities and attributes necessary to fulfill the managerial duties in an adequate manner.

To summarize, this academic paper aims to manifest if an excellent ability to compete in triathlon events and being able to endure the challenges occurring during the lead up and training for those events directly correlates to being an effective manager. The most important contribution of this academic paper can be regarded as it is contributing towards the general literature on sports, or more specifically triathlon, and management, and furthermore the actual implications it discovers for managers, athletes, organizations and society as a whole.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **What distinguishes triathlon from other sports?**

When compared to other sports, or more specifically endurance sports, triathlon stands out as being very difficult and demanding in many aspects. The triathlon experience generally revolves around enduring suffering, which is being regarded as a psychological method to push oneself to the maximum and accomplish personal objectives which boost one's confidence and equip an individual with a strong mental attitude and aids these participating individuals in overcoming obstacles in their everyday personal and professional lives.. Many triathletes take pleasure in their capacity to endure pain and discomfort and embrace the challenge of conquering both physical and mental obstacles that the training brings along, in terms of volume and intensity. Social and cultural elements, such as the perception of the triathlon sport by the public as an elite sport and a highly masculine endeavor, most definitely have an impact on the triathlete sufferer's experience. This general highly valued perception of this sport definitely motivates many individuals to engage in such sport in order to be regarded as enduring and persevering by their peers and the general public. Participating triathletes may experience pressure to live up to specific standards and expectations which they set up by themselves, or their coaches set up or they believe the society sets up for them, which may have an impact on how they see pain and how eager they are to push oneself to the edge in order to comply with these expectations. The triathlon process revolves around hardship and determination, which is being regarded as a means to push oneself to the maximum physical and psychological ability and accomplish personal objectives. Many triathletes take pleasure in demonstrating their capacity to endure physical and mental discomfort and agony and embrace the challenge of conquering both psychological and physical obstacles that this sport brings along.

Individual characteristics of participants and their character traits, as well as their coping mechanisms, have an impact on how these individuals perceive and experience hardship and discomfort during these sporting events. The psychological and emotional demands that the sport brings along may be easier to cope with for triathletes who already demonstrate excellent coping

mechanisms and demonstrate a high ability to handle the exertion experienced during training and races (Atkinson, 2008).

Adding to the mental and physical demands of this sport, triathlon, especially regarding the distances being covered in Long Course, Half Ironmans and Ironmans, is one of the most time-consuming sports that individuals can engage in. Athletes who sign up for a race commit not only to the event but also to months of rigorous, mentally and physically challenging hours of training and other unknown obstacles such as injuries that may accompany the lead up to the race.. The following table provides an overview of weekly training hours of amateur triathletes, respectively for each race type they are preparing for, clearly identifying the amount of workouts per discipline and their respective duration in total (Lacke et al., 2022).

RACE TYPE	SWIM	BIKE	RUN	TOTAL
Super Sprint	1:00-1:30 (2 swims)	1:30-2:00 (2 bikes)	1:15-1:30 (2 runs plus a run off the long bike)	<b>4:00-5:00</b>
Sprint	1:30-2:00 (2-3 swims)	2:30-3:00 (2 bikes)	2:00-2:30 (2 runs plus a run off the long bike)	<b>6:00-7:30</b>
Olympic	1:30-2:00 (2-3 swims)	4:00-5:00 (3 bikes)	3:00-4:00 (3 runs plus a run off the long bike)	<b>8:30-11:00</b>
World Triathlon/ITU Long Course	1:30-2:30 (2-3 swims)	5:00-6:00 (3 bikes)	4:00-5:00 (3 runs plus a run off the long bike)	<b>11:00-14:00</b>
Half Ironman / 70.3	2:00-3:00 (2-3 swims)	5:00-6:30 (3 bikes)	3:30-4:30 (3 runs plus a run off the long bike)	<b>10:30-14:00</b>
Ironman	3:00-4:00 (2-3 swims)	7:00-9:00 (3 bikes)	4:30-5:30 (3 runs plus a run off the long bike)	<b>14:30-18:30</b>

(Lacke et al., 2022)

## **Who participates in triathlons and how can those participants be segmented?**

As stated in the publication "Who takes part in triathlon? An application of lifestyle segmentation to triathlon participants" by Daniel Weimar, P. Wicker, Kirstin Hallmann, and Joachim Prinz five different segments of triathlon participants can be identified based on their lifestyle characteristics. These five different segments can be identified as "Competitive Athletes," "Recreational Athletes," "Socially-Oriented Athletes," "Fitness-Oriented Athletes," and "Non-Athletic."

The data mentioned in the following paragraph is obtained from the paper "Who takes part in triathlon? An application of lifestyle segmentation to triathlon participants" by Daniel Weimar, P. Wicker, Kirstin Hallmann, and Joachim Prinz. In my research paper, I will mainly focus on the largest group of triathlon athletes identified by Weimar, Wicker, Hallmann and Prinz, the "Competitive Athletes" (37.4% of the respondents identified in the paper mentioned above), who are identified based on their willingness to dedicate themselves to participate in triathlon and all accompanying facets, carry along a strong urge to compete, and are willing and able to endure a demanding training schedule. Furthermore, I will focus on the second-largest group of athletes (27.3% of the respondents identified in the paper mentioned above), who are being classified by Daniel Weimar, P. Wicker, Kirstin Hallmann, and Joachim Prinz as "Recreational Athletes" who demonstrate a respectively higher but still moderate sense of dedication to the sport, enjoy individual success and usually only undertake a smaller amount of training in terms of volume and intensity.

This paper published by Daniel Weimar, P. Wicker, Kirstin Hallmann, and Joachim Prinz is based on a survey of 768 triathletes in Germany. Regarding the "Competitive Athletes", the following key attributes were identified in regards to the demographics, motivations, and attitudes:

### *Demographics:*

According to the findings of the survey conducted by the authors mentioned above, male triathletes make up the majority of "Competitive Athletes" (77.4%) when compared to female athletes (22.6%). In general, these "Competitive Athletes" are already more senior than the other segment groups, with an average age of 34.7 years. On top

are more likely to be "Competitive Athletes" (77.4%) than female athletes (22.6%). "Competitive Athletes" are indeed older than the average age of the other groups, with an average age of 34.7 years. Furthermore, this segment group proves that they are the best educated academically and that they are the most likely to hold a university degree.

### *Attitudes:*

The group of "Competitive Athletes" logs in the most training hours of the five different segment groups identified by the authors, with an average weekly training time of 10.7 hours. Further to that, those athletes being segmented as "Competitive Athletes" also enjoy being active in other sports and mostly engaged in a multitude of other activities before participating in triathlon nowadays.

### *Motivations:*

The group of "Competitive Athletes" are constantly motivated by the urge to improve their performance and to reach milestones and objectives which they set up by themselves. This internal motivation is even more ignited by the competitive nature of triathlons, which reinforces their desire to achieve and makes participating in races even more tempting and desirable for these individuals. Enjoyment and considering the sport of triathlon as social engagement is not of high importance for these "Competitive Athletes" (Wicker et al., 2012).

Following are the key attributes which were identified in regards to the demographics, motivations, and attitudes for the segment group of "Recreational Athletes":

### *Demographics:*

The segment of “Recreational Athletes” mainly incorporates individuals who regard participating in and training for triathlon races as leisure activity and personal enjoyment. Furthermore, these “Recreational Athletes” are mainly amateur athletes who did not and plan not to participate in professional races. The ages of these “Recreational Athletes” often vary, but the majority of these athletes are middle-aged adults between 35 and 60 years of age. The distribution of male and female participants is evenly distributed (Wicker et al., 2012).

### *Attitudes:*

The segment of “Recreational Athletes” is especially drawn towards the social aspects that triathlon brings along, such as meeting like minded people and to establish meaningful connections. Enjoyment and personal satisfaction is valued above everything else, and winning or achieving certain goals is not being regarded as overly satisfying and worthwhile. The segment of “Recreational Athletes” generally demonstrates a way more relaxed and balanced viewpoint towards competing and training. “Recreational Athletes” may participate in other sports, but most of their available and dedicated time regarding engaging in sports goes towards triathlon (Wicker et al., 2012).

### *Motivations:*

The segment of “Recreational Athletes” is mainly motivated by the drive to achieve a healthy and active lifestyle through triathlon participation. Furthermore, “Recreational Athletes” want to accomplish personal fulfillment and establish a feeling of accomplishment by participating in and taking part in triathlon races. These “Recreational Athletes” furthermore enjoy challenges, but use the sport of triathlon more as a means to relief stress and escape from daily routines instead of constantly pushing themselves to the extreme boundaries (Wicker et al., 2012).

## **Characteristics of a good triathlete - Which mental skills do triathletes need and want?**

It is undisputed that as a triathlon athlete, especially for the long distance triathlon, you need to master a remarkable range of skills and abilities to succeed in the sport. In particular, the often months-long, rigorous preparation for the competitions, which is characterized by a lot of training in absolute solitude and pushing one's own limits, requires a strong mental resilience and other mental skills as a basic prerequisite.

In accordance with the journal entry “What Mental Skills Ironman Triathletes Need and Want” by Karine Grand’Maison published in 2004, it becomes clear that triathletes must fulfill a wide variety of mental skills in order to excel at this demanding sport. Grand’Maison quotes that for Ironman triathletes, mental fortitude is just as crucial as physical preparation and that competition is only possible with adequate and thorough mental preparation. (Ironman) triathletes need to be robust, psychologically tough, and able to focus for extended periods of time. Furthermore, the setting of objectives is crucial. (Ironman) triathletes must develop SMART goals—specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound—for both their training and competition. This benefits them to be inspired and concentrated throughout their months-long preparation leading up to a race.

The use of visualization and mental practice is beneficial: Ironman triathletes employ mental rehearsal and visualization to be ready for race day, get over challenges, and maintain motivation throughout arduous training sessions. Triathletes must be able to manage their inner dialogue and employ positive self-talk in order to stay inspired, concentrated, and confident (Grand’Maison, 2004).

Coping mechanisms are required for them to be able to cope with stress and maintain their mental health. Triathletes encounter a variety of difficulties throughout training and competition, including exhaustion, suffering, and unforeseen obstructions. Triathletes depend on the support of their coaches, training partners, family members, and friends to be inspired, focused, and psychologically tough, hence support is crucial (Grand’Maison, 2004).

## **Does engagement in sports have a positive effect on workers' performance at the workplace?**

It has been known for decades that sporting activity can have a positive influence on the mental and physical condition of individuals, especially those who are being exposed to a hectic and demanding work environment.

The additional benefits of sports do not stop at this point. Sports of any kind can increase the social inclusion and cohesion of participants in society. In addition, companies as well as governments at the state and local level can promote sports activities among the population and thus successfully meet social and economic goals by reducing overall health care costs through better health status of the society in general brought about by sports. Economic goals such as employment rates and overall economic growth can also be achieved as sport engagement serves to open up new markets and thereby create new jobs (Porro, Martelli & Testa, 2020). Relating these findings to the general impact of sport on the overall potential development and performance of employees, it can be seen that sporting activity has a direct positive impact on the healthy development of individuals, making them happier overall and demonstrating greater cohesion and inclusion, which ultimately promotes overall job performance.

In the text “The effects of high school athletic participation on education and labor market outcomes. published by Barron, Ewing and Waddell in 2000 the authors explore the relationship between high school athletic participation and labor market outcomes. The authors conclude that students who participate in high school sports will produce a positive effect on labor market outcomes, which among other contributing factors will result in low unemployment rates, higher job satisfaction and ultimately also higher earnings and hence an increase in motivation and workplace performance. On top of that, the authors inform the reader that companies and societies have to change their perspective on high school sports and rather view it as an investment in the human capital which they will prospectively benefit from in the near future when employing those young talents since the sports aided them to develop a skill set and attributes which are highly valued in the workplace atmosphere such as perseverance and commitment. Investing in young high school athletes and enabling them to follow their preferred

leisure activity must be regarded as long-term investments made from policymakers, educators and parents (Barron, Ewing and Waddell, 2000).

Another paper published in 2005 by Henderson, Olbrecht and Polachek which is called “Do former college athletes earn more at work? A nonparametric assessment.” in its findings furthermore strengthens the preceding arguments brought up by other researchers. In this study, the authors conclude that former male college athletes are significantly higher paid in regards to those who didn’t participate in college sports. Furthermore, the study explains that those who engaged in college sports developed skills such as collaboration, self-motivation, discipline and competitiveness. All of these attributes lead to a positive effect on labor market outcomes and subsequently on the average wage of those former college athletes (Henderson, Olbrecht and Polachek, 2005). Again, these findings can be directly related to the positive impact that sports participation has on workers’ performance and their overall achievements in the workplace.

Quoting another paper published in 2015 by Dewenter and Giessing called “The effects of elite sports participation on later job success” reinforces the assumption that participation in sports has a positive effect on workers’ performance. In their paper the authors summarize that individuals who participate in elite sports will experience positive effects on their earnings situation, overall workplace satisfaction and earnings. The reason for this is that, according to the authors, the participants of elite sports aids the development of highly valued attributes, both in the professional as well as personal environment, such as discipline, dedication and collaboration (Dewenter and Giessing, 2015).

In 2011 the researcher D.O. Rooth published an academic paper called “Work out or out of work - the labor market return to physical fitness and leisure sports activities.” which declared some of the following findings. Firstly, Rooth confirms that there is an existing positive relationship between engaging in physical activity and labor market outcomes which can be measured by many factors such as weekly hours spent at the job, hourly salary and overall probability of employment. Another interesting aspect that the author states is that as a result of investments

into physical activity, positive spillover effects could result for the individuals' labor market outcome (Rooth, 2011).

As a finalizing note for this chapter of my academic work, I would like to refer to another paper which was published in 2016 by D. Gorry called "Heterogeneous effects of sports participation on education and labor market outcomes. Education Economics". In this paper, the author explains that individuals who engage in high school sports will receive a positive effect on their educational attainment through this leisure activity. This effect is measured through the rate of high school graduations and college enrollments. As his fellow researchers mentioned above, also Gorry concluded that high school participation indeed has a measurable positive effect on labor market outcomes, which can be analyzed in earnings and employment reports (Gorry, 2016).

### **Definition of a good manager - Which skills do managers need and want?**

It is indisputable that many sports show a correlation in terms of the skills required to be successful in that sport and the skills required to be a manager in such a profession, such as determination, organization, prioritization and commitment to the matter itself. Looking at Carmichael's paper "What do we believe makes a good manager" published in 1995, it is clear that a good manager must have a wide range of skills.

In his academic work, author Carmichael explains that communication is the cornerstone of successful management. To be an effective manager, you must be able to listen intently, communicate clearly with your employees, and provide precise and appropriate feedback when requested or needed. He also describes that trust is another cornerstone of successful management. A manager who wants to be considered competent must build a trusting relationship with his team by appearing open, honest and trustworthy. Flexibility and adaptability are also key attributes of a successful manager. Effective managers must be able to adapt and analyze situations and situations adequately, to adopt fresh and innovative approaches and to review to what extent they serve the corporate purpose and also be prepared to implement them. Probably the most important finding from his academic work relates to the necessary

results-driven mentality of a successful manager. Effective managers need to be results-driven and willing to speak uncomfortable truths in troubled times, address problems and make unpopular decisions if it serves the overall achievement of the company's milestones. Furthermore, the author describes that effective managers must show a constant willingness and ability to improve in all necessary areas. Effective managers must be dedicated to their own and their team's development in both personal and professional areas (Carmichael, 1995).

These findings are in turn confirmed in the academic paper "What Do Successful Managers Really Do? An Observation Study of Managerial Activities" published in 1985 by the authors F. Luthans, S. A. Rosenkrantz, and H. W. Hennessey, in which the authors confirm that in order to act effectively and efficiently as managers, these individuals must master a wide array of skills, including those of networking and establishing significant contacts, maintaining interpersonal relationships, and having the capacity to prioritize and multitask. Furthermore, this academic work describes that effective managers have to put a lot of intensive effort into balancing the often high demands of their professional life with their personal life. In addition, effective managers must invest more capital and effort in human resource management, such as training and inspiring themselves and their employees.

In 1996, the author Robert E. Quinn published a paper called "Becoming a Master Manager: A Competency Framework" in which he defines that to engage as a successful manager, these individuals must be able to control and rightfully analyze their own feelings and actions, must continuously prove a willingness to learn, demonstrate a high level of self-awareness, and furthermore being able to explore new ideas while also adjusting and responding quickly to new and unforeseen challenges and circumstances. On top of that, according to the author, successful managers must be able to stand firm in their opinion and demonstrate a confident demeanor. Furthermore, these individuals must be able to delegate responsibly and also show willingness to hand over important tasks to team members in order to achieve the best possible corporate outcome (Quinn, 1996).

## **Are athletes in general more likely to occupy managerial positions?**

### **Previous studies on the relationship between athletic success and managerial success**

According to the paper "Athletes in boardrooms: Evidence from the world" published in 2018 by Dong et al. when compared to non-athletes, athletes are more likely to be appointed to company boards. In comparison to non-athletes, the authors found that athletes are 14% more likely to serve on a corporate board. This implies that sportspeople could be preferred in business boardrooms. Corporate boards with athletes tend to have more successful financial outcomes. Companies with athlete directors exhibit greater return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE) than those without athlete directors, according to the authors. This implies that sportsmen could contribute special knowledge and expertise to company boards that have a favorable effect on financial success (Dong et al., 2018).

When observing other findings, such as the Harvard Business Review article "The making of a corporate athlete" by Loehr and Schwartz published in 2001, the authors both state that physical energy is the basis of great performance, for both personal and professional environments. To increase their physical vitality and hence their managerial abilities, they advise CEOs to adopt a lifestyle that includes consistent and rigorously followed exercise, a well balanced and highly nutritional diet, and adequate rest which would subsequently result in managerial success in a corporate context. In addition to physical energy, the authors state that emotional and mental energy are equally important for excellent performance as an effective manager. They advise effective leaders, or those who strive to achieve that status, to build mental toughness and good emotion management skills so they can handle the pressures of the demanding workplace (Loehr & Schwartz, 2001).

The idea that athletics may be used as a way to help people acquire leadership abilities that can be employed in other sectors of life, including the boardroom, is the theme of the book "From the Locker Room to the Boardroom: Building Leaders Through Sport" by E. Argent. The author states that sport can help people learn important skills such as teamwork, communication, goal setting and decision making that can help them become better leaders. Character traits such as tenacity, resilience and self-control, which are advantageous in leadership positions, can be

developed through participation in sport and then beneficially utilized in managerial decision-making processes (Argent, 2013).

The journal entry in sports while managing others and its effects on managerial effectiveness is the journal entry “Giving meaning to sport involvement in managerial work” by Knoppers published in 2011 further highlights the significance of involvement in sports for leadership while managing teams and the corresponding effects on managerial abilities that are being derived from this activity. The main finding of this article is that participation in sports definitely aids managerial abilities of individuals. For instance, according to the authors, participation in sports can help managers to obtain crucial skills such as a sense of responsibility, teamwork, leadership and also benefits general communication skills, all of which is directly related to managerial effectiveness in a corporate setting. On top of that, participation of managers in sports can lead to the development of experiencing a sense of meaning and also purpose for these individuals outside of their corporate setting. This circumstance benefits the creation of a healthy and sustainable work-life balance and the avoidance of burnouts, which most definitely then benefits their managerial performance. Furthermore, the author argues that managers must always find the balance between engaging in leisure activities and maintaining their managerial duties and that achieving this equilibrium can be a challenging task (Knoppers, 2011).

### **Other factors that make a successful manager?**

Referring to the paper “Managerial Success Factors” published by Stivers, Adams, and Liu in 2007, it can be concluded that according to the authors managerial success is composed of several important factors.

Some of these important factors that form successful managers are that these individuals have to possess the power to encourage, motivate, and inspire their team members in order to achieve maximum corporate success. This corporate success can be then stretched out to the overall well-being of the team members, since these individuals will also experience a feeling of achievement and hence satisfaction. On top of that, successful managers have to demonstrate the

ability to effectively incorporate themselves into the team, demonstrate intercultural competence and furthermore demonstrate a high degree of competence in terms of making well-informed and thoughtful decisions.

Also, efficient managers must demonstrate technical proficiency in their specific area of operation and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the respective industry they are operating in, so that they can carry out their obligations in a concise manner. This understanding incorporates the anticipation and understanding of market trends, regulations and possible best practices.

Additionally, effective managers must demonstrate a high level of networking skills, both with their team as well as other relevant stakeholders. They also have to show that they can work with and absorb critical information in a constructive manner, and also enable the establishment of an effective communication framework in order to avoid possible misunderstandings which would slow down corporate success.

Just as their fellow research colleagues, Stivers, Adams, and Liu conclude that efficient managers must be willing and able to adapt to change if necessary and not be too proud to accept shortcomings and potential personal failures and to assess those issues and translate them into lessons learned. Besides that, communicating effectively what they regard is the clear vision and to operate accordingly and to successfully implement a plan in order to realize this vision is another key attribute for success in the management environment.

To conclude this paper, the authors argue that the demonstration of emotional intelligence and to develop a sense of feeling for possible or factual sensitivities among their team members and themselves is another key attribute of a successful manager (Stivers, Adams, & Liu, 2007).

In 1999, the author F. Analoui published his academic work with the title "Eight Parameters of Managerial Effectiveness" in which he concludes the following parameters which are crucial for managerial effectiveness, which are communication, motivation, delegation, empowerment, creativity, problem-solving, decision-making, and time management.

Especially the managerial abilities in the parameters of motivation, decision-making, and time management are skills obtained through participation in and training for triathlons as my academic work will show in the following pages.

The author states that in order to engage their teams, managers must involve a huge variety of motivational tactics. In terms of productivity and engagement of team members, motivating them is one of the key cornerstones and demonstrating motivation as a manager yourself is one mean to achieve this desired outcome.

Furthermore, managers who are effective must be able to identify problems, provide solutions and conclude avoidance strategies for the future. These can be defined as key problem-solving and decision-making abilities. Effective time management is one of the most critical aspects of being a successful manager, according to Analoui, since the workload and demand for those individuals is enormous. Managers who aim to be efficient must clearly demonstrate prioritization skills and furthermore be able to engage in effective time management (Analoui, 1999).

#### **4. Research design and data collection methods**

In order to answer the research questions, both primary and secondary data will be used.

The basis of published papers regarding the correlation of triathlon and management is extremely scarce. Accordingly, primary data, on which this thesis is based, is obtained through a questionnaire that is sent out to test subjects who meet the criteria of actively following the sport of triathlon and having successfully participated in a triathlon race, and at the same time holding a position as a manager.

In order to make my literature review meet the requirements of an academic paper, I have done intensive source research on several levels. On the one hand, I have worked intensively with the program "Google Scholar" to identify suitable literature and to integrate it accordingly for this academic paper. Utilizing this tool enabled me to gather an extensive and meaningful number of different literature works and could use these as the basis for the production of this work. Key words I used to find appropriate academic papers were "sport", "triathlon", "management style",

"implications", "function", "development", "benefits", "advantages", and "corporate performance", "management" and "success".

In particular, the recruitment of the respondents in the context of the parameters to be fulfilled posed an enormous challenge. It was important for the collection of my qualitative data that I receive reliable responses from those target persons who hold higher managerial positions, i.e. who have leadership, budgetary, strategic or operational responsibility, who are interested in triathlon, who have been involved in the sport for a longer period of time and who have ideally already participated successfully in competitions. For the collection of the answers and the analysis of my results I used the survey tool "Qualtrics", because on the one hand it is easy to use, for the questioner as well as for the respondent and on the other hand it is easy to achieve detailed evaluations based on the obtained results. In order to obtain an adequate number of subjects and to create a meaningful survey to use reasonably as the basis for writing this academic paper, i first sent the survey to friends and acquaintances with whom i am personally acquainted and asked them to engage their own environment in completing this survey so that i would have different demographic levels, different athletic levels, different managerial positions, and different cultural backgrounds to show in my survey and subsequent analysis.

In the first step, the subjects are asked to disclose their demographic data. Subsequently, specific questions are asked regarding the sport of triathlon, the aim of which is to find out to what extent they practice this sport. As a final element of the questionnaire, the respondents are asked if they have gained noticeable and tangible mental competencies through the sport of triathlon and if they can incorporate them into their professional life and managerial competencies.

## **Online Survey**

### **Data Collection**

The main goal of this academic paper is to investigate to what extent a manager's physical and mental well-being, effective time management abilities, and overall job performance in terms of managerial abilities are affected and potentially enhanced by triathlon training and competition. The goal is to investigate if managers who eagerly train for and compete in triathlon races

demonstrate improved time management abilities, and overall enhanced performance in their work environment.

Data from managers who compete in triathlons on an amateur level will be gathered to test this underlying research question of this academic paper. Participating respondents will be questioned on their physical and mental well-being, their effective time management abilities, and overall perception to what extent their engagement in the sport has helped their employment performance.

Statistical analysis will be used in the study to evaluate the physical and mental well-being, time management abilities, and work performance of managers who compete in triathlons to those who do not. The findings could have a multitude of implications for employers, employees and overall governing institutions, as this paper is going to shed light on how beneficial the participation in triathlon sports can be for individuals and give insightful information about the possible advantages of triathlon training and competition for individuals who engage in managerial positions.

## **Research Design**

The purpose of the survey design is to collect information on the associations between triathlon training, competition, and workplace productivity, time management, and physical and mental health of business people. The survey consists of 16 questions, the first two of which request basic demographic data like age and gender.

In questions 3 and 4, the participating respondent is questioned for their precise current employer and respective position in the entity.. This helps us to establish a meaningful insight into the participant's experience and professional background, and furthermore its managerial significance.

Focused on the participant's triathlon activities are questions 5 and 6. Question 5 asks about the participant's involvement in triathlon activities throughout time and what motivated them. The answer choices to Question 6's question about how many hours a week the participant devotes to triathlon training range from 4 to 24 hours.

Open-ended questions 7 through 15 are meant to gather information in the format of in-depth responses on the participant's own experiences with triathlon training, competition, and how it has impacted their professional lives. These inquiries focus on the participant's perception of business people who participate in triathlons, the triathlon events they attend most frequently, and their strategies for balancing their demanding executive responsibilities with their challenging and time consuming triathlon training.

The survey also inquires about the participant's professional life's ability to make well thought through decisions, their ability to lead others, their ability to handle stress, their ability to solve problems, and how they maintain discipline and concentration during the lead up and during competing in triathlon races. These questions are specifically meant to determine how triathlon practice and competition may affect effective time management abilities, general physical and mental health, and overall work performance, and hence managerial abilities.

The final question, number 16, inquires as to whether the respondent believes that being a good triathlete has a direct impact on the managerial performance.

### **Participants of the survey**

All of the survey respondents in this study are very active in the triathlon sport and have jobs with high levels of responsibility. This criterion guarantees that the survey's findings will offer insightful information on the connection between triathlon training and success in executive posts. Respondents had to possess a higher managerial position and have actively participated in triathlon activities for a predetermined amount of time in order to participate in the study. As a result, volunteers are guaranteed to have the necessary triathlon-related knowledge and expertise, as well as a degree of responsibility in their job that is pertinent to the research issue of the study.

The goal of the study is to examine whether , and if, to what extent, a manager's physical and mental well-being, effective time management abilities, and overall job performance may be positively impacted by triathlon training and competition. This includes the amount of time spent on training each week, how it affects decision-making abilities, how leadership abilities are developed, and how well people can deal with stress. The study seeks to shed light on the

possible advantages and difficulties of balancing executive duties with triathlon training by collecting data from highly experienced triathletes who also occupy positions of managerial responsibility in their professional lives.

## **Measurements and Instruments**

In order to learn more about the possible connections between triathlon training and competition and managerial work performance, effective time management, and overall physical and mental wellness, the survey mentioned above includes a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Age, gender, the present employer, and position are among the demographic inquiries that appear first in the survey. The survey's main questions include the frequency and duration of the participants' triathlon training, the effects of such training on their decision-making abilities, their leadership skills, and their stress management coping mechanisms, as well as the applicability of triathlon-specific skills to management positions, such as acting quickly upon experiencing unexpected situations.

Participants were asked to choose how many hours they spend training each week from a predetermined set of possibilities in order to gauge the frequency and duration of their triathlon training. Participants' motivations for participating in triathlon-related activities and their opinions on business people who actively and eagerly compete in triathlons were gathered using open-ended questions. A question on the level of triathlon competitions, including amateur and professional competitions, was also given to the participants in order to determine their motivation and level of commitment and engagement.

In general, the survey's questions were created to gather data on the correlation between triathlon competition and training and several areas of job performance, including stress management, time management, leadership, and decision-making. The survey was delivered to people who meet the requirements of being actively involved in triathlon activities and having higher administrative positions using the Qualtrics platform and through direct methods like email and WhatsApp.

## **Data analysis and techniques**

For parts of this survey, descriptive statistics were used in order to examine the previously gathered data. This method was applied in order to determine the mean and standard deviation regarding the e.g. number of training hours committed to training per week.

Furthermore, the statements of the individual participants of my survey are analyzed with regard to the frequency of various key words and thus a weighting is created, which enables us to summarize the overall statements and thus to gain a deep insight into the perceptions of the respective participants regarding the individual questions provided in the survey, who, as already mentioned, are active triathletes on the one hand and also hold higher-ranking managerial positions.

## **5. Results**

A total of 18 high-quality responses were received, which serve as the basis for the following analysis and result conclusion. In collecting the results, specific care was taken to ensure that the respondents fulfilled the criteria of being passionate and ambitious followers and active participants in the sport of triathlon, and also that they hold senior management positions in order to answer the direct correlation in relation to the research question of this thesis.

It was deliberately decided not to distribute the survey unconditionally to a large number of possible respondents, as the questions included can only be completed meaningfully by a specific group of individuals. In order to ensure that the responses received meet the high standards of this thesis, it was consciously ensured that the respondents take their time and answer the questions to the best of their ability. An extensive circle of friends and acquaintances was drawn upon, from whom a high level of commitment and dedication to answering the survey was to be expected. As a result, it was possible to gain a high quality and detailed insight into the correlation of managerial performance, time management and active participation in triathlon which I will describe and analyze in more detail in the following pages.

## Descriptive statistics of the sample

In this study, information gathered from a survey of employees who engage in triathlon and furthermore hold high-ranked managerial positions at medium-sized businesses including Birkenstock, PwC and McKinsey was evaluated. The study was carried out to firstly gain an insight into the demographics of the workers in these businesses. There were 18 people in the sample, 12 male and 6 female. Since two of the participants omitted important questions and therefore did not provide a cohesive insight, I have excluded them from the following analysis and they will not be considered further. Therefore, the actual and viable participants are a total of 16 people. The respondents' mean age was 41, compared to a 40 median age.

The findings imply that older employees make up a slightly but still meaningful larger portion of the respondents' age distribution, as seen by the discrepancy between median and mean ages. The sample's gender distribution was about equal, with slightly more men than women participating. The following provides an overview of the respondents' age, gender, employer, position and the years that they have been actively engaged in triathlon.

AGE	GENDER	EMPLOYER	POSITION	YEARS ENGAGED IN TRIATHLON
37	Male	Fitogram GmbH	CEO	5
52	Male	Self Employed	Owner	10
56	Male	Birkenstock	Vice President	26
36	Male	Valantic GmbH	/	3
33	Female	EnBW AG	Agile Transformation Expert	7
40	Male	Self Employed	Coach	11
39	Male	Film Production Company	Managing Director	6
24	Male	Armira GmbH	Analyst	3
42	Female	PR Agency	Senior Manager	8
41	Male	KPMG	Manager	5
35	Female	PwC	Senior Manager	3
45	Male	BearingPoint	Senior Manager	6
39	Female	KPMG	Consultant	2
47	Male	Self Employed	CEO	6
37	Male	Renature	Project Manager	11
42	Male	Deutsche Telekom AG	Vice President	5

The mean years of being engaged in triathlon of the respective participants of my survey amounted to 7.3 years and the median years of being engaged in triathlon amounted to 6 years even. The distribution of years spent participating in triathlon is not exactly symmetrical or uniformly distributed, as can be identified by the variation in mean and median years of respondents' participation in the sport.

The fact that the mean is older than the median (7.3 years vs. 6 years) subtly indicates that some members of the group have been triathletes for substantially longer than the majority of other members of the respondents' group.

The list of businesses is segmentable depending on a number of factors, including revenue, nation of headquarters, number of employees, and industry.

Starting with the revenue category, in order to simplify the overview of the companies involved through the respective participants, the companies are categorized into two major revenue categories, which are for once large companies whose revenue exceeded \$1 billion in 2020 and whose employee count exceeds 10,000, such as EnBW AG (EnBW AG, 2021), KPMG (KPMG International, 2021), PwC (PwC International, 2020) and Deutsche Telekom AG (Deutsche Telekom AG, 2021). The second revenue category incorporates companies whose revenue on the other hand didn't exceed \$1 billion in 2020 and whose employee count is under 10,000, such as BearingPoint (BearingPoint, 2020), Fitogram GmbH (Fitogram GmbH, 2022), Birkenstock (Birkenstock, 2022), Valantic GmbH (Valantic GmbH, 2021), Armira GmbH (Armira Group ,n.d.), Renature (Renature, n.d.), and all self-employed. All values mentioned here are provided in US Dollars.

The industries in which the employers of the respondents of my survey are active range from consulting to environmental conservation. The main proportion of the respondents, namely 25%, are being employed in the consultancy sector.

The respective positions of those involved range from analyst to vice president. The respective positions of the individual respondents will not be discussed further in this thesis, since it is only intended to serve as proof that only respondents who fill high-ranking manager positions were

considered for the survey of the preceding analysis and the fundamental underlying question of this thesis.

The information obtained by the survey indicates that the primary motivations for competing in triathlons for the participating respondents include finding a meaningful leisure activity or hobby, balancing a busy or demanding professional career, seeking a new challenge, networking possibilities, and enhancing overall mental as well as physical fitness and health. According to the survey, some people use triathlon as a chance to pursue a joyful leisure activity or hobby; they may have always been active in sports but wanted to try something new and especially difficult in terms of mental and physical demands. Others mentioned that they started to engage in triathlon as a coping mechanism strategy to handle the sometimes overwhelming pressures of a demanding job or to achieve a better and more balanced work-life balance. The challenging nature of a triathlon is a big incentive for many since it offers the chance to push oneself both physically and psychologically. According to the survey, those that participate in the sport may also encounter networking chances, enabling them to get in touch with people who share their interests and hence form alliances which can be regarded as beneficial, both in a professional as well as personal context. Finally, the respondents quote that triathlon offers a great way to increase overall fitness levels and challenge oneself to achieve new personal milestones, hence health and fitness are also significantly important reasons to participate, according to the participants. Overall, personal development, mental and physical wellbeing, a desire for challenge, and a sense of accomplishment seem to be the primary drivers behind triathlon participation of the participating managers of my survey. Furthermore, the respondents of my survey associate the sport of triathlon with high-income individuals, who have a further monetary incentive to participate in this sport, as it seems reasonable to assume that these individuals hope that by participating in the sport of triathlon they themselves will join a high-income group, as the sport will provide them with the necessary mindset and stamina to gain a competitive advantage in the long term and thus be able to pursue a career quickly.

The participants in this study reported that they dedicate an average 10.66 hours of their time each week to their training in order to engage in and participate in future triathlon races. 61.11% of individuals reported that they trained 8–12 hours per week, while 22.22% said they commit 4–8 hours per week of training for their triathlon fascination. Only the minority of 11.11% of

survey respondents confirmed that they dedicate between 12 and 16 hours per week to their triathlon training, which proves to be already a significant amount of time among amateur athletes. None of the participants reported training for more than 20 hours per week, and only 5.56% reported training between 16 and 20 hours per week, which can be regarded as the absolute exception among amateur athletes. According to a study by Ipsos Global Advisor published in 2021 entitled "Global Views on Exercise and Team Sports", the mean number of hours of training per week for individuals worldwide is 6.1 hours. The Netherlands leads the international ranking with a mean of 12.8 hours per week, closely followed by Germany with an average of 11.1 hours per week. Bringing up the rear in this survey are Italy with an average of 3.6 hours of exercise per week, Japan with an average of 3.3 hours of physical activity per week, and Brazil with an average of 3 hours of exercise per week. This survey illustrates how time-intensive triathlon is and how significant the difference in time investment is compared to the international comparison. This survey was conducted using 21,503 online adults aged 16-74 from 29 countries. It is interesting to note that the Global Country Average of the mean number of weekly hours of exercise is higher for men (6.9 hours) than for women (5.4 hours) (Ipsos Global Advisors, 2021).

There is quite some notable and mentionable fluctuation in the amount of time people spend training, as seen by the data's standard deviation of 3.07 and variance of 9.41. Overall, these results indicate that training for triathlons involves a large time commitment which can be challenging to provide while holding high-ranked managerial positions, with the majority of participants devoting 8 to 12 hours per week to their training schedule. The participants' weekly training time ranges from the mean of 10 hours by about 3.07 hours, according to the standard deviation of 3.07. The standard deviation squared, or in other words known as variance, of 9.41, is used to express the average squared deviation from the mean. A smaller variance implies that the data gathered is more closely attached around the mean, whereas a greater variance indicates that the data proves to be more scattered. This distinct situation is given, as participants of this survey reported a broad range of training hours, some dedicating much more hours or much fewer hours than the average. This is supported by the relatively large standard deviation and variance.

The survey responses from 16 participants provide us a window into the kinds of triathlon contests that competitors choose to attend. Due to their hectic schedules, most competitors are amateurs, and they tend to concentrate on local and regional events that work with their schedules. A few survey participants want to compete in the future but have not yet participated in any tournaments. Regarding particular competition categories, many competitors compete in middle distance (Olympic Distance and Middle Distance) races at the amateur level, while a select number have even participated in one or two long distance races. While some have raced in both 70.3 events and full-distance Ironman races at the amateur level, others only participate in tiny community competitions with fewer starters. The results clearly show that the sorts of triathlon contests that respondents participate in differ based on their personal schedules, geographic areas, and degree of experience. Furthermore, these results prove that even though, or perhaps because, triathlon is such a time-consuming and costly sport to train for and to participate in, many of the respondents only participate in local races and competitions. This can be seen as a reason why the participants show a kind of disenchantment with having to pay expensive entry fees for major races, high travel costs and enormous accommodation costs, combined with an enormous logistical effort to transport the equipment to the venue of the competition, and therefore prefer the local and geographically well connected races. According to the article "The Actual Cost of Racing Triathlons: First-Timer, Beginner, Enthusiast, and Advanced" published in the online magazine "triathlonbudgeting.com", the actual financial implications of participating in or preparing for a triathlon event. The article distinguishes between "first-timer" (objective is to get to the finish line with minimal spending), "beginner" (properly engaged in the sport), "enthusiast" (already has some years of experience in triathlon) and "advanced" (every marginal improvement is welcomed). The authors identify the initial costs to participate in the sport and state that it can be up to more than 5000 US dollars for advanced athletes who aim for excellent equipment due to their competitive mindset and the desire to achieve the best possible outcome. In addition, the annual ongoing costs could potentially furthermore be up to more than 8000 US dollars per individual athlete, due to the enormously expensive entry fees (sometimes more than 800 US dollars), the required and cost intensive nutrition needed during preparation for and racing in triathlon events (more than 500 US dollars) and as the heaviest financial burden the travel and accommodation (up to more than 5000 US dollars) (triathlonbudgeting.com, 2023). This proves furthermore why a lot of respondents of my

survey showed notable hesitation regarding participating in major races, due to the enormous financial burden that these events bring along. The following table provides an overview of the initial costs of racing triathlons, respectively for different categories of triathlon participants as categorized by the authors and explained above (values are provided in US Dollars):

Item	First-Timer	Beginner	Enthusiast	Advanced
Bike	\$50	\$500	\$1,500	\$5,000
Cycling shoes + pedals	Not required	Not required	\$70	\$250
Aero bars	Not required	\$45	\$100	N/a
Bike Pump	Not required	\$35	\$35	\$35
Helmet	\$30	\$30	\$60	\$150
Triathlon watch	Not required	Not required	\$200	\$700
Running shoes	\$70	\$70	\$140	\$140
Bike trainer & accessories	Not required	Not required	\$200	\$600
Triathlon Wetsuit	Not required	\$100	\$150	\$500
Triathlon Suit	Not required	\$60	\$120	\$300
Goggles	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10
Bike Travel case	Not required	Not required	Not required	\$250

(triathlonbudgeting.com, 2023)

The following table provides an overview of the annual ongoing costs of participating in and racing in triathlon races, respectively for different categories of triathlon participants as categorized by the authors and explained above (values are provided in US Dollars):

<b>Item</b>	<b>First-Timer</b>	<b>Beginner</b>	<b>Enthusiast</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
Local Races entries – \$50 each	\$50	\$200	\$300	\$300
Ironman 70.3 – \$300 each	\$0	\$0	\$300	\$600
Full 140.6 Ironman – \$ 700 each	\$0	\$0	\$700	\$1,400
Swimming sessions	\$50	\$100	\$0	\$0
Nutrition	\$5	\$40	\$100	\$520
Travel + hotels	\$0	\$200+	\$2,000+	\$5,000+
Bike Maintenance	\$0	60\$	\$150	\$400

(triathlonbudgeting.com, 2023)

When asked about business executives who participate in triathlons, several of the respondents gave examples of the excellent traits that these people exhibit. One person, for instance, emphasized the discipline and commitment needed to manage a busy profession with a demanding training program. Another responder said that taking part in triathlons may be a good method for business people to network and form ties with people who share their interests. Others, however, emphasized that the mental fortitude and goal-setting necessary for triathlon competition are transferable abilities that may enhance a professional's job output. According to a particular response, triathletes who work in business demonstrate a "huge ambition to challenge everything." Overall, it appears that the majority of respondents consider triathlon participation by business executives as a positive thing, highlighting commendable traits like commitment, discipline, and determination to excel in both their personal and professional life. The implications that these character traits have on the development of managerial competencies will be further discussed in the following pages of this academic paper.

In a separate question, respondents were surveyed as to “How do you manage to mix your triathlon training with your executive responsibilities?”. The significance of effective time management and prioritizing was emphasized by several of them. They recommended organizing

training sessions during less hectic hours of the day. Some survey participants mentioned working exercise into their everyday routines, such as riding their bikes or jogging to work. Others mentioned that they exercise in the morning before work or during their lunch breaks. Additionally, a number of respondents underlined the significance of keeping in touch with their peers to let them know when they are available. While several admitted that combining managerial responsibilities with triathlon training might be difficult, they also observed that it is possible with organization, flexibility, and the establishment of clear goals and priorities.

Some respondents claimed that triathlon training definitely had a highly favorable effect on their ability to make decisions. These people claim that the discipline, mental fortitude, and goal-setting necessary for triathlon training can be applied to corporate decision-making. Some people said that participating in triathlon competitions had helped them hone abilities including making quick decisions under pressure, using resources wisely, and setting priorities. Additionally, taking part in triathlon races has enhanced responders' ability to make judgments by teaching them how to remain composed under duress and act quickly when required. Some respondents declared that they used the training period as a time for reflection and thought. Overall, the opinions of the respondents imply that participating in triathlon competition may improve decision-making ability by enhancing mental fortitude, concentration, and strategic thinking. One respondent in particular declared that it “has helped them (me) understand that some difficult, long-term objectives require significant amounts of pain, endurance, and commitment”, which is further reflected in the respondents ability to effectively make decisions.

When analyzing the results obtained from the survey conducted regarding the question “In what ways has your triathlon training and participation influenced or developed your leadership skills and abilities?”, an above-average number of respondents have strongly emphasized the beneficial effects that triathlon training and competition have had on developing and enhancing their leadership skills and talents. Precise goal-setting, strict time management, and prioritizing skills have been strongly promoted in their professional life as a result of the rigorous discipline, tenacity, and determination definitely needed to adequately prepare for and complete triathlon races of all kinds. Furthermore, respondents have stated that the preparation for and participation in triathlon races aids in developing distinct perseverance and thus can directly help make them a better and more efficient leader as it enables them to go beyond their limits and equips those

effective managers with the necessary adequate mindset in order to succeed in a corporate environment and to adequately lead and delegate a team.. Participating in triathlons has also aided people in building stronger and more meaningful connections with their peers, establishing strong communication skills, and enhanced their collaboration approach and skillset. Long-distance triathlons have also given people an increased self-assurance, self-discipline, level of commitment and motivation, which has aided them in leadership roles and succeeding in those. While some have voiced concerns about the possible heavy time demands of intensive training and preparation for races, others have discovered that triathlon training has enabled them to reevaluate their priorities and improve their productivity at work by immensely improving their sense of discipline, focus and commitment. Collaboration and team-building abilities are furthermore improved, according to the respondents of my survey, as during preparation for these triathlon races many participants engage in a team and hence develop a sense of togetherness and cohesiveness. Summarizing, one can conclude that, according to the respondents of my survey, preparation for and participation in triathlon races is definitely to be regarded as an excellent method and practical application to enhance and sustainably sharpen their managerial abilities and their leadership abilities.

When looking at the question whether there are any particular skills or methods that the respondents have gathered and developed while preparing and training for triathlon events, it becomes clearly apparent that most of the respondents declare that there are several distinct attributes that they gathered and developed from the sport which would be useful in their position as a successful manager and as an effective leader.

Most of the respondents from the survey constructed by me agreed that they have obtained many different techniques and applications that benefit them in their managerial duties through their participation in and preparation for triathlon races. The respondents concurred that the most developed and crucial abilities obtained from the participation in and preparation for triathlon race are time management, prioritization abilities and distinct goal setting. Goal setting abilities become increasingly important for effective leadership as it is the key cornerstone of achieving corporate milestones, especially when being able to break bigger objectives down into smaller, much more manageable milestones and hence being able to track the individual progress along the way when fulfilling the necessary objectives. Balancing the demanding job requirements of a

manager, their entailed personal life, as well as the time consuming and mentally tiring training requires efficient time management abilities. Adding to that, the respondents further stated that they obtained an array of qualities from their triathlon engagement, such as discipline, commitment, perseverance, strategic decision-making, stress coping mechanisms and planning, among others. The characteristics and qualities that the respondents could gather through the engagement in sport and that were most frequently mentioned in the analysis of the answers collected in the survey are setting goals, setting priorities and time management. On top of that, participants have mentioned that they obtained the ability to channel their energy wisely and in the most productive manner through triathlon training, which can be furthermore utilized in a corporate context as it enables effective leaders to purposefully lead themselves and their team in order to achieve common goals. Being able to assess and channel your energy into the proper direction is becoming increasingly significant for effective leadership, as today's business environment is becoming ever more demanding and complex in terms of tasks, operational fields and requirements.

There was a great enthusiastic response from the participants of my survey when being asked if their participation in triathlon activities had improved their ability to manage stress and act appropriately since situations can be assessed in a more constructive and calm manner. Some other respondents claimed that the physical and mental requirements in order to successfully complete a triathlon race, equipped them with the necessary mindset that it needs to be successful in today's ever growing business environment and helped them to develop a sense of perseverance and stress resistance. On top of that, a majority of participants responded that the engagement in triathlon has enabled them to use this leisure activity as a stress reliever and that it provides them with energy and confidence, both which they can then directly translate into their corporate life in order to assess issues with a more focused and precise objective. Furthermore, respondents stated that their training for and participation in triathlon races benefits them by developing a stress resilient mindset which helps them to handle their demanding work environment better. On top of that, respondents also stated that triathlon puts them into a state of relaxation and balance.

When being asked if there had ever been a scenario during a triathlon race that required fast problem-solving, the responses of the participants showed quite a bit of variation. A few

respondents agreed that they had to engage in adaptations in their race tactics, due to unforeseeable circumstances such as sudden change in weather conditions or mechanical malfunctions regarding their equipment. According to the respondents, in this case it is of the utmost importance to remain calm and assess the situation in a constructive manner. Making decisions on the spot and being able to act rapidly, think innovatively and respond according to the existing circumstance while keeping the long-term goal in sight is another key competence of a successful manager, which is, according to the respondents of my survey, another key attribute that can be derived from triathlon racing. Several respondents noted that engaging in rapid adjustments in a multitude of situations is a key skill that successful managers must possess, especially during today's fast paced business environment. The ability to remain calm and composed even during stressful situations is a skill that can be directly applied to personal as well as professional contexts, as mentioned by a respondent of the survey. The required willingness and ability to commit to your own decision, even when made during hectic circumstances is important, both as a manager and as a triathlete, according to a respondent. It must be noted that, although many respondents agreed that they have already experienced such an unforeseeable situation in a race or during their training, some respondents were not able to recall a precise scenario where they had to make rapid adjustments to their previously articulated plan during a race. All in all, it can be summarized that, while participating in a triathlon race, as well as holding a high-ranked managerial position, quick problem-solving skills are of significant importance. Although some participants of the survey do not actively feel like that this skillset is developed and formed during triathlon races and the lead up to them or they could not recall a specific situation in which this skill was required, it is clearly developed during training and racing in triathlon events and it clearly offers an advantage and can be seen as an important tool to sharpen the mindset and strengthen the mental aspect of an athlete, which can be directly transferred into their professional lives as a successful and effective manager.

When asked if engaging and taking part in triathlon races and training has benefited the respondents in developing and strengthening a sense of discipline and dedication that directly transfers into their responsibilities and duties as a successful manager, there were several positive comments, some of which I will present in the following paragraph. The majority of the respondents confirmed that participating in and preparing for triathlon events incorporates a significant level of dedication, commitment, and willingness to achieve, all of which may heavily

influence their work behavior and orientation towards desired outcomes and hence will have a direct impact on their managerial performance. Being successful in triathlon races is heavily dependent on being able to set up clear goals and precise priorities, and also demonstrating the ability to display a high level of commitment in order to achieve those goals and priorities. At the same time, these exact qualities can be directly translated into the corporate context, as for example, the necessary commitment needed to adequately train for triathlon races provides individuals with an enhanced ability to effectively manage their time, establish priorities and concise goals and also not lose their motivation when being faced with potential setbacks and challenges, all of which can be also utilized as a successful manager. Some other respondents agreed that training for triathlon races requires a strong sense of perseverance which is developed through gradually harder and ever more challenging and demanding training plans. This circumstance has benefited these participating individuals to develop a strong sense of discipline, focus, and also very importantly focus which can be directly utilized in their work environment to achieve long-term milestones. Furthermore, another benefit of participating in triathlon sports is that individuals who engage in that activity develop a strong ability of time management, which, as stated before, is of significant importance in today's very competitive business environment which is ever growing and increasingly fast paced. Adding to that, respondents furthermore stated that triathlon as a leisure activity helped them to develop an excellent work ethic, an ever growing desire to achieve, and lastly resilience which can be directly utilized in many areas of their professional lives.

The most important and also concluding question of the survey conducted by me deals with the question "As a good triathlete, are you also a good manager?".

This question definitely brings up a very interesting insight into the actual perception of the respondents, whether a good triathlete also makes a good manager. There are many different answers recorded, offering many different perspectives for analysis whether being a successful triathlete directly refers to being a successful manager. However, the majority of replies collected and analyzed from the respondents reported that as a fact, both participation in triathlons and executing the position of a successful manager prove to have a lot of shared abilities and traits, so that one activity benefits the other and vice versa.

As concluded above, successful triathletes and successful managers share a lot of attributes, as both must be willing and able to demonstrate a high level of dedication, problem solving skills, discipline and time management, among others. Being regarded as a successful manager and also acting as such, is mainly dependent on the expertise in the areas of leadership abilities, communication skills, vision and implementation, mental resilience and the overall desire to achieve. Referring to the attributes which are mandatory to succeed as a triathlete, both in training and in racing, it is clearly evident that the above mentioned attributes are equally important in this environment. Both parties need to be able to define and achieve goals and milestones, demonstrate prioritization skills and leadership skills, and possess effective communication skills.

When analyzing the responses obtained from my survey, it is clear that attributes such as resilience, collaboration, discipline, commitment, goal-setting and determination are formed and strengthened during training for and participation in triathlon races which subsequently directly positively impacts managerial abilities of these individuals. Analytical thinking, interpersonal skills and solution oriented thinking are other key attributes that effective leaders can obtain from participating in the sport of triathlon. Overall it can be concluded that the engagement in triathlon offers individuals who hold high ranked managerial positions a solid foundation for strengthening and developing these skills mentioned above. Although managers must still engage in the development and acquisition of additional skills when it comes to enhancing their managerial abilities, participation in and training for triathlons already equips those individuals with a set of key competencies required to act as a successful leader and many valuable lessons can be learned through the engagement in triathlon which are directly related to the corporate environment and hence have a direct positive impact on managerial abilities and managerial performance and aid them to supervise and delegate more effectively.

As a summarizing note it can be concluded that the respondents clearly recognize the strong positive correlation between success in triathlon and the success of a manager throughout many different industries. While triathlon does not provide the entire cohesive skill set which successful managers must possess in order to lead effectively, the majority of insights and skills derived from triathlon training and participation can be perfectly utilized and implemented into the managerial competencies of individuals.

## **Correlation between triathlon engagement and managerial success**

According to the preceding chapters of this academic work which hold the title "*Which skills do managers need and want?*" and "*Other factors that contribute to managerial success.*", the concluding key factors can be pointed out that successful managers have to be able to demonstrate and continuously develop, some of which are: Effective communication skills, willingness to adapt and act flexibly, leadership abilities, technical proficiency and industry knowledge, ability to implement plans and to think visionary, demonstrate strong decision making skills, problem oriented mindset, emotional intelligence, trustworthiness and effective time management.

Referring those attributes back to the survey conducted by me prior and the resulting evaluation of responses made by the individuals who participated in this survey, the following findings and statements can be made initially: According to the responses, training for and participating in a triathlon race is demanding in many aspects as it necessitates effective time management, precise goal-setting, and the ability to prioritize tasks in order to achieve the best possible outcome, among others.

On top of that, almost all participants of the survey expressed their strong desire to demonstrate profound skills in stress-management skills, which subsequently will equip them with the proper toolset and mindset to endure stressful situations and demanding conditions, which will furthermore benefit managers with an increasingly growing focused and objective perspective and perception of demanding situations which will assist them in assessing these situations adequately and in a concise manner.

Furthermore, triathlon races often oppose participants with problems in which they have to assess these situations promptly and hence have to demonstrate fast problem solving skills. These problems can range from mechanical malfunctions to nutrition strategy failures to muscle malfunctions, so the array of problems that can arise during these triathlon events is almost endless and hence the lessons obtained from such situations in triathlon races also present themselves in a variety of ways. The lessons learned in these events will then benefit participants

to acquire crucial skills that will most likely be applicable to each participants' personal, but for the underlying purpose of this academic paper even more importantly, their professional lives.

As mentioned before, the respondents of the survey gave the majoritarian answer that training for and participating in a triathlon race necessitates the extreme development of discipline, clear focus, prioritizing, goal-setting, and a solution-oriented mindset, all of which are mandatory to fulfill the position of a successful and effective manager across all industries.

Furthermore, the respondents additionally declared that training for and participating in a triathlon race provided them with an excellent work ethic, a strong sense of motivation, a purpose, and an enormous resilience which can be directly utilized in a variety of ways and in many different facets of their lives, but most importantly for their managerial positions and the development of their managerial abilities.

The overarching majority of participants of the survey concluded that the competencies and skills acquired while training for and participating in a triathlon race are most definitely beneficial in their everyday professional lives and especially their managerial duties, even when considering that a small minority of participants concluded that they do not experience a direct positive correlation between their ability to successfully demonstrate strong and profound managerial abilities and their training for and participating in a triathlon race.

## **Triathlon of Leadership**

The three primary roles that managers have to fulfill as part of their leadership responsibility are described by the phenomena known as the "triathlon of leadership" (Marti, 2019). These rolls defined by the "triathlon of leadership" consist of the following: **expert, manager, and leader**. In order to successfully lead and assist their team members, experts need to possess a certain knowledge base and set of abilities in their specific field of expertise and specific industry and furthermore show continuous willingness to widen the knowledge in their specific area of expertise. In their capacity as manager these individuals must dispense resources appropriately and organize and coordinate work processes without losing sight of the whole organization and its respective milestones and desired corporate outcomes . Finally, in their capacity as leaders, these individuals must create visions and goals and effectively communicate those to their team

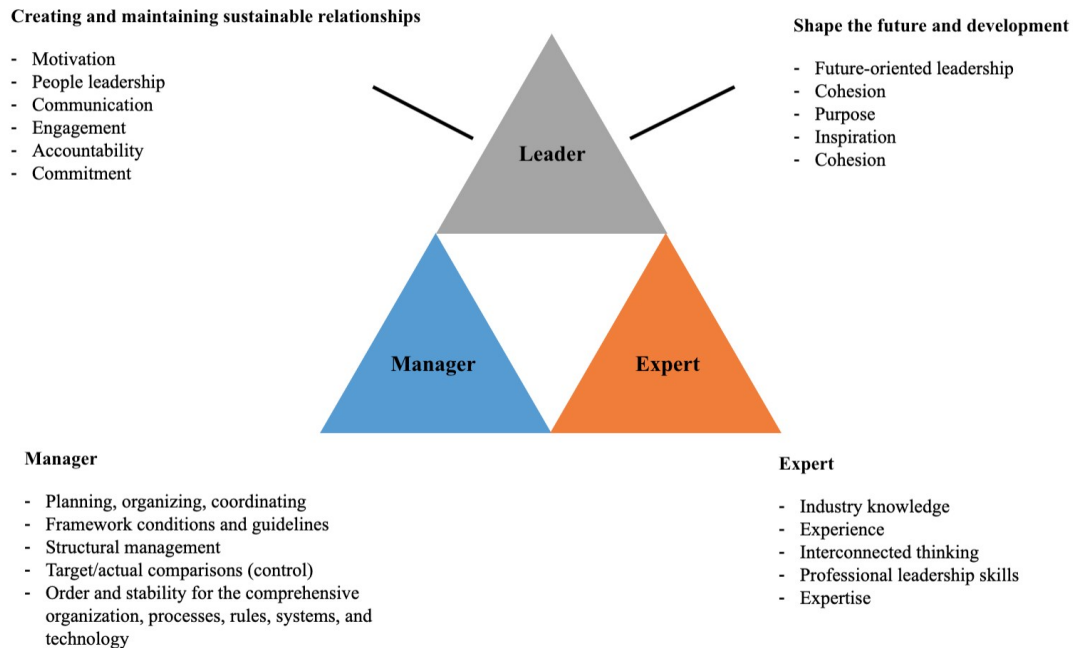
members and other involved parties, motivate and inspire their team members, and develop and foster a corporate culture within the business in order to achieve corporate success. The phenomenon known as the "triathlon of leadership" refers to the requirement for all three roles to be successfully performed by individuals who hold high ranked managerial positions, which necessitates a high degree of competence and talents in several areas (Marti, 2019). These specific areas will be further discussed in the following paragraphs.

As a **leader**, the respective individual fulfills the responsibilities of creating and maintaining sustainable relationships with their team members through, for example demonstrating excellent abilities in the areas of motivation, people leadership, communication, engagement, accountability, and commitment to their role as an effective leader. Furthermore, in his role as a leader, the individual has the responsibility to shape the future and development of their team members and the milestones that the team is striving to achieve, which is achieved through developing a future-oriented leadership style, establishing cohesion and togetherness among the team, creating a sense of purpose among the team, and lastly to foster inspiration through different means,

In his capacity as **manager**, the person is in charge of structuring the framework conditions and guidelines of the respective entity or the respective team of the entity, precise planning, exact organizing, and adequate coordinating, as well as maintaining distinct order and profound stability throughout the complete organizational operations that their team is involved in and beyond that.

Finally, in his role as an **expert**, the respective individual must be able to advise and lead the company and their respective team in a focused and decisive manner, possessing specific industry knowledge, extensive industry experience, interconnected thinking, professional leadership skills, profound expertise, and also be able to connect and, given the circumstances, deploy and lead his team in a proper and future-oriented manner. The following diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the links and connections between the various roles that a successful manager must master in order to fulfill his or her tasks and responsibilities in a meaningful and success-oriented manner and furthermore demonstrates the different sub components which each role of a successful manager includes, according to the "triathlon of leadership" (Marti, 2019).

Figure 1.)



(Marti, 2019. Adapted

from: Management Center Vorarlberg and Göpf Hasenfratz)

According to the author, three crucial leadership functions are identified by the "triathlon of leadership", which are leadership skills, management skills and professional competencies (as can be seen in Figure 2). Specific arrays of skills are required to fulfill each of these specific functions which effective managers must be able to demonstrate. These specific arrays of skills must be continuously developed and improved. Self-competence lies at the very core of these three competences. When one of these functions proves to be absent or undeveloped regarding the specific demands occurring at the respective organization, the significance of the other competences becomes more apparent as they must compensate for the absence or underdevelopment of the other competence. The author adds that leadership and management are both crucial: "Management without Leadership is a daydream - Leadership without Management is a nightmare!" This quote by Marti implies that management and leadership are both highly valued and important for each organization, and that the underdevelopment or even the absence of one component will ultimately lead to negative outcomes for the whole organization.

Management just regarded by itself can be inefficient and fail to lead to predetermined milestones, while leadership just regarded by itself can be chaotic and fail to present a clear direction in terms of which strategic plan the entity follows and could hence potentially lead to milestones being missed. Therefore, this quote illustrates the significance of balancing both, leadership and management, as to ultimately achieving corporate goals and success as a manager (Marti, 2019).

Figure 2.)



(Marti, 2019)

Managers oftentimes face themselves in situations where demonstrating the ability of self-leadership is essential at times of hardship or significant change, meaning that they need to employ a strategy for themselves first as to how to cope with changing and demanding conditions in a business context before confidently communicating and implementing this approach among their team members. Change is oftentimes difficult, stressful, and frequently pushes individuals over their breaking points and results in burnouts of individuals. This is where a profound inner strength, the capacity for self-reflection, excellent self-knowledge, and lastly superior *self-competence*, become of significant importance. According to the author, self-competence includes different fields, some of them are the ability to adequately cope with

stress, demonstrating a strong sense of courage, inner stability, strength, composure, resilience, willpower and lastly and most importantly tolerance in terms of ambiguity (Marti, 2019).

Taking into account the previous results of the analysis presented in the preceding paragraphs regarding the main attributes that identify efficient and successful managers across all industries, we can conclude the following relationships and correlations in terms of support for the development of those attributes and the different fields of self-competence, which will be dissected and explained in detail in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, managers must possess the definite field of self-competence of communication skills for their everyday working life. Possessing effective communication abilities may help people handle difficult circumstances more effectively, express their wants and concerns, and develop relationships with others. This leads to a more effective and collaborative togetherness of the team when striving towards a common goal and leads to increased productivity, hence resulting in an increased level of managerial performance as milestones and deliverables are achieved in a timely and consistent manner.

Furthermore, managers must demonstrate a high level of trustworthiness. Being trustworthy may help people establish solid bonds with others and provide a sense of stability and security while under pressure. Especially as a supervisor, it is important to give your team the feeling that they can confide in you and express their opinions, beliefs and concerns. Only such an environment of comfort and well-being enables productive collaboration and ultimately absolute productivity through constructive collaboration, which is reflected in managerial performance and is therefore of enormous importance. If you look at this condition from the opposite direction and look at companies where there is an environment of resentment and fear regarding the employees' well-being, you will find that these companies are not very employee-friendly and also not sustainably successful as such a corporate culture leads to a lack of motivation of the employees and therefore to a failure to achieve achievables.

Additionally, successful management consists of a high willingness and ability to act in a flexible and adaptable way. Flexibility and adaptability are key competencies when coping and keeping up with unforeseeable changes, which enable individuals to boost their resilience and lower their overall stress levels. Today's business environment is becoming more and more fast-moving and

dynamic, hence these adaptable and flexible character traits are becoming increasingly important. Being able to adapt strategic and operational approaches under changing conditions is a key asset for successful managers across all industries. Successful managers must be able to flexibly deploy their employees and delegate tasks in the most effective way, in order to successfully manage a corporation or a team, even or especially under unforeseen circumstances.

On top of that, a successful manager must demonstrate another key competence field which incorporates a results-driven mentality in their everyday working life. This mentality enables individuals to stay on track regarding their predetermined goals, and equips them with a sense of motivation and direction, especially when being faced with obstacles during challenging times. Being result oriented is especially important for a successful manager, since lacking in this field would result in not possessing the necessary dedication and determination to achieve demanding goals and withstand challenges of all kinds. In today's business world which is becoming more and more fast paced and demanding, achieving milestones is the most transparent measure when identifying the performance of a manager. These results can vary from sustainability indicators, to financial indicators but also to employee satisfaction and retention.

Adding to this, the willingness to continuously improve their skill set in terms of learning and improving is another key competence for a successful manager. Those who resist the change of times and the correlated necessity to continuously demonstrate profound motivation to learn about new industry standards or technological improvements, will not be successful in terms of management in the long-term perspective and hence lose their competitive advantage when compared to other managers. Summarizing it can be declared that the topics in which successful managers can improve their knowledge are endless. Demonstrating the willingness to continuously improve their skill set and knowledge, furthermore clearly signals to their superiors, stakeholders and team members that these managers are constantly striving to achieve the best possible version of themselves by further educating themselves and as a result be able to successfully manage and adequately prepare the team members and the organization for the future. To stand still means to fall behind, and this is the principle by which successful managers

should work and align themselves. If managers want to fulfill the competencies of a successful manager, they must engage in continuous learning.

Another key managerial competency that successful managers must be able to demonstrate is their leadership ability. The ability to encourage and inspire others during challenging and demanding situations and to offer guidance and assistance is the very core of managing successfully. Establishing a common purpose and motivating team members to really commit to their work is the absolute essence of achieving milestones in an adequate and timely manner and hence achieve corporate goals. Employees are seeking direction and guidance, so a successful manager must realize this and as a result deliver clear objectives and milestones and enable a sense of togetherness and cohesion in the organization. Managing a team, especially in today's ever changing and more globalized economy, where people from all different social and cultural backgrounds collaborate, it is of the utmost importance for managers to avoid misunderstandings and potential disagreements in order to increase productivity and overall workplace satisfaction and hence effectiveness. This would result in an improved morale of the team, which leads to an overarching improvement in individual performance which is then reflected in the managerial performance and subsequently in the organizational performance. Effective management further means to establish meaningful relationships with team members, external and internal stakeholders and other accompanying parties, which can be achieved through excellent leadership ability. Corporate performance is therefore significantly dependent on the leadership abilities of the individual managers.

Adding to the preceding arguments, managers who strive to act as efficiently and successfully as possible must continuously engage in developing their technical competence and industry knowledge. These skills can assist people in recognizing and controlling possible causes of stress and in creating winning solutions to problems. It furthermore enables managers to use that technical competence to analyze and solve complex problems in a business context and to make well informed decisions. Adding to that, possessing well-established industry knowledge enables successful leaders to identify opportunities for the team or the respective entity at an early stage, hence creating a competitive advantage. What furthermore enables managers to make their employer and their team stay ahead of competition is that through industry knowledge, industry trends, best practices and newly emerging technologies can be identified and properly utilized for

the company at an early stage which subsequently drives financial growth and profitability. Even more importantly, managers must be able to gather and identify industry knowledge as it is one of the most important indicators to adequately anticipate, assess and manage risks occurring in the respective market and on top of that information adapt strategic or operative decisions and tackle new challenges and opportunities. Identifying this competence from a more human resource related perspective, technical competence is an important skill of a successful manager as it is mandatory for managers to evaluate and assess the performance of their subordinates, provide adequate training and support, or even identify areas that require improvement. In some industries, which are heavily relying and hence forced to comply with regulations and industry standards, possessing knowledge about a certain industry is a mandatory skill set that managers must demonstrate in order to avoid legal and financial implications. Furthermore, in order to effectively and trustworthy communicate with team members, customers, and external stakeholders it is of great advantage if the manager possesses technical competence and industry knowledge in order to transfer information in a credible way which fosters trust. Lastly, being knowledgeable and proving technical competence helps managers to inspire and motivate their subordinates and to foster a sense of commitment and dedication for the work required to succeed as a corporation.

One competence that many managers oftentimes neglect when setting up and establishing their fields of competence is the establishing of meaningful and lasting trust mechanisms with their team members. Establishing connections with a strong trust in each other can support the development of a network of support and a feeling of inclusion that can enhance stress resilience. Furthermore, building a trust mechanism with your team is essential to motivate the respective team members to handle tasks more engaged, motivated and committed. In a network of trusting mechanisms, team members are more willing and likely to communicate openly, provide clear and profound feedback and address issues to avoid possible escalations. On top of that, establishing such a trusting mechanism among your team members as a successful manager fosters togetherness and collaborative teamwork. Trust among team members fosters the exchange of ideas, promotes effective collaboration and provides support during demanding times, which will most likely occur at some point in any given industry. Another contributing fact, why establishing trust mechanisms as a manager is beneficial for corporations, is that young individuals pay an ever growing amount of attention towards organizational culture, where those

individuals feel valued, respected and heard. Providing such a positive organizational culture leads to retaining and attracting young talents, which furthermore supports corporate success and managerial performance through improved individual quality of workers. Adding to that, trust can furthermore be an important factor when building meaningful relationships with external stakeholders, such as suppliers or customers. When those parties trust a manager and hence the respective organization, there is an increased probability that they will engage in sustainable contractual relationships and stay loyal to the company. Lastly, as an employee that works for a superior, you want to feel like you can trust and open up to your respective contact person. Although it takes time, effort and engagement to build such a trust mechanism and the corresponding positive relationships, the advantages are tremendous and are reflected in the productivity and efficiency of team members and hence the corporate growth and profitability of the respective company.

Another field of competence that managers must demonstrate in order to act efficiently and successfully is the ability to accept change and continuously widen their horizons. Developing in these fields enables managers to establish an open-minded mindset that simplifies difficult situations and demanding circumstances. In today's business world, change is a constant companion and manifests itself in many facets, so as a successful manager it is essential to trust and be open to this change and to develop the necessary mindset to appropriately recognize and address challenges and opportunities that arise based on the constant change occurring. Furthermore, an openness to change is also an opportunity for managers not to get disenchanted with innovation and to proactively pursue novel ideas, technologies, methods and approaches to gain a competitive advantage. Customer demands are almost never predictable, as well as identifying trends that are emerging, resulting in the definite need for managers to demonstrate a high willingness to adapt to ever changing conditions and to continuously widen the horizon of themselves and their team members in order to pursue relevant new market conditions and to aid their employing entity to remain relevant and competitive. Widening horizons as a manager is furthermore crucial as it opens up the perspective and enables them to look at matters from a new angle and thus discover new opportunities or avert dangers at an early stage in order to guarantee the sustainable success of the company. Demonstrating a high degree of openness to change furthermore aids managers in the development of stronger, meaningful connections with their subordinates. As accepting change is oftentimes an unpleasant and uncomfortable situation to be

situated in, successfully managing these demanding situations can aid managers in developing a higher degree of focus, resilience and motivation in the prospect of facing challenges occurring through these changes. The external impact of a manager is in turn largely determined by how flexibly and appropriately he deals with unforeseen changes in his working environment. Managers who are considered successful and effective respond to this change with visionary and forward-thinking approaches that significantly enhance their reputation and thus positively impact the overall corporate image, attracting and retaining young talent which ultimately leads to corporate growth and increased managerial performance. At last, managers who perceive change as a positive occurrence and on the basis of that manage to widen their horizons and accept challenges experience significant growth, both in their personal and professional development since they are exposed to novel ideas, cultural differences and viewpoints that can increase their understanding of the global economic environment and as a result improve their leadership skills as well as their managerial performance.

Possessing the field of competence to effectively be able to transform vision into reality is another key aspect of being a successful and effective manager. This skill benefits managers as it enables them to communicate an orientation which strengthens their and their teams' motivation as it provides a feeling of direction and purpose. The skill to transform a vision into reality demands a significant amount of planning and implementation, and furthermore the ability to effectively allocate resources and to properly prioritize tasks according to their operational and strategic significance. Individuals who possess the quality of being able to transform a vision into reality often times also prove that they are able to effectively communicate, incorporating external stakeholders, team members and other managers into their decision making process and provide them with a clear and precise structure of what that vision necessitates as an underlying foundation and also the respective advantages that this vision brings along once transformed into reality. On top of that, managers who demonstrate that they possess the quality of transforming vision into reality, establish a strong industry reputation for properly converting ideas into results, which enhances their credibility within the organization and the respective industry. Lastly, this competence fulfills both managers and their team members as it provides a meaningful and long-lasting activity which in the best case delivers a positive impact on real world situations.

Emotional intelligence is another key competence that successful managers must be able to demonstrate. This skill benefits managers as it is crucial to listen to and understand one's feelings as well as those of others in order to develop interpersonal connection and enable trust. The ability to recognize and listen to your own emotions, while at the same time demonstrating the ability to manage and understand the emotion of your peers is of significant importance as a manager since fast paced and high-pressure business environments often times cause emotional and chaotic situations where managers have to assess and deal with those situations accordingly. Superiors who demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence are better equipped to deal with conflicts occurring at the workplace and hence manage to establish meaningful relationships with their team members. Furthermore, possessing a high degree of emotional intelligence enables managers to adjust their style of management to meet the criteria of the individual demands of respective employees and as a result boost and improve their motivation and foster a sense of belonging. Besides the sense of belonging, proving emotional intelligence as a manager furthermore fosters respect, open communication and trust among the team as the manager is regarded as highly empathetic and cordial. On top of that, emotional intelligence can serve as a foundation for effective decision-making, since it enables managers to take perspectives and feelings of others into account when making decisions that would have an impact on the team or the respective entity. Another aspect that emotional intelligence underlines in regards to the development of a successful manager is that managers who demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence are more likely to provide necessary and adequate feedback to their team members, providing them with the guidance to develop and excel in their roles. Emotional and tense situations can furthermore be adequately dealt with if the manager is equipped with the necessary degree of emotional intelligence which as a result fosters productivity and managerial performance, since no unnecessary resource in terms of energy or time is wasted on conflict resolution. Managers that demonstrate a high degree of emotional intelligence furthermore share a feeling of value, support and empowerment among their team which subsequently leads to a more positive and inclusive organizational environment which then results in increased togetherness and ultimately corporate success.

Furthermore, the ability to demonstrate encouragement is regarded as another key competence of successful managers. The workplace can be a hectic and challenging environment, so encouraging and motivating their team members is of the utmost importance for successful

managers, so that they do not miss out on milestones and objectives due to general dissatisfaction among the team. Creating a positive and productive environment at the workplace, to establish a great morale and to create confidence among the team is a key competence of successful managers so that they extract the best possible results from collaborating with their team. Employees that feel valued and appreciated, demonstrate a higher level of self-confidence and self-esteem and hence manage to deal with their work in a more productive and effective manner. Adding to that, this sense of encouragement fosters a corporate culture in which employees strive to develop and grow and accept challenges. When striving for excellence, trust, respect and encouragement is non-negotiable at the workplace. This aids in developing lasting and meaningful relationships, which subsequently result in being able to avoid feelings of anxiety and overload appearing. Shifting their team members' viewpoints towards the potential learnings that they could derive from approaching a challenge, rather than the potential negative implications, is another key concept on how to develop a sense of encouragement among the team as a successful manager. Encouragement can also be seen as a tool to celebrate and highlight specific achievements and accomplishments of team members which as a result fosters the feeling of pride and accomplishment among the team, and strengthen the significance and recognition of their contributions to the organization's success which ultimately leads to them being more engaged and motivated regarding their work contribution.

As a manager, one is constantly faced with challenges and problems that ought to be solved in the most efficient and effective manner. Hence, a solution-oriented mindset is one of the most important key competencies that a successful manager must be able to demonstrate. Constructive problem solving and decision making skills benefit managers and their teams respectively as it enables them to overcome stressful situations and create an environment that tackles those demanding conditions in an appropriate way. Rather than focusing on the disadvantages that a certain obstacle brings along, a solution-oriented mindset contains the ability to shift the focus on defining the solutions to a problem. This defines a key competency for managers as these individuals are often facing complex and demanding situations that necessitate out of the box and innovative thought approaches. Approaching a problem with a solution-oriented mindset, rather than a problem-oriented mindset often produces a more effective and efficient solution which also meets the needs of the company and all external and internal stakeholders. Developing a solution-oriented mindset aids managers in developing a resilient and adaptable approach to

problems in a business context, since they are comfortable with navigating uncertain situations and difficulties. Furthermore, this solution-oriented mindset and thus solution-oriented managers, foster a corporate culture of continuous improvement within the entire company, where employees are encouraged to not only act once they face a difficult situation but rather independently and proactively identify possible areas of growth and create innovative solutions. On top of that, managers who are equipped with a solution-oriented mindset develop a strong sense of focus on their achievable goals and objectives, even during possible shortcomings, obstacles or setbacks. Also, those managers who act in a solution-oriented manner are oftentimes viewed as forward-thinking and proactive, which furthermore strengthens their reputation among the industry and even more importantly within the respective organization. Managers who demonstrate and portray a solution-oriented mindset, oftentimes find themselves to be an incubator and inspire team members to act and engage in a similar way and work more as a team rather than an individual in order to achieve common goals. Another effect that a manager equipped with a solution oriented mindset brings along, is that such a mindset can create a positive and efficient work environment, in which team members sense a common feel of empowerment and responsibility for their work and respectively for the success of the organization.

Finally, I would like to emphasize one more key competency that successful managers have to demonstrate, which is constructive time management. Constructive time management enables managers to appoint different levels of priority to tasks and projects and fosters prioritization which improves productivity and reduces stress. Especially in today's ever growing and fast paced, globalized economy, effective time management is crucial for managers to make sure that achievables and deliverables can be delivered in alignment with the expected time frame and quality of work. This involves allocating time in an appropriate manner, setting up clear and concise priorities, and shifting the focus towards activities that most likely will have the biggest effect on achieving goals and objectives. Effective time management is an essential tool to avoid the feeling of overwhelm and overwork, and managers who demonstrate this skill are ideally equipped to manage the demands of their role. On top of that, effective time management aids in enhancing the respective managers' efficiency, enabling them to accomplish bigger milestones in the same amount of time. Structure is key when striving to achieve milestones, hence being able to effectively manage time, can reduce stress for managers and in return enhance their

productivity and focus. Managers often deal with high-priority tasks, so effective time management also includes identifying tasks which can be dealt with by team members, so that the manager frees their own time and can engage more in those high-priority tasks. The demands for a manager are ever increasing and it is not uncommon for managers to experience symptoms like burnout or significant fatigue due to their professional lives. Being skilled in effective time management aids in equipping managers with the right skillset to avoid those symptoms and being better able to engage in a healthy work-life balance.

## **Interpretation of results**

The abilities that managers could potentially acquire through competing in and preparing for triathlon races are beneficial for building a variety of fields of self-competence and success-enhancing elements when it comes to managerial performance and the subsequent corporate success, well-being of the subordinates and corporate image of the entity.

Participating in and preparing for triathlons can support these managerial talents in a number of different ways and facets. Essential triathlon conditioning abilities include the ability of successful time management, precise goal-setting, and concise prioritization as participants must balance and not lose focus on their demanding training schedules leading up to races, general employment demands, and other professional or personal obligations which life brings along. Effective and potent stress-management techniques are quintessential for successfully competing in and preparing for triathlons, as participating athletes must demonstrate a sense of control regarding their tension and objectives while competing in those races which can take up to 16 hours.

Involvement in and participation for a triathlon necessitates the application and demonstration of a strong sense of discipline, huge attention to detail, and manifested problem-solving skills, as well as the ability and willingness to train on a regular basis, maintain strict focus on one's predefined objectives, and overcome challenging and demanding obstacles that may arise in the lead up as well as during and after the specific race. Participating in and preparing for triathlon races may also instill and awaken a feeling of drive in people, enhance mental and physical resiliency, and establish a fantastic and success improving work ethic that these participating

individuals can utilize in a variety of aspects and facets of their personal and professional lives, including management roles duties and obligations.

Competing in triathlons presupposes participating individuals to effectively express their adjustment wishes and concerns to their coaches regarding their training demands and preferred race outcomes in a transparent and cohesive manner. This transparent communication is another key asset that managers must demonstrate in order to successfully lead, inspire and motivate a team to strive for common corporate goals. Building strong relationships with people is of significant importance for individuals while competing in triathlons since these individuals must rely on their teammates, coaches, and supporters to deliver the desired performance and successfully finish a race. This circumstance of active relationship building can be implemented directly into the professional everyday life of managers, because without an intensive and trustworthy connection to their team no competitive advantage can be gained in the long run, because basic communication is poor and possibly innovative approaches and significant improvements are left out. An energetic and trustful relationship building is therefore a key characteristic that can be gained from sports and embedded into the managerial daily routine.

Furthermore, acting in the most flexible and adaptable manner are essential and key traits needed to successfully compete in triathlon races, as competitors must swiftly adapt to possible shifting weather conditions, physical breakdown, and unforeseen mechanical malfunction, such as a chain break or a malfunction of the heart rate monitor. Similar to other endurance sporting events, triathlon training and racing demands participating individuals to maintain attention on what they want to accomplish in order to succeed.

Adding to that, involvement in and preparing for triathlon events asks participating individuals to acquire new strategies and adaptations to enhance their performance on a continuous basis, therefore this continuous willingness to improve and widen one's horizon abilities in terms of establishing innovative approaches are also essential. Participating in and preparing for triathlon events is hence another option for individuals who hold managerial positions to acquire powerful innovative managerial skills and to reinforce and improve their managerial skills in a manner that is oriented towards the "Zeitgeist". In other words, it benefits successful managers to oblige towards beneficial technological factors, which contribute to the success of both the employing corporation as well as the individual managers respectively.

Triathlon also necessitates the ability to strongly inspire, motivate and push oneself. This is due to the fact that preparation for and involvement in triathlon events is extremely demanding and time consuming, and can appear to be challenging and tiring for both, mind and body. Hence, the ability to motivate oneself, directly translates into the business context, as successful managers not only have to demonstrate the ability and willingness to motivate themselves but even more importantly to motivate their employees. This enhanced skill of being able to inspire and motivate results in fostering a culture of collaboration and togetherness within the team and subsequently the entire organization.

Involvement in and preparing for triathlon events demands participants to demonstrate a profound awareness and knowledge of the specific equipment, changing rules, and regulations in order to participate successfully and race fairly. Technical expertise and industry knowledge are of significant importance in this context. Again, this translates directly into the business context, as this leads to the respective managers making well informed decisions, identifying opportunities for the team or the respective entity at an early stage, hence creating a competitive advantage which subsequently drives financial growth and profitability

In order to develop meaningful and lasting relationships with their peers, coaches, and fans, triathletes need to be emotionally intelligent. To do this, they must be able to effectively cope with feelings of their own as well as those of others. As a successful manager, this skill is of significant importance as well, since understanding the emotional dynamics and fluctuations of your team is greatly important to effectively communicate, delegate and hence achieve corporate milestones.

Ultimately, taking part in triathlons, where competitors must have a precise objective and plan to achieve their predefined goals and objectives, can benefit participating individuals to strengthen their imaginative talents and capacity to transform visions into reality.

### **Comparison of findings with previous studies**

Especially on the topic of triathlon and the correlation between participation and preparation for this physical exercise and the specific managerial qualities that result from that very specific

endurance sports participation, there is no specific literature or analysis at this time. Due to this, it is not possible for me to provide specific correlations to previous findings and academic papers in this topic area or to examine them as a basis for my analysis. Although there are several academic papers that broadly discuss the topic of sport and management and also analyze the development of managerial competencies or even the potential possible implications regarding the career of individuals based on physical activity, no work specifically addresses the sport of triathlon.

However, I would now like to string back to the beginning of my academic work by referring to the paper "Athletes in boardrooms: Evidence from the world" published in 2018 by Dong et al, which states that athletes are more likely to be appointed to corporate boards than non-athletes. Dong et al, discovered that athletes are 14% more likely to serve on a corporate board than non-athletes. This suggests that athletes could be favored in corporate boardrooms.

Referring this to the findings mentioned above, which indicates that training for triathlons may assist people in developing a wide range of abilities, including precise time management, concise goal-setting, accurate problem-solving skills, and effective communication, all of which are significantly beneficial for managerial success in a number of disciplines which are omnipresent in today's ever faster developing business environment. This suggests that the abilities and characteristics obtained via athletic hobbies, such as triathlon training and participation, may be seen positively in professional contexts, such as establishing oneself in corporate boardrooms and hence acting as a successful manager and as an effective leader.

Another academic paper which I consulted at the beginning of this work as a confirmation of my hypothesis is "The making of a corporate athlete" published in 2001 by Loehr and Schwartz, which contend that physical energy is the underlying foundation in order to achieve outstanding performance, for both personal and professional efforts. The authors defend the hypothesis that individuals that hold high managerial positions who follow a lifestyle that includes regular exercise, a healthy diet, and enough sleep are going to sustainably improve their physical vitality and furthermore their emotional well-being. This would ultimately lead to achieving management success in a corporate setting and equips managers with a competitive advantage against other individuals who are lacking this commitment . The authors argue that emotional and mental energy are just as crucial for outstanding performance as physical energy. To be able

to withstand the demanding stresses of the managerial job duties, they urge effective leaders to develop mental toughness and effective emotion management techniques. Referring this back once again to the findings obtained through my survey and the characteristic qualities obtained from triathlon training, this proves further that participating in triathlon sports and obtaining qualities such as time management, goal-setting, prioritizing abilities, stress-management skills, gaining an increased focused and objective perspective, and quick problem-solving skills, aids the development of managerial competencies and ultimately leads participants of triathlon to becoming efficient and successful leaders who develop a high level of mental toughness and effective emotion management techniques.

Lastly, referring back to the paper "From the Locker Room to the Boardroom: Building Leaders Through Sport" by E. Argent published in 2013 which identifies that performing a sport can aid individuals in developing highly valuable qualities such as goal-setting, communication, cooperation, and decision-making that can make them better leaders and that sport involvement may help build character characteristics like tenacity, resilience, and self-control that are helpful in leadership roles and can subsequently be used to their benefit in management decision-making processes which is also to be seen as qualities obtained through triathlon training, participation and commitment to the sport as identified by the analysis of the survey conducted as a basis for answering the research question of this academic paper.

### **Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research**

The limitations of the detailed study for this academic paper are clearly the slightly deficient underlying basis in specific previous academic analyses and results publications regarding the correlation of involvement in the sport of triathlon, whether as an amateur or professional athlete, and the resulting improved skill development in both emotional as well as professional characteristics and leadership as an effective manager who is willing and able to demonstrate leadership qualities necessary to effectively lead, guide and inspire themselves and their team towards corporate success without challenging the emotional boundaries of his team too far and encouraging rather than overwhelming them by being a supportive, empathetic and understanding manager.

Furthermore, as described above, qualitative data was used as an underlying basis for the creation of this academic work, which was gathered and evaluated on my own by predetermining the respondents according to variables such as engagement in triathlon and holding managerial positions. Utilizing quantitative data instead would not have provided the necessary insight in the context of answering the research question and would also have been difficult to grasp and evaluate accordingly due to constraints such as that important variables are absent and the data found could potentially prove to be incomplete. On top of that, quantitative analysis would have potentially simplified complex conceptions too much and possibly lead to crucial context being left out. Adding to that, quantitative analysis methods would possibly prove itself to be unable to capture personal viewpoints and opinions of participating respondents and furthermore highlight its limited capacity to investigate fundamental drivers of behavior.

On the contrary, I decided to conduct a qualitative analysis as the underlying foundation for the creation of this thesis as this methodology facilitates and enables the possibility of researching intricate or subtle phenomena that are difficult to quantify while looking to fully comprehend people's experiences or viewpoints, especially in such a highly subjective topic as being dealt with in this very academic work.. This approach enabled me to research how social, cultural and professional circumstances directly affect people's behavior and views on the correlation of engagement in triathlon and the resulting development of managerial abilities and hence managerial success.

Possible suggestions for further research could be presented and carried out as follows.

First of all, as a researcher, it would be possible to make a further study of the possible advantages of other sports or physical activities in terms of management and the accompanying and beneficial development of skills for both professional and personal contexts, to compare them with the conclusions of this research regarding to triathlon and to weigh the development of the different skills against each other and to complete an evaluation of the results. As a result, one could tabulate different sports and their direct influence on the general managerial success of individuals, and expand the variables to also distinguish between genders and possibly also clearly highlight industry-dependent differences.

In order to obtain an even more in detail understanding of the correlation between triathlon engagement and the resulting development and enhancement of managerial abilities that derive from that leisure activity, as a researcher and with a more extended time of frame, the overall diversity of the respondents could be extended in terms of gathering respondents from different cultural as well as socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, to extend the survey to follow a more global approach, respondents from different continents and countries could be consulted in order to determine the country's specific similarities and differences.

Furthermore, with a more extended time frame of study and even more long-term perspective analysis, follow-up interviews or surveys could be conducted with the same participants over time to monitor and track the development of their leadership skills and abilities and to determine the long-term impact of their participation in triathlon and compare these determined results to those obtained initially and clearly identify developments. If the scope of this analysis were to be extended and one were to cooperate in depth with several, e.g. stock listed companies, one could proportionally determine the share of executive positions held by sportspeople and from this analyze a correlation and direct implications on, e.g. ROE / ROA, employee retention, and company valuations to determine to what extent managerial performance is affected by engagement in sports of these individuals.

In addition, as a professional researcher, one could engage in conducting a comprehensive comparison of the effects of participation in team sports and individual sports on the factual skill and leadership development in terms of both emotional as well as professional attributes. This analysis would most definitely provide interesting insights into the extent of the potential differences and overlaps between the mechanisms and outcomes of these two sports and also identify advantages and disadvantages, if any, and also which of these two sports is more advantageous for the development of managerial skills.

To conclude, there is also the possibility of conducting an ever deeper analysis and to gain an even more precise understanding of the underlying mechanisms of the direct correlation of engaging in (triathlon) sports and the development of effective managerial abilities, by conducting a research which focuses on the significance in terms of development of attributes that a successful manager must possess such as distinct personality traits, motivation, and social support.

All these additional possibilities for further investigations could be identified as potential supplements and would certainly be of high knowledge gain, but would have to be treated separately and as own academic work.

## **6. Summary of the study's main findings**

Based on the results of my survey, which was conscientiously completed and analyzed, it can be summarized that the characteristics and qualities achieved through participation and preparation for triathlon competitions, according to the respondents, are: time management, goal-setting, and prioritizing abilities, stress-management skills, focused and objective perspective, and problem-solving skills clearly and strongly contribute significantly to shaping and supporting the self-competencies and requirements of The Triathlon of Leadership according to Marti (Marti, 2019) which subsequently support individuals in becoming an efficient, successful and inspiring leader - both in a corporate as well as in a social environment. According to my study and the resulting analysis, the main qualities or competencies for managers consist of the aspects, which are described in depth in the chapter [“Correlation between triathlon engagement and managerial success”](#). All of these competencies are supported by and significantly developed by engaging in this diversely demanding sport called triathlon.

## **7. Conclusion on the research question**

This concise preceding summary of the results of this study and the resulting positive consequences for managers who have dedicated themselves recreationally to the sport of triathlon and all its facets allows a clear conclusion to be drawn about the underlying research question of this academic paper, which is: "Does being good at triathlon have a positive effect on your managerial performance?"

The overall positive impact that participating in and preparing for triathlon races has on the development and improvement of a multitude of managerial competencies, which are going to become more all-embracing and ever more significant with increasing seniority of the respective manager and hence resulting influence on the business success of a company as well as the

professional leadership and positioning of respective employees and colleagues in order to extract their full potential and subsequently achieve the desired corporate success, cannot be dismissed as to be seen on the basis of the results of this academic paper..

The qualities that managers have to prove in order to act effectively and operate successfully are, as mentioned previously in this paper, flexibility and adaptability, willingness to adapt, a results-driven mentality, and the dedication to improve personal and professional skills of versatile facets (Carmichael, 1995) as well as the capacity for multitasking and managing effective interpersonal relationships (Lufthans, Rosenkrantz & Hennessey, 1985) and furthermore proving the increasingly important quality of demonstrating self-awareness, learning flexibility and ultimately having the capacity to delegate (Quinn, 1996). Referring these desired characteristics of a competent and effective manager to the qualities and outputs that result from participating and competing in triathlon events and the previous demanding preparation for those events, such as effective time management, a results-driven attitude, goal-setting attributes, prioritizing abilities, stress-management skills, problem-solving skills, gaining and developing a focused and objective perspective and establishing trusting relationship, it is certain that the research question of this paper can be answered with confidence that ultimately, being good at triathlon and all accompanying facets of that sports is in fact supporting individuals who hold (high) managerial positions to develop a sustainable improved and furthermore improving managerial performance.

## **8. Final thoughts on the topic**

My final thoughts concerning this thesis and its underlying research question can be summarized as follows. I myself have been involved in the sport of triathlon since a young age and early on I started to take a closer look at the people in my immediate environment who are fascinated by the sport and what characteristics they bring with them. The level of determination, dedication and commitment it takes to do this sport justice are still very impressive to me to this day. No matter how time constraint my daily life was during academically demanding phases or during demanding phases of my professional practical experiences, I still put the sport as a top priority, without understanding at the beginning why I intrinsically put this importance on this subject.

Only after some years should I understand that the triathlon sport is the basis for everything in my life, that means that the training for and the participation in triathlon competitions equip me with the necessary mental resilience and confidence to live my life in the way I intend to live it. The sport shows me that with enough mental willpower, the necessary discipline and the self-confidence obtained through triathlon I can formulate and ultimately achieve my goals.

For these reasons I have consciously chosen this topic of the heart for my final academic thesis, to find out if my assumptions are in accordance with the theory and to check if my direct environment which is involved in this sport is in a similar situation and if we are driven by the same tireless power to push the sport, to strive for faster, better times to prove to us that life is conquerable and controllable.

The goals one can achieve through triathlon lead to confidence, this confidence leads to competence, this competence leads to knowledge and this knowledge leads to experience. This concatenation of positive attributes is what ultimately leads to the increased managerial competencies and mental resilience needed to be successful and competent in today's fast-paced and dynamic business world.

## **9. Appendix**

### **Survey Questions**

Q1 - What is your age?

Q2 - What is your gender?

Q3 - Who is your current employer?

Q4 - What is your current position?

Q5 - How long have you been engaged in triathlon activities, and what spurred you on?

Q6 - How many hours per week do you devote to your training on average?

Q7 - What do you think of business professionals competing in triathlons?

Q8 - Which triathlon competitions do you attend most frequently, and at what level (amateur vs. professional)?

Q9 - How do you manage to mix your triathlon training with your executive responsibilities?

Q10 - Has engaging in triathlon competition impacted your capacity for making decisions in any way?

Q11 - In what ways has your triathlon training and participation influenced or developed your leadership skills and abilities?

Q12 - Are there any skills or methods you learned while training for the triathlon that you think would be useful in your position as a manager? What are they if so?

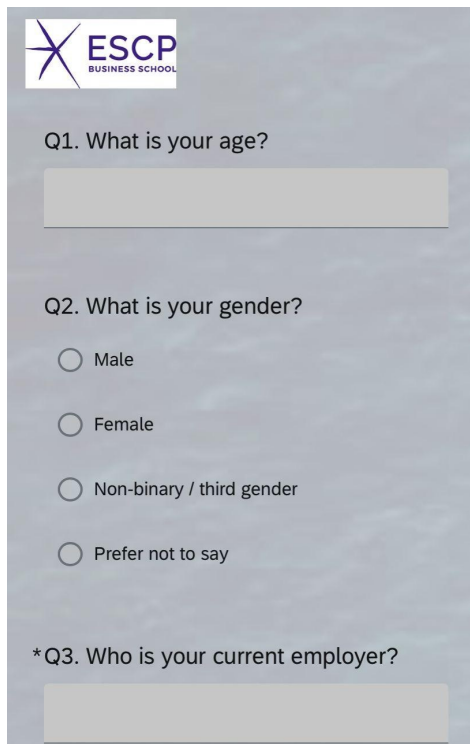
Q13 - Do you believe that engaging in triathlon sports has helped you handle stress better? How, if so?

Q14 - Have you ever encountered a situation requiring quick problem-solving during a triathlon event? If so, how did you react to it and do you feel it has made a difference in your professional life?

Q15 - Do you believe that participating in triathlon sports has helped you develop a sense of discipline and focus that carries over into your work as an executive?

Q16 - As a good triathlete, are you also a good manager?

## Screenshots of Survey



ESCP  
BUSINESS SCHOOL

Q1. What is your age?

Q2. What is your gender?

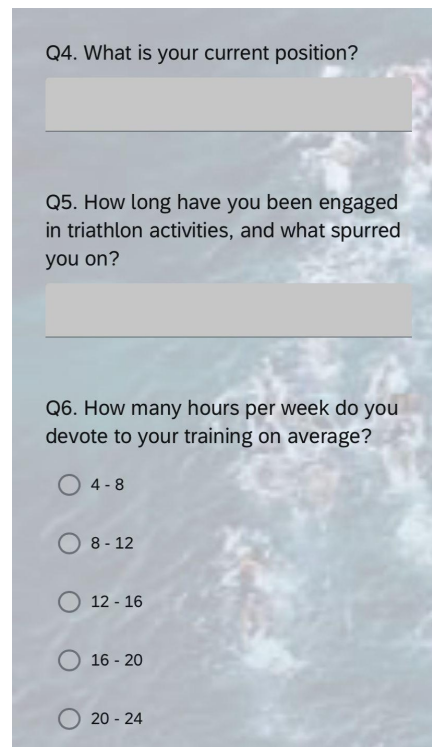
Male

Female

Non-binary / third gender

Prefer not to say

\*Q3. Who is your current employer?



Q4. What is your current position?

Q5. How long have you been engaged in triathlon activities, and what spurred you on?

Q6. How many hours per week do you devote to your training on average?

4 - 8

8 - 12

12 - 16

16 - 20

20 - 24

Q7. What do you think of business professionals competing in triathlons?

Q8. Which triathlon competitions do you attend most frequently, and at what level (amateur vs. professional)?

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Q16. As a good triathlete, are you also a good manager?

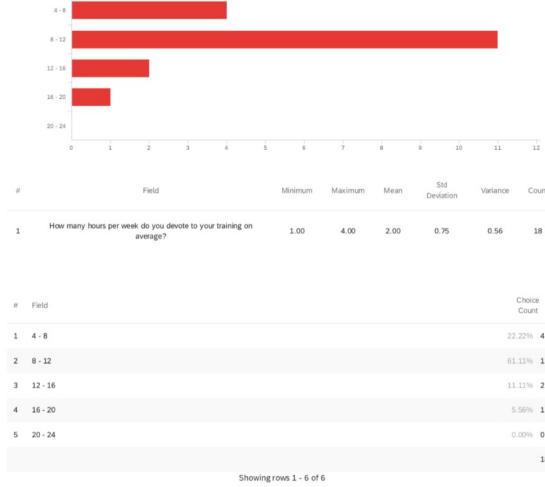
# Excerpt from the participants' answers

Q5 - How long have you been engaged in triathlon activities, and what spurred you on?

How long have you been engaged in triathlon activities, and what spurred you on...

0
5 years, started as a balance to work
11 years, a friend brought me to a half marathon and I was hooked by the challenge and reward
6 years, youtube life coaches inspired me to start this journey
Since 2 years; health, well-being & better performance at work
2 years
6 years
3 years
I have started triathlon 5 years ago when I was looking for a new challenge that could help me develop my soft skills and improve my sharpness at work and personal life
For 8 years now, I guess after my baby I wanted to feel kind of sexy again
3 years
6 years since I started after a sudden change of heart about work life balance
11 years, getting out the best of myself and coach others whilst achieving there best
Since 2016 // date with yourself & friends
3 years. Have been to an ironman as a spectator and wanted to try it out myself.
10 years / Health and fun
4-5 years
Since 1997, health reasons

Q6 - How many hours per week do you devote to your training on average?



### Q7 - What do you think of business professionals competing in triathlons?

What do you think of business professionals competing in triathlons?

Respect on your devotion and time management, as both activities require significant time and effort to excel on

I think they have a great mindset to achieve bigger

I have worked with amazing executives and managers that do Triathlons with good performance

Flourishing a winner's mindset seems the right way of doing sports & conducting business

I do think it is a great way of clearing your mind next to work

Questionable

It improves resilience

I think it's good, the sport offers a very good balance

I think it is one of the most complete sports and the one that provides professional with the most benefits. It helps them to become more energized and productive at work as well

I trust them way more than non triathletes, because they have a staying power and a huge ambition to challenge everything

People with a lot of income

In my opinion sports can help to create a balance for business professionals. In my opinion professionals who are actively working out tend to have better moods and better relationships with their coworkers.

Of course, you need them to have some role models in our sports

People have discipline and a good time management to get all the things managed

Sport is a good habit in general.

It is good for the mindset

No opinion really.

Triathlon is part of a view of life and therefore it makes no difference which professional group you belong to. However, from my point of view, the zestebigkeit and ambition that one shows in professional life is also reflected in triathlon

### Q8 - Which triathlon competitions do you attend most frequently, and at what level

(amateur vs. professional)?

Which triathlon competitions do you attend most frequently, and at what level...

None

Iron Man

I do at least one public triathlon per year on an amateur level.

standard distance, Ironman (amateur)

Half triathlon, amateur

?

Triathlon Mallorca, Amateur Level

Running, amateur

Half Distance triathlon (70.3 Ironman) as amateur

Because of my kids I only can participate in local events in and near Berlin.

Half Distance (Ambitious Amateur)

Mainly just local amateur events, every 2-3 months in and around Berlin.

Half distances and long distances, amateur level

Middle distance, amateur

Middle Distance - Amateur Level

OD and MD as amateur - LD one time 2021

Long distance - amateur

Full distance and 70.3 on amateur level

### Q9 - How do you manage to mix your triathlon training with your executive

responsibilities?

How do you manage to mix your triathlon training with your executive respon...

I don't

I can integrate it in my day to day life (in breaks, after work)

I train biking and running in the evenings, and swimming on the weekends

phone calls during cycling, training with business partners or employees

It needs discipline to make this a priority in my schedule. But as it satisfies me, I am investing the time.

Stress

Prioritizing tasks and not making excuses to skip sessions

I put in fixed times early in the morning

It has helped to become more organized and to decrease the amount of wasted time. It is based on having a solid schedule, waking up earlier

Time management is the key. At the end of the week I have a meeting with my husband to discuss the next week. So we can manage our work, Sport and kids schedules

Plan week by week

I have changed my routine to working out early in the morning so it does not cross my responsibilities as an executive. My days have just gotten a little longer, although I also found that triathlon training has improved my efficiency.

Always a tough choice to find a balance, trying to prioritize things

I have a personal trainer who helps me to get a perfect balance - get the most of my free time beside working

It's all about the planning and of course flexibility. Don't stick to a fixed training plan at all cost. Like in your working day very unexpected things happen and you just have to handle them an plan around them.

at the evening and weekend

It's hard. Like I believe trying to squeeze a run just before a meeting, or lunch break is most of the time a good idea, but from time to time can have negative impacts (barely on time, no time to prep...)

Planning and time management of work, everyday life and family/friends

### Q10 - Has engaging in triathlon competition impacted your capacity for making decisions

in any way?

Has engaging in triathlon competition impacted your capacity for making dec...

It has helped me understand that some difficult, long-term objectives require significant amounts of pain, endurance, and commitment etc. Learning this has helped me making difficult long term decision because even though they cannot be achieved within a few days, I know that I can work up towards achieving them. Thus making decisions to commit to long-term, difficult, major objectives has become easier

It made me a faster decision maker

The rigour and agility I gained over the years through the sport has taught me a great deal on how to make decisions

faster stronger better decision-making rationale

I am more disciplined and able to make decisions faster. I am super good in managing my time since I've started with my training

Yes

The best analogy I found is that it helps me managing resources

I think yes, thanks to the sport I act more exuberantly and am more reflective and can make my decisions carefully

It has turned me into a more confident manager and helps to make hard decisions easier

Yes, I'm way more confident in my whole behaviour, especially at work.

Not so far

I feel like I can focus more clearly after doing intense workouts in the morning. Improved efficiency in other areas of my work also means I can concentrate more in depths on key decisions when it comes to business.

Yes, more focused then before

Not sure - but you are focused all the time, during training and at work

Sport activities are clearing my mind and yes I would say help to make decisions. But I struggle with the term "capacity for making decisions".

I think no

I use the training time as meditation and thinking time. I very often ponder solutions to business issues during those moments.

In competition, decisions must be made within a short time. This necessity has definitely had an effect on my professional life as well.

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