

# THE RUNNING MIND: AN EXPLORATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES IN URBAN MARATHONS

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**Abstract:** As a rapidly developing urban sports activity in recent years, urban marathons have gradually become a new form of mass sports culture. This paper, through in-depth research on the psychological needs, physical and mental experiences of urban marathon participants, as well as contemporary body culture, aims to explore its impact on individuals, society, and school sports. Firstly, the paper analyzes the diverse psychological needs of participants, including challenging personal limits, pursuing physical health, and seeking social recognition. Secondly, by closely observing the physical and mental experiences of participants during training, competition, and post-race, it reveals the unique influence of marathon on individual growth and spiritual development. Thirdly, the paper dissects the contemporary body culture reflected by urban marathons, covering the selection of sports equipment, the dissemination of health concepts, and the strengthening of social interaction. Finally, by discussing the implications of urban marathons for the development of school sports, it proposes how to better draw on the successful experience of marathons to promote the prosperity of sports culture. In summary, this paper provides a profound insight into the comprehensive understanding of urban marathons and offers valuable references for the future development of sports culture and the reform of school education.

**Keywords:** Psychological needs; Physical and mental experience; Phenomenology; Urban marathon

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, urban marathon has rapidly risen and become a striking feature of urban sports activities. Half marathons, full marathons and ultramarathons, various races have gathered a large number of enthusiasts and gradually formed a new kind of mass sports culture. Urban marathons are not only a race, but also a dialogue between body and soul, providing participants with the opportunity to surpass their own limits. This paper will deeply analyze the psychological needs and physical and mental experiences of urban marathon participants, and explore the contemporary body culture reflected by urban marathons and its implications for the development of school sports. Through a comprehensive analysis of this sports phenomenon, we can better understand the unique charm of urban marathons and provide profound thoughts and inspirations for the future development of sports.

## 2 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE CITY MARATHON

The city marathon event attracts a large number of participants, and behind this participation lies profound psychological needs. Understanding these psychological needs is crucial for analyzing the popularity of the city marathon and promoting the development of sports culture.

### 2.1 The Desire to Challenge One's Own Limits

Participants in the city marathon often have a strong desire to challenge their own limits. Long-distance running requires participants to overcome various physical and psychological difficulties, thereby achieving a deep-level challenge of their own abilities. This challenge is not only physical but also a test of perseverance and willpower, satisfying the participants' desire for spiritual self-transcendence.

### 2.2 The Desire for Physical Health

The city marathon is closely related to physical health. During the training process, participants not only improve their heart and lung functions, enhance their muscle strength, but also exercise their body's coordination and endurance. This comprehensive physical exercise meets the pursuit of healthy living by modern people, making the city marathon an effective way to pursue physical health.

### 2.3 Seeking Social Recognition

Individuals participating in the city marathon often desire to integrate into a community with a common interest. During the marathon event, participants can share similar goals and experiences with others, establishing a close social network. This sense of social recognition strengthens the participants' level of commitment to the marathon event, making it not just a sport but also a social experience.

### **3 THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EXPERIENCES OF CITY MARATHON PARTICIPANTS**

City marathons are a comprehensive physical and mental challenge for participants. During the training and competition phases, they undergo unique and profound experiences. Delving into these experiences not only helps understand the feelings of the participants but also reveals the various aspects of marathon sports' impact on the body and mind.

#### **3.1 Challenges and Sense of Achievement during Training**

In marathon sports, participants face various physical and mental challenges during long training sessions [1-2]. These include challenges to endurance, muscle strength, and willpower. However, as training progresses, participants gradually overcome these challenges and gain a sense of achievement and self-confidence. This stage of experience not only strengthens the body but also sharpens the participants' willpower.

#### **3.2 Changes in Physical and Mental States during the Competition**

A marathon race is an extremely challenging experience. Participants experience physical fatigue, increased heart rate, and continuous adjustments in thinking during the race [3]. These changes in physical and mental states allow participants to have a deeper understanding of their bodies and cultivate the ability to adapt to changes. At the same time, participants may also experience a state of flow, which is a state of total concentration and selfless dedication, providing them with a unique psychological sense of pleasure.

#### **3.3 Reflections and Satisfaction after the Race**

After the marathon race, participants often experience a period of physical recovery and psychological adjustment. This stage of experience includes reflection on the race process, the spontaneous emergence of a sense of achievement, and expectations for future challenges. The satisfaction after the race comes not only from the achievement of completing the race but also from the discovery and breakthrough of one's own potential.

### **4 CONTEMPORARY BODY CULTURE OF CITY MARATHONS**

City marathons are not merely a sports event; they are an important part of the contemporary social body culture. From sports equipment, health concepts to social interactions, city marathons reflect modern people's understanding of the body and their pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

#### **4.1 Sports Equipment and Body Expression**

The sports equipment chosen by participants in city marathons is not merely for improving running performance; it is also a way of expressing the body. Various brands of professional equipment and trendy-designed running shoes showcase the participants' pursuit of the integration of sports and fashion. This fashionable sports equipment has become a part of the city marathon culture, representing modern people's attention to sports and the quality of life.

#### **4.2 Health Concepts and Lifestyle**

The rise of city marathons reflects the contemporary society's emphasis on a healthy lifestyle. Participants develop good living habits through long-term running exercises, including regular sleep schedules and healthy diets. The dissemination of this health concept not only affects individual participants but also forms a positive healthy atmosphere throughout society.

#### **4.3 Social Interaction and Sports Communities**

City marathons, as a large-scale sports event, provides a platform for participants to interact with others. Participants share experiences and encourage each other through the competition, forming a close sports community. This social interaction not only deepens the participants' participation in city marathons but also promotes the dissemination of sports culture.

### **5 INSIGHTS FOR SCHOOL SPORTS DEVELOPMENT FROM CITY MARATHONS**

From the psychological needs, physical experiences, and body culture of the participants in the city marathons, we can also obtain many insights for the development of school sports, providing better references for the reform of school education.

#### **5.1 Insights for School Sports Development from the Psychological Needs of City Marathon Participants**

Firstly, a deep understanding of the psychological needs of city marathon participants can help enhance the attractiveness and influence of sports activities [4]. School sports organizers can design activities that emphasize elements such as challenges, health, and social interaction to better meet the psychological needs of students, thereby

promoting the development of school sports. Secondly, the successful experience of city marathons also tells us that sports is not only a means to cultivate students' physical fitness, but also an educational platform that promotes the all-round development of individuals [5]. School sports should focus on cultivating students' perseverance, teamwork spirit, and self-management abilities, enabling them to not only exercise their bodies but also cultivate their individual character in competitions. Finally, city marathons also closely link sports with the concept of health. School sports can carry out diverse sports activities and promote healthy lifestyles to guide students to integrate sports into their daily lives, thereby improving overall physical fitness and reducing academic pressure.

## 5.2 Insights for School Sports Development from the Physical Experiences of City Marathons

Firstly, understanding the physical experiences of city marathon participants has a positive impact on sports organizers and individual health management [6]. By understanding the challenges and pleasures during the competition, one can design more targeted training plans and provide post-race support to enhance the quality of the participants' experiences. This also provides insights for school sports, on how to design courses that enable students to gain more rich physical and mental experiences during sports exercises, and improve their positive attitude towards sports. Secondly, the reason why city marathons attract a large number of participants is partly due to their profound attention to individual needs. School sports development can draw on this, by designing more diverse and interesting sports programs to meet the diverse interests and needs of students, and stimulate their enthusiasm for participation. Finally, participating in city marathons requires learning scientific training methods, maintaining perseverance, and arranging time reasonably. This provides an opportunity for school sports to cultivate students' self-discipline and time management skills. Through planning sports courses and training programs, students can develop the quality of perseverance in exercise, and apply these qualities to their studies and lives.

## 5.3 Insights for School Sports Development from the Body Culture of City Marathons

The contemporary body culture of city marathons reminds us to pay attention to the multi-level needs of people for health and sports. Sports activities are not only a means of exercising the body, but also a manifestation of a lifestyle. In school sports, we can draw on the resonance and social interaction of city marathons to design sports programs that are closer to students' interests and needs, promoting the in-depth development of sports culture. In addition, the social interaction and the spirit of pursuing common goals in city marathons have constructed an active and positive sports culture. School sports can also establish a positive and healthy sports culture atmosphere through various events and promoting cooperation among students, enabling students to cultivate teamwork and social skills in sports.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The rise of urban marathons not only represents a grand event of sports, but also serves as a distinct symbol of contemporary sports culture. Through in-depth research on the psychological needs, physical and mental experiences, and contemporary body culture of urban marathon participants, we not only gain a more comprehensive understanding of this sports phenomenon, but also reveal its profound impact on individuals, society, and school sports.

Firstly, the psychological needs that attract participants in urban marathons are diverse and profound. From the desire to challenge one's own limits to the motivation for seeking physical health, and the longing for social recognition, participants pursue multiple levels of self-realization in the marathon. This is not just a sport, but a deep individual spiritual journey. Secondly, the physical and mental experiences of urban marathons are a rich and colorful process. During the training stage, participants experience the interweaving of challenges and achievements; during the competition, changes in physical and mental states become a journey of self-discovery; the reflection and satisfaction after the race constitute the complete story of the entire marathon experience. These experiences not only bring physical exercise to participants, but also provide unique opportunities for their individual growth. Thirdly, the contemporary body culture reflected by urban marathons is a complex and multi-faceted picture. The selection of sports equipment, the dissemination of health concepts, and the strengthening of social interaction constitute the unique symbolic system of urban marathon culture. The spread of this culture has influenced the lifestyle of individual participants and has had a positive health impact on the entire society. Finally, urban marathons provide profound insights for the development of school sports. By drawing on the organizational methods, social interaction, and attention to individual needs of urban marathons, school sports can be closer to students' interests and stimulate their enthusiasm for sports. Urban marathons are not just a competition, but a vivid physical education class that offers comprehensive opportunities for individual development. Urban marathons are not only a race, but also a grand event of the body, mind, and society. A profound understanding of the psychological mechanism, physical and mental experiences, and contemporary body culture of urban marathons will provide rich inspirations for future sports development and school education, guiding us towards a healthier and more positive sports culture future.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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