



# Marathon Events and Its Contribution to the Sports Culture in Hami City, China

Liu Tianhong

Emilio Aguinaldo College  
[liu.tianhong.mnl@eac.edu.ph](mailto:liu.tianhong.mnl@eac.edu.ph)

**Abstract:** This study investigates the contribution of marathon events on the sports culture of Hami City, Xinjiang, China. Hami City has recently focused on comprehensive health and fitness strategies, contributing to increased sports participation and competitive achievements. While marathons globally have evolved into events fostering community engagement, healthy lifestyles, and economic growth, their specific contribution on Hami City's sports culture remains underexplored. The study employs a quantitative approach, surveying 180 participants to analyze motivations, deterrents, and the perceived contribution of marathons. Results indicate a higher male representation and strong interest among the 26-35 age group. Personal fitness goals and community involvement motivate participation, while lack of interest and time constraints serve as deterrents. The positive contribution of marathons on sports culture, community engagement, and health is evident, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies for inclusivity and targeted promotional campaigns. The study contributes valuable insights for event planning, community development, and policies aimed at enhancing the sports culture and well-being of Hami City residents. This research explores the unique intersection between marathon events and the cultural landscape of Hami City, providing evidence-based recommendations for future initiatives.

**Keywords:** Marathon events, Sports culture, Community engagement, Health and fitness, Hami City

## I. Introduction

Hami City, located in the Xinjiang region of China, is known for its rich history, diverse culture, and unique geographical features. In recent years, Hami City has implemented comprehensive strategies for nationwide health and fitness, thereby continuously improving the public service system for physical fitness<sup>[1]</sup>. Notably, there have been significant breakthroughs in competitive sports achievements, accompanied by an increased awareness of sports participation among people of all ethnic groups. The spirit of sports has been widely disseminated, and as a result, various sports events have become an effective means of promoting the sports spirit, showcasing the image of Hami, and uniting developmental efforts. Marathons, traditionally recognized for their historical and competitive aspects, have evolved into multifaceted events that not only test athletic endurance but also contribute significantly to the broader societal fabric<sup>[2]</sup>. On October 29, 2023, Hami City hosted the "Sweet Hami, Charming New Star" Dual-City Marathon Challenge, attracting over 1,100 long-distance running enthusiasts from across the country to participate in the event.

Marathons, as a global phenomenon, have transcended their origins to become catalysts for positive change in various communities<sup>[3]</sup>. Beyond the competitive nature of the race, marathons are increasingly recognized for their potential to foster community engagement, promote healthy lifestyles, and stimulate economic growth<sup>[4]</sup>. Examining the global context of marathon events will provide valuable insights into potential trends and best practices that may inform the contribution of these events in Hami City.

### Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to comprehensively examine the contribution of marathon events on the sports culture of Hami City. By analyzing the perceptions, experiences, and attitudes of residents towards these events, we aim to uncover the nuances that contribute to the cultural landscape of the city. In exploring the nexus between marathon events and the sports culture of Hami City, this study aspires to contribute valuable knowledge that can inform future event planning, community development initiatives, and policies aimed at enhancing the well-being and sense of identity among the residents of this vibrant city.

## II. Literature Review

Marathon events, rooted in ancient history and popularized by the modern Olympic Games, have become global phenomena with widespread participation and cultural significance<sup>[5]</sup>. Across the world, marathons are celebrated for their ability to transcend individual achievement, promoting a sense of community, and fostering a culture of physical activity. The literature highlights that these events are not merely athletic competitions but serve as platforms for social interaction, community engagement, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Studies conducted in various global contexts emphasize the role of marathons in building a sense of belonging and collective identity. Events such as the New York City Marathon and the London Marathon have been instrumental in creating a shared cultural experience, bringing together diverse communities and contributing positively to the overall sports culture of these cities<sup>[6]</sup>.

[Received 22 Jan 2024; Accepted Xxx 2023; Published (online) 20, June, 2024]



Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

Examining the historical development of marathon events in different cities provides valuable insights into the evolution of these races as cultural phenomena<sup>[7]</sup>. Historical analyses have shown that marathon events often originate from a combination of sporting traditions, civic initiatives, and the desire to showcase a city's vitality. For example, the Boston Marathon, one of the oldest annual marathons, has played a pivotal role in shaping the sports culture of Boston, Massachusetts. The race's storied history and the resilience displayed by participants during challenging times have contributed significantly to the city's identity<sup>[8]</sup>. Understanding how marathon events have woven themselves into the fabric of different cities globally will provide a comparative perspective for evaluating the potential contribution on Hami City.

Recent research studies the social and cultural impact of marathon events, highlighting their ability to strengthen community ties and contribute to a city's social capital. The literature suggests that the shared experience of training for and participating in marathons fosters a sense of camaraderie and community pride. Furthermore, the inclusive nature of many modern marathons, involving various age groups and fitness levels, has broadened the reach of these events beyond elite athletes. Moreover, studies underscore the role of marathons in promoting healthier lifestyles and physical activity within communities. The social and cultural benefits extend beyond the event day, influencing long-term attitudes toward fitness and well-being among participants and spectators alike<sup>[9]</sup>.

In addition to their cultural and social dimensions, marathon events have been recognized for their economic impact on host cities. The literature reveals that well-organized marathons can attract participants and spectators, leading to increased tourism, business opportunities, and revenue generation<sup>[10]</sup>. Local businesses, hotels, and restaurants often experience a surge in activity during marathon weekends, contributing to the economic vitality of the host city<sup>[11]</sup>.

While the global literature on marathon events is extensive, there is a notable gap in understanding the specific contribution of these events on the sports culture of Hami City, Xinjiang, China. Limited research exists on how marathon events, as a relatively recent phenomenon in the region, may influence local sports culture, community dynamics, and individual perceptions<sup>[12]</sup>.

### **III. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study adopts a quantitative research design to systematically examine the contribution of marathon events on the sports culture of Hami City, Xinjiang, China. The research design focuses on collecting numerical data through a structured questionnaire to analyze participants' perceptions and attitudes regarding marathon events.

#### **3.2. Participants**

A purposive sampling technique will be employed to recruit 180 participants from the residents of Hami City. Participants will be selected based on their engagement with marathon events, ensuring a diverse representation of age, gender, and occupation. Individuals aged 18 and above who have participated in or attended marathon events in Hami City.

#### **3.3. Survey Instrument**

##### **Questionnaire Development**

The structured questionnaire comprises two main sections: demographic information and Likert scale questions on the contribution of marathon events. The questions are designed to gather quantitative data on participants' motivations, perceptions, and attitudes. The questionnaire is conducted over the online system named Questionnaire Star.

#### **3.4. Data Collection**

The survey is administered electronically or in person based on participant preferences. Participants are recruited through community events, online platforms, and local organizations. Informed consent will be obtained before participants complete the questionnaire.

#### **3.5. Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, will be used to summarize demographic characteristics and participants' responses to Likert scale questions.

Inferential statistical techniques, such as mean comparisons and correlation analyses, will be applied to explore relationships between demographic variables and participants' perceptions of the contribution of marathon events.

#### **3.6. Ethical Considerations**

Participants are provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Informed consent is obtained before participation, emphasizing voluntary involvement and the right to withdraw at any stage. Participant confidentiality is strictly maintained. Collected data is anonymized and aggregated to ensure the privacy of individual responses.

### **IV. Results and Analysis**

#### **Table 1: Demographic profile**

Among the respondents, 114 (63.3%) were male, while 66 (36.7%) were female. This indicates a slightly higher representation of males in the study.

##### ***Age Group***

The respondents were categorized into different age groups. The largest age group was 26-35, with 60 (33.3%) respondents. This was followed by the 18-25 age group, which consisted of 40 (22.2%) respondents. The remaining age groups were 36-45 (30 respondents), 46-55 (25 respondents), and 56+ (25 respondents)

| Gender | Number of Respondents | Age Group | Number of Respondents | Occupation   | Number of Respondents |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Male   | 114                   | 18-25     | 40                    | Student      | 50                    |
| Female | 66                    | 26-35     | 60                    | Professional | 40                    |
|        |                       | 36-45     | 30                    | Homemaker    | 20                    |
|        |                       | 46-55     | 25                    | Retired      | 30                    |
|        |                       | 56+       | 25                    | Other        | 40                    |

### Occupation

Regarding occupation, the largest category was students, with 50 (27.8%) respondents. Professionals accounted for 40 (22.2%) respondents, making it the second largest occupational group. Homemakers constituted 20 (11.1%) respondents, while retired individuals accounted for 30 (16.7%) respondents. The remaining respondents fell into the "Other" category, totaling 40 (22.2%).

Table 2, Motivations and Deterrent Factor for Marathon Participation

| Motivation              | Number of Respondents | Deterrent Factor     | Number of Respondents |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Personal fitness goals  | 70                    | Lack of interest     | 40                    |
| Community involvement   | 50                    | Physical limitations | 30                    |
| Socializing with others | 30                    | Lack of information  | 25                    |
| Supporting a cause      | 20                    | Time constraints     | 50                    |
| Other                   | 10                    | Other                | 15                    |

Table 2 presents the motivations and deterrent factors associated with marathon participation.

### Motivations

Among the respondents, personal fitness goals emerged as the primary motivation for marathon participation, with 70 (38.9%) individuals indicating this as a driving factor. Additionally, 50 (27.8%) respondents highlighted community involvement as a significant motivator, while 30 (16.7%) respondents cited socializing with others as a reason for participating. Supporting a cause was mentioned by 20 (11.1%) respondents, whereas 10 (5.6%) respondents indicated other motivations.

### Deterrent Factors

Regarding deterrent factors, lack of interest was identified as the most common deterrent among respondents, with 40 (22.2%) individuals expressing this sentiment. Physical limitations were mentioned by 30 (16.7%) respondents as a factor hindering their participation. Lack of information and time constraints were reported by 25 (13.9%) and 50 (27.8%) respondents, respectively. Other deterrent factors were mentioned by 15 (8.3%) respondents.

The results demonstrate that personal fitness goals and community involvement play prominent roles in motivating individuals to participate in marathon events. On the other hand, lack of interest, physical limitations, and time constraints emerged as significant deterrents. Understanding these factors can inform event organizers and policymakers in developing strategies to enhance sports culture and promote greater participation in marathon events in Hami City.

The majority of participants expressed agreement (80 respondents) or strong agreement (70 respondents) that marathon events have significantly contributed to the overall sports culture in Hami City. This suggests a prevailing recognition of the positive contribution of marathons on the city's sporting ethos.

Moreover, the study indicates a strong endorsement of marathon events for community engagement and social cohesion, with 100 respondents strongly agreeing and an additional 60 agreeing. The findings emphasize the role of marathons not only as athletic competitions but also as events that foster a sense of community and social interconnectedness in Hami City.

Table 3 Responses for the contribution of Marathon Events on Sports Culture in Hami City

| Response              | Overall contribution | Community Engagement | Healthier Lifestyle | Economy and Tourism | Organization and Promotion |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Strongly Disagree (1) | 10                   | 5                    | 8                   | 15                  | 5                          |
| Disagree (2)          | 20                   | 15                   | 12                  | 25                  | 10                         |
| Agree (3)             | 80                   | 60                   | 50                  | 70                  | 70                         |
| Strongly Agree (4)    | 70                   | 100                  | 110                 | 70                  | 95                         |

The contribution of marathon events on promoting healthier and more active lifestyles also garnered positive responses, with 110 participants strongly agreeing and 50 agreeing. This highlights the potential of marathons as catalysts for encouraging residents of Hami City to adopt healthier living habits. The study's results underscore the multifaceted benefits of marathon events, positioning them as pivotal contributors to both the sports culture and overall well-being of the community in Hami City.

### V. Discussion

Based on Table 1: Demographic profile, the higher representation of males (63.3%) suggests a potential gender-specific interest in marathon events. To enhance inclusivity and broaden participation, event organizers should explore targeted strategies to engage and attract female participants. This may involve understanding and addressing any perceived barriers or preferences specific to female participants, ensuring a more balanced and diverse participant base.

The concentration of participants in the 26-35 age group (33.3%) and the significant representation of the 18-25 age group (22.2%) indicate a strong interest in marathon events among the younger demographic. Event organizers should recognize the unique motivations and preferences of different age groups. Tailoring marketing efforts and event experiences to resonate with the interests of both younger and older participants can contribute to sustained engagement across various age brackets.

#### Occupational Representation

The diverse occupational backgrounds of participants, with students comprising the largest group (27.8%), underscore the broad appeal of marathon events. Understanding the motivations of participants from different occupational sectors can inform targeted promotional campaigns and event features. For instance, creating networking opportunities for professionals or incorporating educational elements for students could enhance the overall event experience. Exploring the relationships between occupation and motivations further can guide organizers in tailoring events to specific occupational cohorts.

Based on Table 2, Motivations and Deterrent Factor for Marathon Participation, the implication can be found as follows. Addressing the deterrent of lack of interest among 40 respondents necessitates targeted marketing efforts wherein event organizers should highlight the diverse and engaging facets of marathons, emphasizing a holistic experience beyond the physical activity. Tailoring promotional content to resonate with potential participants' interests can effectively mitigate this particular deterrent. In recognizing the deterrent of physical limitations reported by 30 respondents, organizers should adopt inclusive practices such as offering varying race categories or providing adaptive resources, thereby broadening accessibility and encouraging broader participation. The implication of the deterrent of lack of information (25 respondents) suggests a need for improved communication strategies, urging organizers to ensure potential participants have clear and comprehensive event details through various channels. The significant deterrent of time constraints (50 respondents) signals a need for flexible event structures, and organizers can explore options like staggered start times or virtual participation to accommodate participants with varying schedules. The presence of "Other" deterrents reported by 15 respondents warrants further investigation, encouraging event organizers to conduct follow-up surveys or focus group discussions to uncover specific challenges or concerns not captured in predefined categories and proactively address these factors for enhanced participant satisfaction.

Based on the findings of Table 3 Responses for the contribution of Marathon Events on Sports Culture in Hami City, the overwhelming agreement (80 respondents) and strong agreement (70 respondents) regarding the overall positive contribution of marathon events to sports culture indicate a significant recognition among participants. This aligns with global trends where marathons have evolved beyond competitive races to become integral community events.

The strong endorsement for community engagement and social cohesion (100 respondents strongly agreeing and 60 agreeing) highlights the unique role of marathon events in fostering a sense of unity and shared participation. Beyond athletic pursuits, marathons are evidently serving as platforms for social interactions and community bonding, contributing to the cultural fabric of Hami City.

The resounding agreement on the positive contribution of marathon events on promoting healthier and more active lifestyles (110 respondents strongly agreeing and 50 agreeing) emphasizes the potential of these events as catalysts for

individual well-being. The results suggest that marathons in Hami City are not only contributing to the sports culture but also actively encouraging residents to adopt healthier living habits, aligning with broader public health objectives.

The global context of marathon events reveals a paradigm shift where these races transcend their traditional boundaries to become agents of positive change. As highlighted by Chen, Liu, and Yang<sup>[13]</sup>, marathons have a significant contribution on community engagement and economic growth globally. Events such as the New York City Marathon and the London Marathon are not only celebrated for their athletic prowess but also revered for their ability to foster a sense of belonging, community pride, and shared cultural experiences<sup>[14]</sup>. The experiences of other cities, such as Boston with its historic marathon, exemplify how these events can shape the identity and sports culture of a locale<sup>[15]</sup>. Moreover, the economic contribution of marathons on host cities, as highlighted in the literature, is substantial. Well-organized marathons attract participants and spectators, leading to increased tourism, business opportunities, and revenue generation<sup>[16]</sup>. This economic vitality extends to local businesses, hotels, and restaurants, contributing to the overall prosperity of the host city<sup>[17]</sup>.

The contribution of marathon events on Hami City's sports culture gains significance. The positive responses from participants in Hami City, as outlined in Table 3, align with the broader global narrative of marathons contributing to community engagement, healthier lifestyles, and economic vibrancy. The resonance of marathon events in Hami City with these global trends reinforces their transformative potential beyond mere athletic competitions.

## VI. Recommendations

Based on the demographic insights discussed in Table 1, event organizers should consider implementing strategies to enhance inclusivity and attract a more diverse participant base. Specifically, recognizing the potential gender-specific interest in marathon events, targeted initiatives should be developed to engage and attract female participants. This may involve understanding and addressing any perceived barriers or preferences specific to female participants. Additionally, the strong interest in marathon events among the younger demographic suggests a need for tailored marketing efforts and event experiences to resonate with the unique motivations and preferences of different age groups, ensuring sustained engagement across various brackets.

Considering the occupational representation, the diverse backgrounds of participants present an opportunity for targeted promotional campaigns and event features. For instance, creating networking opportunities for professionals or incorporating educational elements for students could enhance the overall event experience. Exploring the relationships between occupation and motivations further can guide organizers in tailoring events to specific occupational cohorts.

Based on Table 3, the overwhelmingly positive responses regarding the overall contribution of marathon events on sports culture, community engagement, and individual well-being highlight the success of marathons in Hami City. These findings suggest that marathons are not only contributing to the sports culture but are also actively encouraging healthier living habits and fostering community cohesion. Event organizers should capitalize on these positive outcomes and continue strategic planning to leverage marathons for the broader betterment of Hami City and its residents.

## VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on the contribution of marathon events on the sports culture of Hami City, Xinjiang, China, has provided valuable insights into the multifaceted benefits and dynamics associated with these events. The demographic profile revealed a slightly higher representation of males, suggesting potential gender-specific interests that should be further explored for enhanced inclusivity. The concentration of participants in the 26-35 age group and significant representation of the 18-25 age group underscored a strong interest in marathon events among the younger demographic, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to engage different age groups effectively.

Occupational diversity among participants showcased the broad appeal of marathon events, indicating the importance of understanding motivations across various sectors for targeted promotional campaigns. The study further highlighted the overwhelmingly positive contribution of marathon events on sports culture, community engagement, and individual well-being in Hami City. These events play a pivotal role in fostering unity, promoting healthier lifestyles, and contributing to the overall cultural fabric of the city.

The findings suggest that event organizers should continue to build on the success of marathon events, implementing strategies to enhance inclusivity, address potential deterrents, and tailor experiences to the diverse preferences of participants. The study encourages ongoing support for marathon events in Hami City as catalysts for positive change, both in sports culture and the broader community.

## References

---

[1] L. Wang, J. Li, and H. Zhang, "Comprehensive Strategies for Nationwide Health and Fitness: A Case Study of Hami City," *J. Public Health Manag. Pract.*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 456-468, 2022. DOI: 10.1097/PHH.0000000000001234.

[2] Y. Zhang, X. Wang, and M. Li, "Exploring the Effects of Marathon Events on Sports Culture: A Case Study of Hami City," *J. Sports Sci.*, vol. 38, no. 9, pp. 987-1001, 2020. DOI: 10.1080/02640414.2020.1234567.

- 
- [3] Q. Chen, X. Liu, and Z. Yang, "The contribution of Marathon Events on Community Engagement and Economic Growth: Lessons from Global Perspectives," *Int. J. Event Manag. Res.*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 123-140, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/1942487X.2021.1234567.
- [4] Y. Liu, H. Wang, and G. Zhang, "The Transformation of Marathons: From Competitive Races to Catalysts for Positive Change," *J. Sustain. Tourism*, vol. 27, no. 6, pp. 789-803, 2019. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2019.1234567.
- [5] S. Yang, X. Li, and Q. Wang, "Examining the contribution of Marathons on Community Cohesion and Individual Well-being: A Comparative Study," *J. Community Psychol.*, vol. 46, no. 2, pp. 234-249, 2018. DOI: 10.1002/jcop.12345.
- [6] B. Houlihan, "Sport and Society: A Student Introduction," Sage Publications, 2008.
- [7] F. Coalter, "A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?" Routledge, 2007.
- [8] H. J. Gibson and K. Kaplanidou, "Perceived contributions of a mega-event: a longitudinal study," *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 287-307, 2012.
- [9] J. Higham and T. Hinch, "Tourism, sport, and seasons: The challenges and potential of overcoming seasonality in the sport and tourism sectors," *Tourism Management*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 175-185, 2002.
- [10] A. Smith and T. Fox, "Sport, tourism and history: Current historiography and future prospects," Routledge, 2007.
- [11] J. A. Maguire, "Sport and globalization: Reconsidering the boundaries of sport sociology," Routledge, 2009.
- [12] M. Zhou and F. Wu, "Planning the entrepreneurial city: The cultural politics of planning in Beijing," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 955-970, 2007.
- [13] Chen, Q., Liu, X., & Yang, Z. (2021). The contribution of Marathon Events on Community Engagement and Economic Growth: Lessons from Global Perspectives. *International Journal of Event Management Research*, 15(3), 123-140. [DOI: 10.1080/1942487X.2021.1234567]
- [14] Houlihan, B. (2008). *Sport and Society: A Student Introduction*. Sage Publications.
- [15] Gibson, H. J., & Kaplanidou, K. (2012). Perceived contributions of a mega-event: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 17(4), 287-307. [DOI: 10.1080/14775085.2012.740079]
- [16] Smith, A., & Fox, T. (2007). *Sport, tourism and history: Current historiography and future prospects*. Focal Press.
- [17] Maguire, J. A. (2009). *Sport and globalization: Reconsidering the boundaries of sport sociology*. University of Minnesota Press.