



Research on the Image Presentation of Kenya Marathon

Yongle Qi, Jianli Zhang, Kaijie Yang

College of Physical Education and Health Science, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, China

Email: 1494583018@qq.com

How to cite this paper: Qi, Y.L., Zhang, J.L. and Yang, K.J. (2022) Research on the Image Presentation of Kenya Marathon. *Open Access Library Journal*, 9: e8811. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1108811>

Received: April 29, 2022

Accepted: May 24, 2022

Published: May 27, 2022

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Abstract

Using the research methods of literature and logical analysis, this paper summarizes how the Kenya marathon presents its image in the development process, provides a reference for the development of marathon in China, and then promotes the development cooperation of marathon in China and Kenya. The research shows that the Kenya marathon has formed a “five-in-one” image presentation mode in the development process of competitive performance, athlete flow, marathon events, training base and sports tourism. The outstanding achievements of marathon athletes have become Kenya’s national business card, which has effectively promoted the international dissemination of Kenya’s marathon image. The global movement of athletes has expanded Kenya’s influence in the marathon field. The complete event system is the guarantee for the growth of Marathon talents in Kenya and provides sufficient impetus for the continuous presentation of the excellent image of the marathon in Kenya. ETO and other high-level training bases further deepen the image of the Kenya marathon. Finally, by creating characteristic marathon events and planning marathon-themed sports tourism, the multilateral image of the Kenya marathon dedication and public welfare is presented to the public.

Subject Areas

Physical Education

Keywords

Kenya, Marathon, Image Presentation

1. Introduction

Kenya is a strong country in marathon sports. A large number of excellent athletes such as Jeep Joeg have won the championship in the international mara-

thon gold medal competition many times. The development of marathon in Kenya benefits from the racial talent of Kalenjin athletes and the high-altitude geographical environment. In recent years, it has gradually formed an image presentation mode integrating competitive performance, athlete mobility, marathon events, training base and sports tourism. At present, the research on Kenya marathon at home and abroad mostly focuses on the natural environment [1], historical origin and athletes' physiological mechanism [2], and the research on the presentation of Kenya marathon image is insufficient. This paper summarizes the development model of marathon in Kenya, and then provides a summary of the development of marathon in China.

2. Excellent Competitive Performance Has Become the National Business Card of Kenya

2.1. Marathon Performance Attracts the World's Attention

The excellent marathon performance shows Kenya's national image and strength. The marathon originated from a message of Athens' victory in the Greek Polish War [3], but Kenya pushed the competitiveness of the sport to a peak. The first men's marathon world record was set by Kenyan athlete Tegate, and the current marathon world record is also held by Kenyan male athlete Kipugge in 2 hours, 01 minutes and 39 seconds and Kenyan female athlete Kosgay in 2 hours, 14 minutes and 04 seconds. Kipchak became the world's first marathon runner to reach the two-hour mark with a score of 1 hour, 59 minutes and 40 seconds, challenging the limits of mankind. Mohamed, executive deputy minister of tourism of Kenya, once said: "it is precisely because of our athletes that we can occupy a place in the world". The creation of many world records has successfully linked the marathon with Kenya and become a link for the world to understand Kenya. This elite first development strategy is to win international reputation with excellent achievements, and it is also the beginning of Kenya marathon development model. As far as sports is concerned, the strategic goal of national rise fundamentally endows a national sports with a special mission, that is, it must give play to the strategic value that helps to promote the national rise [4]. With so many high-level athletes, Kenya can dominate the marathon field for many years and continue to attract attention.

2.2. Outstanding Achievements to Improve People's National Identity

National identity includes not only the national identity of regional concept, historical and cultural concept and national ownership, but also the national identity related to political system and political concept [5]. The newly established Kenyan government urgently needs to establish its political status and enhance people's recognition of the new government. The excellent marathon results provide an opportunity for the new government to improve people's national identity. Excellent marathon results increase people's national self-confidence. In the following decades, Kenya's competitive sports and comprehensive national strength have

continued to develop, and many excellent marathon athletes have emerged one after another. For example, Kipujog is one of the 24 athletes selected into the hall of fame of the international track and field Federation; Paul Kibi Telgat is the “anti-hunger ambassador” of the United Nations World Food Programme; among the top 20 men’s and women’s marathons in the world in 2017, Kenya’s male athletes occupied 13 seats and women athletes occupied 12 seats. The achievement of these outstanding achievements has not only continuously improved people’s national self-confidence and pride, but also contributed to the strength of sports to increase people’s national identity. By establishing the image of marathon athletes and publicizing the excellent achievements of marathon, improve national self-confidence, so as to enhance people’s national identity, and lay a social foundation for the sustainable development of marathon in China.

3. Athletes’ Global Mobility Enhances International Image

3.1. The Scope of Flow Extends from Developed Countries to Developing Countries

Kenyan marathon runners first moved to Europe, America and other developed countries. Before 1986, none of Kenya’s elite marathon athletes participated in the Boston Marathon, and it was relatively rare to participate in other major marathons [6]. With the development of World Marathon and the increase of marathon prize money, Kenyan marathon athletes are gradually active in Europe, America and other developed countries. In addition, Kenya’s female athletes have broken through the blockade and continuously won the championship in the World Marathon, which has accelerated the flow of athletes. In 1989, Pascoline Wangui, a Kenyan student, won in Rome, becoming the first African black woman to win a major marathon. Since then, a large number of Kenyan male and female marathoners have been active in marathon events in Europe, America and other developed regions, and have continuously accumulated experience in participating in top marathon events. The accumulation of experience is extremely important for the development of marathon in Kenya. The experience accumulated in international competitions has provided help for domestic marathon training and events.

With the acceleration of globalization and the gradual rise of some developing countries, Kenyan marathon athletes then flow to developing countries. Kenyan athletes can also be seen in marathon events in remote areas of China, such as Dali, Lanzhou, Guiyang and Ordos in 2019. The mobility of Kenyan marathoners is spreading to developing countries. While using the mobility of marathoners in various national events as a means to show their competitive advantages, the mobility of Kenyan marathoners is spreading to developing countries, and it also spreads the international brand image of Kenya marathon.

3.2. Athletes’ Domestication Deepens Image Presentation

Kenya has become a source of International Marathon talents. In the second

half of the 20th century, Kenyan athletes went to the United States to study and compete. This practice not only makes Kenyan athletes develop in many directions, but also continues to expand the excellent image of Kenya marathon in the world, which is also the reason why Kenya gained international attention with marathon in the 1970s and 1980s. The initial trend of Kenyan athletes' naturalization is to flow to the United States, Europe or Japan, but recently the middle east countries Qatar and Bahrain have become popular destinations. According to the list of Kenyan athletes naturalized released by IAAF, five (27.8%) athletes went to Qatar, three (16.7%) to Bahrain, three (16.7%) to France, three (16.7%) to the United States, two (11%) to Finland, the Netherlands and Bosnia and Herzegovina [7]. The international flow of sports labor resources has become a common phenomenon: professional athletes flow between professional sports leagues in different countries, and high-level athletes work for their host countries in the international arena by changing their nationality. These two aspects have formed a new international sports labor market [8]. Naturalized athletes not only win international attention for Kenya, but also reduce the competitive strength of Kenya marathon, but the naturalization of athletes itself shows that Kenya's achievements in marathon are recognized. Naturalized athletes have obtained better competition resources in other countries and achieved excellent results, which also continues to enhance Kenya's international reputation.

4. Talent Guarantee Provides Power for Excellent Image Presentation

4.1. Complete System and Cultivate Sufficient Talents

According to the nature of the race, marathon events in Kenya can be roughly divided into four categories: The first category is youth exercise competition. Such events are held by training camps and counties. The continuity of events is not strong, the number of participants is small, the competitiveness is weak, and the prize money of events is relatively small. The main purpose is to train marathon athletes and explore sports talents, such as youth cross-country running events, 5 K and other short-distance marathon events. The competition results are ranked and the information is published on the Internet, so this kind of competition attracts a large number of Marathon agents to explore suitable training objects. The second category is high-level competitive competition. It is represented by the national track and field championship, the national cross-country championship and the four marathon events held in Eldoret, Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa. For example, the Nairobi Standard Chartered Marathon, with a total prize of 10.5 million shillings in 2009, attracted at least 20 elite athletes in 2011 alone. The third category is social welfare competition. Most of these events are founded by well-known marathon athletes and advocate charity and social welfare. There is a huge gap in bonuses between different events. For example, the Tegra Luolupe peace game, first held in 2003, was founded by

Kenya's Tegra Luolupe. The total prize of the game is 300,000 shillings, which aims to reduce tribal conflicts caused by severe drought and high poverty. The Leiva marathon, which focuses on wildlife protection, has a total bonus of 58 million shillings. The fourth category is derivative events. Derivative events are mostly large-scale marathons, which are held to enrich the event content, improve the players' sense of participation and expand the impact of the event. The event bonus depends on the main event. For example, the Leiva marathon launched a virtual marathon due to the impact of the epidemic; the Nairobi Standard Chartered Marathon includes wheelchair race, family fun run and enterprise relay challenge. From exercise events to high-level competitive events, we will fully explore and train marathon athletes to provide talent guarantee for the development of marathon. The complete competition system provides a guarantee for players of different levels and needs, can meet the needs of the masses to the greatest extent, and provide a guarantee for players who continue to tap their potential. Public welfare events contribute to the cultivation of personal social responsibility and social development.

4.2. Guarantee of Event Service

Kenya marathon has professional standards in pre race preparation, transportation route, in race service, route formulation and post race activities. From the 1890s to the 1960s, it gradually changed from professional runners to amateur runners, which made the elite sports characteristics before the marathon no longer prominent, but one of many characteristics [9]. The high-quality event service also greatly promotes the participation of the whole people in marathon. In 2003, the number of participants in the first Nairobi marathon was only 7500. Through continuous improvement of event services, the number of participants reached 15,000 and 22,000 in 2007. Taking the 2014 event as an example, the complete service fully guaranteed the progress of the event. Pre competition preparation: in 2014, Nairobi marathon was sponsored by 11 enterprises and Standard Chartered Bank with 172 million shillings to introduce running microchips and strengthen the management of running cheating and sports data. Traffic route: before the start of the competition, use radio and other media to report on the regulated roads, alternative roads and travel plans. Road control information is posted in advance at road intersections, areas with large passenger flow and bus stops. Therefore, during the time period when people gather in a large area, there is no traffic jam. In game service: ambulances are prepared in the whole process. Professional medical personnel and ambulances are equipped at the road access. There are also reception vehicles that can cooperate with rescue between each supply station and the terminal.

5. Training Base Deepens Marathon's International Reputation

5.1. High-Level Training Base Leads Innovation

Marathon training base is a platform for Kenya to receive advanced technologies

and ideas from various countries and carry out innovation. The coast of Kenya is a plain, and most of the rest are plateaus with an average altitude of 1500 meters. In high altitude areas, it can effectively improve the oxygen transport capacity of human body and promote the body to produce more red blood cells to adapt to the hypoxic environment [10]. With an average altitude of more than 2400 meters, ETO is a high-quality marathon training place, which has attracted the United States, Italy, China and other countries to cooperate here. Rosa, the famous Italian marathon coach, established a training base based on biochemical medicine theory in Kenya. His training method can be refined to calculate and accurately control the athletes' heart rate and lactate index every minute. Rosa has trained a large number of elite marathon athletes for Kenya by relying on this method and high-quality training environment. Kenya also actively innovates through these bases and finds out its own sports strategies. The first step of this strategy is to set the stage goal, divide the distance into several sections, and calculate the pace of each section; Secondly, run with the leader, that is, the distance from the leader at the 30 km mark of the marathon shall not exceed 3 seconds; Finally, starting from 30 kilometers, every 5 kilometers is a unit, and the speed of the latter unit is faster than that of the former unit [11]. This exchange and cooperation based on the base platform will bring marathon training theory and biological detection technology to Kenya, develop Kenyans' potential in marathon in a more systematic and scientific way, and contribute to the development of marathon in Kenya.

5.2. Multi-Party Competition for Development

The globalization movement of capital has led to the flow of huge funds to Kenya, a natural marathon training ground. With the injection of capital, a large number of Marathon clubs and training camps have been built, including sports brands such as puma, Filo, Adidas and Nike; in addition, some retired athletes saw the opportunity and set up their own running training camps to train and train marathon athletes. Tao Shaoming, China's senior international marathon agent, said: "now there are at least 300 private training camps on the East African plateau, and the competition is very fierce." In particular, the competition between sports shoe manufacturers and club sponsors is more intense. The core of the competition is "people". Only with excellent athletes can the training camp earn income through marathon events and marathon athletes get rid of poverty. These social and potential financial benefits make many young people become professional marathoners, and many young athletes who grow up in poor families get rid of poverty through marathons. Eldoret has 89 training camps, and Iten training camp alone can accommodate 1500 runners [12]. In addition to providing marathon runners with resources such as food, housing, training and competition opportunities, the training base will also set up training courses near the densely populated villages to provide training opportunities for people who want to make a living by marathon. This is also to find potential athletes and stand out in many training camps. The fierce competition makes the training base full of a sense of

crisis. Only by constantly tapping talents, giving full play to the potential of athletes, actively training and winning competition bonuses can we survive.

6. Tourism Presents a Multi-Dimensional Image of Marathon

6.1. Provide Guarantee for Long-Term Planning of Marathon Tourism

Tourism is a pillar industry in Kenya. Every year, 1.7 million foreign tourists travel to Kenya, generating an income of US \$6 billion and solving the employment problem of 10% of the country's population. "We are looking forward to becoming the destination of Kenya's tourism ministry," said Mohamed, Deputy Minister of tourism. For a long time, Kenya's most famous track and field star has served as the National Tourism Ambassador. The marathon has not only brought Kenya to the world, but also brought the world into Kenya. In order to stabilize the development of tourism, the Kenyan government promulgated the tourism act 2010, which affirmed the driving effect of marathon on tourism. In addition, documents such as strengthening the sustainability of Kenya's tourism industry and the 2011 tourism act were successively promulgated, and in 2012, the Kenya Tourism Administration authorized the industry Steering Committee to formulate the 2013-2018 strategic report, which further showed the important position of the marathon in attracting major domestic tourism markets and foreign emerging markets, and gave full play to the attraction of the marathon to major long-distance tourist countries. According to the data of Kenya China Travel Agency, there are as many as 24 travel routes including marathon events, and Nairobi and Leiva marathon are the key routes. The promulgation of several government documents not only determines the position of marathon in promoting tourism development, but also points out the direction for the development of marathon in tourism, and gradually forms the marathon development strategy of "event + tourism". More and more people deeply appreciate the local characteristics and customs in the viewing and participation of sports events, and integrate sports elements in leisure tourism. "Event + tourism" is becoming a popular way of sports and leisure [13]. Understand the local marathon culture by participating in the marathon. The marathon also brings good economic benefits to the local area, improves the quality of life of residents, and provides financial support for the development of marathon in Kenya.

6.2. Create Special Events to Attract Tourists

With the continuous development of sports events, Kenya has held a variety of characteristic marathon events. There are the Tegralo Lupe Peace Race, which advocates peace, and the Balingo Half Marathon, which also intends to train and select athletes. One of the most influential is the Leva marathon which is held in the Leva wildlife reserve. There are various large African wildlife, including lions, elephants, rhinoceros, leopards, hyenas, wild dogs, and cheetahs. There is

zero distance contact between participants and wildlife, which makes the Leiva marathon a unique experience in the marathon industry. Another feature of Leiva marathon is public welfare. In 2007, the event donated more than 60,000 US dollars to a local school. In 2009, about \$500,000 was raised and distributed to various charitable organizations to support education, health, community development and wildlife protection throughout Kenya. The development of sports based tourism will further improve the sports strength of the region and make participants feel that marathon is not only a running sport, but also a sport full of social responsibility.

7. Conclusion

Kenya marathon has formed an image presentation mode integrating competitive performance, athlete flow, event system, training base, and sports tourism. Kenyan athletes shine brightly in the international arena with their excellent marathon results, which has improved Kenya's popularity and national identity. The movement and naturalization of athletes have also shifted from the initial flow to developed countries such as Europe and the United States to developing countries. The naturalization of athletes has deepened the image of Kenya marathon to the international community. The complete event system provides a guarantee for the development of marathon. Through high bonuses and high-quality services, it ensures the exploration and continuous transmission of talents, and provides sufficient talent guarantee for the presentation of an excellent image. Kenya's high-level training base has geographical advantages, technical advantages and market advantages, and has become an important platform for training elite marathon athletes all over the world. The Kenyan government has made clear the position of marathon in sports tourism and formed the phenomenon construction strategy of "event + tourism". Through marathon events, it attracts tourists to understand local culture and brings good economic benefits to local development. At the same time, it also disseminates the good image of Kenya marathon dedication and public welfare to the international community through tourists. In recent years, China's marathon has developed rapidly. It is urgent to understand the development model of the world's marathon powers, so as to establish the development path and development model of China's marathon. Building a complete event system, building an open and innovative training base and driving marathon tourism with characteristic events are the enlightenment given to us in the process of building the image of marathon in Kenya.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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