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Abstract: Marathon activities are booming in China, but the research of participants' experience is lacking. In this paper, the experience value dimension is verified among marathon participants, and the relationship between satisfaction and willingness to participate is discussed by using structural equation model. The results show that :(1) the perceived experience of marathon participants can be divided into four dimensions from high to low: economic experience value, hedonic experience value, altruistic experience value and social experience value. (2) economic experience value and altruistic experience value have a significant positive impact on the satisfaction, and the impact of economic experience value is greater. While hedonic experience value and social experience value have no significant impact on the satisfaction. (3) participants' satisfaction will have a positive impact on the participation willingness.

Key words: Marathon; Experience value; Participation willingness; structural equation model

1. INTRODUCTION

Entering the decisive stage of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way in China, people's income has been increased, together with leisure time which leads to the coming of leisure era. National fitness has become a national strategy. The enhancement of people's health awareness makes more and more people realize the importance of sports. Among the various sports methods, running is simple and easy way and is highly praised. Marathon in various forms and themes has shown a blowout development in China. According to the annual report of <China Marathon 2018>, at the end of 2018, there were 1581 marathons and related sports events (road races with more than 800 people and cross-country races with more than 300 people) in China, with a total of 5.83 million participants.

Recently, experience has gone beyond products and services. It is a beautiful, unforgettable and unique process that people experience which refers to a kind of beautiful feeling produced in people's consciousness when people's emotion, body, intelligence and even spirit reach a certain level(Yu and Zhang, 2015; Wu, Cheng, Ai,2018). The research on experience value has shifted from product field to leisure field, and it has theoretical and practical significance for the research of consumer experience. Experience value has been achieved in different fields (Song and Yao, 2013; Prebensen, Woo, Uysal,2014; Michie and Gooty, 2005).

As an increasing number of Marathon participants, what experience they can get from the activities still needs exploration. Some scholars have begun to explore the psychological experience of participants by qualitative research methods (Li and Li, 2019; Huang and Zhang,2019). This study will try to focus on the problems: what kind of experience can participants get in marathon activities under the existing framework dimension of experience? How does the experience affect their satisfaction and willingness to participate? We hope to provide some theoretical basis for the organizers and participants of the city marathon.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of experience exists in many disciplines. Different scholars in economics, management, psychology and many other disciplines have defined this concept from different perspectives. From the perspective of economics, experience is not only sold to customers as accessories when the

audience enjoys the service, but also sold to the audience at a certain price as if the commodity has its own value (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). Pine et al. (1998) pointed out that experience is an event in which each customer participates in a personalized way. Schmitt (1999) pointed out that experience is an individual's response to some stimuli (such as marketing efforts). Wen (2007) indicated that businesses will create an appropriate atmosphere to infect the audience in order to promote or publicize products. In this case, the emotional reaction of the audience to the products, personnel and services of the businesses in the process of contacting with the businesses is experience (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). In reality, experience is more and more used in the service industry.

There is no consistent view on the dimension of experience. Pine et al. (1998) thinks that it should include entertainment experience, education experience, recluse experience and aesthetic experience. According to Schmitt (1999), it includes sensory experience, emotional experience, thinking experience, action experience and relevance experience. Sweeney et al. (2001) divided the retail consumer experience into emotional experience, quality / performance experience, social experience and price experience. Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon (2001) pointed out that customer perceived experience value interacts with long-distance appreciation or direct use of products and services. The brand value of the resort is related to customers' experience before, during and after consumption. Therefore, they believe that under the context of the resort, customers' experience should be understood from the following four dimensions: internal environment, interest, return on investment and excellent service facilities.

Li (2017) explored the four dimensions of tourists' leisure experience: entertainment experience, education experience, escape experience, aesthetic experience and their environmental responsible behavior. Li and Fan(2006) divided service experience into three dimensions: (1) Functional experience, including product experience, environment experience and employee service experience. (2) Emotional experience is the affection, mood or feelings that customers are aroused in the process of consumption. (3) Social experience is a kind of functional or symbolic value. Consumption is to establish a kind of social relationship and seek a sense of social belonging and identity. They believe that in the process of consumption, the first thing customers need is functional value, the second is emotional value, and the last is social value that highlights their own status and taste . Yang and Chen (2010) followed Holbrooke's classification and divided customer experience into four kinds of experience value ideology: (1) Economic experience value refers to consumers' requirements for high quality and efficiency of goods and services. (2) Hedonic experiential value refers to the sense of pleasure, aesthetics and comfort that consumers can experience when they get goods and corresponding services. (3) Social experiential value is mainly reflected in that consumers regard purchasing behavior as a means of reflecting social status and social value. (4) Altruistic empirical value refers to the impact of consumers' purchasing activities on others and society.

From the above classification, we can find that the division of experience will be different due to the different nature of products or services. Since marathon is not a physical product, participants will be weak in the functional experience, and more concentrated in the emotional and social experience. Wang (2018) pointed out that with the help of running, an individual's body has such social functions as symbol, consumption, narration, communication, and identification. Wang et al. (2017) believe that marathon is a performing platform for the realization of group-value and self-value, and marathon running can be transformed into the recognition and pursuit of community value. Li et al. (2019) found that the psychological experience of City Marathon competitors includes four categories: cognition, emotion, will and special experience. Therefore, based on the division of various dimensions of experience value and altruistic experience value referring to the characteristics of Marathon participants.

The research on experience value and satisfaction shows that value has a positive impact on satisfaction. Wu and Liang (2009) show that service-related factors will have a positive impact on customer satisfaction through experience value. Prebensen et al. (2014) also pointed out that experience value has an impact on satisfaction. Therefore, this paper puts forward the following hypotheses:

H1: experience value will have a positive impact on marathon participants' satisfaction

H1a: economic experience value will have a positive impact on marathon participants' satisfaction

H1b: hedonic experience value will have a positive impact on marathon participants' satisfaction

H1c: social experience value will have a positive impact on marathon participants' satisfaction

H1d: altruistic experience value will have a positive impact on marathon participants' satisfaction

The impact of satisfaction on loyalty and willingness to participate has also been confirmed in many fields. For example, in the field of tourism and reception industry, the impact of experience value on post purchase behavior is recognized (Chang,2018; Ahn, Lee, Back,2019). Research by Wu et al. (2018) shows that experience satisfaction of cruise tourists will have a positive impact on behavior intention. Therefore, the study proposes H2:

H2: satisfaction will have a positive impact on the willingness to continue to participate.

3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the existing researches, this study divides marathon participants' experience into four dimensions: economic experience value, hedonic experience value, social experience value and altruistic experience value. In order to design items more objectively, this study first conducted a content analysis of Marathon participants' feelings after competitions (16803 words in total) in the above four dimensions, and the summary is shown in Table 1. The content was obtained through internet from the travel notes and diaries of the Marathon participants.

Dimensions	Typical descriptions of feelings after competitions	Summary
Economic experience value	Running is the most economical way of fitness, no equipment, no professional venues, no company, no time limit. Especially that the picturesque hills and streams in the back garden of our village are stunning, the air is fresh. It is like a crime if you do not run. Although marathon is a competitive sport, in my humble opinion, it is a good activity for national fitness and entertainment. So that a lot of friends at the scene come to the game and play together.	Marathon participants generally believe that running is a healthy and inexpensive activity. At the same time, the route selection of Marathon usually has a better environment, which can let them also experience local customs and get a better experience than expected, acting like a good adjustment to the daily life.
Hedonic experience value	Some people say that "life is a run with an end". Like Forrest Gump, he keeps on running, keeps on walking, and changes other people's lives without pause. During running, we throw away the past, learn to be tolerant, and find the true meaning of life, which is one of the reasons why people love marathon. It is the eighth time that I came to this track, everything was so familiar, as if I went home. How much can I run is not so important to me. It is the most perfect result to run well and run PB; If not, just enjoy the track and feel the annual feeling.	Most of the members will have a sense of pleasure in the process of participation, either from the beauty and elegance of the surrounding landscape, or from the baptism of life and their own ideas, or from the reunion with new and old friends, or from the passion supplement to the plain life. In a word, it can be found in the description that the participants have hedonic experience characteristics.
Social experience value	This process, for athletes, is not a competition, and a self- transcendence. We tried to run on the field together, and learned to insist in the process of running. Every time they finish a competition, they have completed a challenge for themselves. When they rush through the finish line, they will gain enough to benefit from their life.	Participants believe that marathon is a race against themselves. Maybe it's reflected in the better results you can get in each run, maybe it's reflected in the perseverance you get. Participants believe that marathon can produce social experience beyond self.
Altruistic experience value	The participants who prepared before the competition and the audience were instantly touched and joined in the hot dance. Several young French dancers also joined in, taking pictures one after another. It more like a carnival instead of a	Results are important, but so is the atmosphere of the game. Many participants mentioned in their descriptions that the racers had a good relationship during the race, cheered

Table1. Experience dimensions of Marathon participants based on feelings after competitions

race.	each other up and took pictures with
Of course, sports do not have national boundaries.	each other. Many participants can even
When we were doing preparatory activities, we	make new friends in the activities.
also saw black friends and I don't know which	
country they are from, but it doesn't matter. We	
smile to each other, and a thumb is the biggest	
encouragement to each other.	

According to the above description, and referring to the relevant literature and the actual situation of Marathon activities, the item design is carried out (as shown in Table 2), and the questionnaire is designed according to the Likert five subscale.

Dimensions	Items	Source
Economic	Taking part in the Marathon is a convenient and efficient way to improve the quality of life	Yang et al. (2010)
experience	Taking part in the marathon effectively improved my health	
value	Taking part in the marathon has effectively improved my attitude towards life	
	Taking part in the marathon effectively enriched my free time	
	Taking part in the marathon made me relax completely	Wang et al. (2018)
Hedonic experience	Taking part in the marathon helped me relieve the pressure and calm down	
value	Taking part in the Marathon gives me a sense of stress and security	
	Taking part in the Marathon gives me a sense of freedom	
	Taking part in the Marathon makes me gain encouragement	Li J et al. (2006) ;Huang
Social	and praise from others, and I feel more confident	et al. (2019)
experience	Taking part in the Marathon can let me feel my own sense of existence.	
value	I explore myself, explore my potential and feel satisfied in every marathon.	
Altruistic	I'm free to express trust with other marathon enthusiasts	Wang et al. (2006)
experience value	I have a stress free, easy interaction experience with other marathon enthusiasts	
value	Marathon brings upward atmosphere into the whole society	
Willingness	I'm very willing to continue running marathons	Wu (2018)
to	It's very difficult for me to give up the marathon	
participate	I'm very determined to keep running	
	I'm satisfied with the sense of accomplishment that marathon	Wu et al. (2018) ;Yang
Satisfaction	brings	Yun et al. (2010)
	I'm satisfied that running a marathon helps me relax	
	I'm satisfied that running a marathon has challenged my physical fitness	

 Table2. Source of questionnaire items

This study collected data through questionnaire survey and conducted from December 2018 to February 2019. The questionnaire was mainly distributed during the Nanshan Marathon in Shenzhen. In addition, 218 valid questionnaires were collected through online distribution among marathon lovers in Hunan. The sample profile is shown in Table 3, from which we can find that the proportion of men and women is relatively balanced. The Post-70s, 80s and 90s are the main groups of the survey, and 59.2% of the sample group have participated in more than three marathons.

Table3. Sample profile

	Male	54.1		Shenzhen	27.5
Gender	Female	45.9	Occupation	Other places in Guangdong Province	36.1
Age	post-2000s	8.3		Outside Guangdong Province	35.8
Ũ	post-1990s	33.5	Frequency	1st time	30.7

	post-1980s	22.9		Twice	10.1
	post-1970s post-1960s			Three times and above	59.2
				Full-time job	54.1
	No formal education	0.5		Part-time job	6
Education	High school and below 25.2		Working situation	Student	26.6
	Bachelor degree	69.3	Situation	Retired	3.2
	Master degree and above	5		others	10.1

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Reliability and Validity Examination

The Cronbach's alpha value of 20 items in the questionnaire is 0.965, and the Cronbach's alpha values of experience, satisfaction and willingness to participate are 0.958, 0.785 and 0.895 respectively, which are all greater than 0.8. In addition, the measurement indexes of each item do not meet the deletion conditions which means they have good reliability.

Exploratory factor analysis shows that the KMO value of the experience scale is 0.921, greater than 0.7. As shown in Table 4, the factor load of each item is above 0.5, and the cumulative variance explanation rates of experience, satisfaction and willingness to participate namely are 81.684%, 70.903% and 77.481%, respectively, which are all more than 60%, indicating that the factors retained after extraction are quite well (Wu, 2010: 232), and there is good stability and internal consistency among the measurement items of the scale.

Dimensions	Items	Factor load	Variationofinterpretation(%)		
	Taking part in the Marathon is a convenient and efficient way to improve the quality of life	0.651			
Economic experience value	Taking part in the marathon effectively improved my health	0.804	21.685		
experience value	Taking part in the marathon has effectively improved my attitude towards life	0.698	21.005		
	Taking part in the marathon effectively enriched my free time	0.721			
	Taking part in the marathon made me relax completely	0.689			
Hedonic	Taking part in the marathon helped me relieve the pressure and calm down	0.651	21.621		
experience value	Taking part in the Marathon gives me a sense of stress and security	0.766			
	Taking part in the Marathon gives me a sense of freedom	0.773			
Social experience value	Taking part in the Marathon makes me gain encouragement and praise from others, and I feel more confident	0.691	20.286		
	Taking part in the Marathon can let me feel my own sense of existence.	0.822			
	I explore myself, explore my potential and feel satisfied in every marathon.	0.700			
	I'm free to express trust with other marathon enthusiasts	0.764			
Altruistic experience value	I have a stress free, easy interaction experience with other marathon enthusiasts	0.815	18.092		
	Marathon brings upward atmosphere into the whole society	0.740			
Willingness to participate	I'm very willing to continue running marathons It's very difficult for me to give up the marathon	0.888 0.833	77.481		

	I'm very determined to keep running	0.918	
Satisfaction	I'm satisfied with the sense of accomplishment that marathon brings	0.760	
	I'm satisfied that running a marathon helps me relax	0.873	70.903
	I'm satisfied that running a marathon has challenged my physical fitness	0.887	

On the basis of the above, we use the maximum likelihood estimation method in AMOS to carry out confirmatory factor analysis on the four dimensions of experience. The results show that RMSEA = 0.093, greater than 0.08, which needs to be modificated. Judging from M.I., we need to delete two items: "Taking part in the Marathon effectively improves my attitude towards life" and "Taking part in the Marathon makes me feel free".

Further examination of the indicators after deleting the items finds that, $\chi^2/df = 2.299$, less than 3; RMSEA = 0.077, less than 0.08; GFI=0.929, NFI=0.950, RFI=0.931, IFI=0.971, CFI=0.971, all of which are greater than 0.9, only AGFI=0.885, very close to 0.9, which indicates that the four dimensions of the measurement model have better fitting advantages.

It can be seen from table 5 that the critical ratios of four dimensions of experience are all greater than 1.96, which is significant at the level of P < 0.05. The standardized factor loads of 12 items are all greater than 0.7, indicating that the scale has good aggregate validity. The combined reliability CR of economic experience value, hedonic experience value, social experience value and altruistic experience value are 0.846, 0.904, 0.882 and 0.905, which are all greater than 0.7, The average extraction variance (AVE) were 0.647, 0.758, 0.731, 0.762, all greater than 0.5, which met the test standard of the model. At the same time, the average extraction variance of satisfaction and willingness to participate were 0.584 and 0.674, respectively, which were greater than 0.5, and the combined reliability were 0.804 and 0.860, respectively, which were greater than 0.7. Therefore, it can be judged that the item has content validity to the interpretation of the concept.

Table5.	Results	of a	confirmato	ry factor	analysis

Dimensions	Items	Average value	Normalized factor load	Critical ratio	P value	Combined reliability	Average extraction variance
	Taking part in the Marathon is a convenient and efficient way to	3.87	0.749	•	•	•	
Economic experience	Taking part in the marathon effectively improved my health	4.06	0.801	11.74	***	0.846	0.647
value	Taking part in the marathon has effectively improved my attitude	4.00	0.859	12.59	***		
	Taking part in the marathon effectively enriched my free time	4.00	0.829				
Hedonic	Taking part in the marathon made me relax completely	3.98	0.919	17.26	***		
experience value	Taking part in the marathon helped me relieve the pressure and calm down	3.91	0.861	15.62	***	0.904	0.758
	Taking part in the Marathon gives me	3.83	0.877				
Social	a sense of stress and security Taking part in the Marathon gives me a sense of freedom	3.74	0.799	14.55	***		
experience value	Taking part in the Marathon makes me gain encouragement and praise from others, and I feel more confident	3.89	0.856	16.25	***	0.882	0.713
	Taking part in the Marathon can let me feel my own sense of existence.	3.80	0.936				
Altruistic	I explore myself, explore my potential and feel satisfied in every marathon.	3.89	0.923	22.77	***		0.762
experience value	I'm free to express trust with other marathon enthusiasts	3.98	0.746	14.43	***		0.702
	I have a stress free, easy interaction experience with other marathon	4.01	0.821				
Willingness	Marathon brings upward atmosphere into the whole society	3.68	0.698	11.02	***		
to participate	I'm very willing to continue running marathons	3.89	0.928	12.8	***	0.860	0.674
	It's very difficult for me to give up the marathon	4.06	0.578				
Satisfaction	I'm very determined to keep running	4.03	0.813	10.01	***	0.804	0.584
Sausiacuon	I'm satisfied with the sense of accomplishment that marathon brings	4.01	0.870	9.989	***		

In addition, from the average value of each dimension of experience in the above table, we can find that from high to low, it is economic experience value (3.98), hedonic experience value (3.96), altruistic experience value (3.89) and social experience value (3.82). From the average of each item, although the difference is not big, the top five items are: Taking part in the Marathon effectively improves my health (4.06), taking part in the Marathon effectively enriches my free time (4.00), taking part in the Marathon makes me relax (4.00), taking part in the Marathon makes me relieve pressure and calm down(3.98), taking part in the Marathon makes me relax (4.00) Marathon brings upward atmosphere into the whole society (3.98).Generally, the average satisfaction of participants to marathon is 4.03, and the average willingness to continue to participate is 3.86.

4.2. Path Testing

The sample data is imported into AMOS 21.0 for calculation and analysis, and the analysis results show the validity of the model $\chi^2/df=2.241$, less than 3; RMSEA = 0.076, less than 0.08. Most of the other indicators are above 0.9, only GFI = 0.897, AGFI = 0.831 is slightly lower than 0.9 (as shown in Table 6), indicating that the goodness of fit of the initial measurement model is acceptable, but some indicators do not meet the standard, so the model needs to be modified by individual path.

The criteria of path coefficient significance examination are: when the critical ratio is greater than 1.96, it is significant at the level of P < 0.05; when the critical ratio is greater than 2.58, it is significant when P < 0.01. The results show that the P values of hedonic experience value and social experience value on satisfaction are 0.800 and 0.172 respectively. The original hypothesis is rejected, which indicates that hedonic experience value and social experience value will not have a significant impact on satisfaction. Therefore, we try to delete these two paths and modify the model. The results are shown in the following table. It can be found that the index is improved compared with the original model, and the GFI and AGFI are very close to 0.9, which is acceptable in the existing papers.

	Absolut	Absolute fitness							Value added fitness		
	χ^2/df	RMR	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	
Recommended standard	< 3	< 0.05	< 0.08	> 0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	
Original model	2.241	0.021	0.076	0.897	0.831	0.917	0.897	0.952	0.94	0.952	
Modified model	1.932	0.019	0.066	0.898	0.859	0.928	0.911	0.964	0.955	0.964	

Table6. Model parameters

The path results after model modification are shown in Table 7, P values are all significant, indicating that the original hypothesis is tenable, that is to say, the economic experience value and altruistic experience value of Marathon participants will have a positive impact on satisfaction, and satisfaction will further affect their willingness to participate. Figure 1 intuitively shows the relationship among the three, the impact of economic experience value on satisfaction is higher than altruistic experience value, and satisfaction has the highest impact on willingness to participate.

Table7.	Path	analysis	results	of me	odified	model
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Hypothetical path	Standardized regression coefficient	Critical ratio (C.R.)	P value	Test results
Satisfaction <economic experience value</economic 	0.691	7.693	***	True
Satisfaction< Altruistic experience value	0.343	5.226	***	True
Willingness to participate< Satisfaction	0.885	11.270	***	True

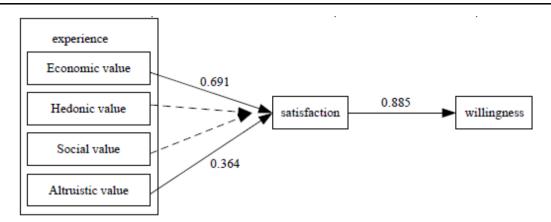


Figure1. Relationship among experience, satisfaction and willingness to participate

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

This paper examines the relationship among the experience, satisfaction and willingness to participate through the structural equation model, and makes the following conclusions:

(1) The experience of Marathon participants can be divided into four dimensions. According to the survey, the experience perceived by participants is economic experience value (3.98), pleasure experience value (3.96), altruistic experience value (3.89), and social experience value (3.82). It can be found that the marathon participants have high experience values, and the experience obtained is not only from their own perspective, but also from the positive energy which is brought into the society by this competition. This can also be found in the text analysis of post competition perception in which different participants have related descriptions in four aspects. The value of economic experience is reflected in the low cost and the ability to know the local conditions around the track. The value of enjoyment is reflected on the participants' inner pleasure, beautiful scenery, harmonious relationship and so on. Altruistic experience value is reflected on the stress-free communication with other participants, and the affirmation of the positive image of marathon. The value of social experience is reflected in the improvement of participants' self, performance or mentality.

(2) The value of economic experience and altruistic experience will influence the satisfaction of participants, and then affect their willingness to continue to participate. Among them, the value of economic experience has the greatest impact on satisfaction. From the perspective of economic experience, running is a way to get people's physical and mental health with low cost. Participating in marathon is a challenge to personal achievements, which can enhance pride, and thus will have a great impact on satisfaction. Meanwhile, from the perspective of participants, marathon is altruistic. The free and easy communication with other runners, the positive characteristics of the event itself can make it have higher satisfaction with the activities.

(3) Hedonic experience value and social experience value have no significant impact on satisfaction. The possible reason is that although participants have a high degree of recognition of these two experiences, the effects of improving their sense of pride and feeling happy are short-lived, and the process of marathon running is not easy. If they heavily pursuit the results, it will produce obvious psychological pressure, so it can not significantly improve their satisfaction.

(4) The higher satisfaction they feel, the higher willingness to participate they have. This is consistent with the results of previous researches. For example, the value of economic experience mentioned above will bring higher satisfaction. Some participants pointed out in their choice of future marathon activities that they will not participate in those with extremely high cost. At the same time, altruistic experience also brings higher satisfaction, so there will be some new relationships in this value, and the probability of participating in marathon together will be higher.

As the conclusion shows, altruistic experience value is recognized by marathon participants. Although marathon, as a positive and healthy sports event, is consistent with the general background of national health, and can enhance residents' enthusiasm for participating in physical exercise, due to the long race schedule, there will be a long time of road closure, and the influx of large numbers of participants will also increase the congestion of the city. In recent years, in running activities, cheating and other

negative events continue to appear, which also makes people have more understanding of the irrational prosperity of marathon. In this context, as the organizer, the identity of the participants should be examined, and there should be binding regulations on their behavior. Participants should also regulate their own behavior, not deliberately cater to the excessive needs of exclude-running spirit, in order to realize the rational return of healthy and positive image of Marathon activities.

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