

## Healthy Lifestyle Economics: Socio-Economic Analysis of Running Activities in Public Spaces in Makassar City

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### Abstract

This study aims to understand the mechanism of how running events and practices in public spaces shape the economic value chain, from product consumption to services, and how these practices contribute to the production and reinforcement of social identity through the display of a healthy lifestyle. The analysis is based on the concepts of cultural capital and impression management, viewing sports as a symbolic practice that builds a modern self-image. This study uses a descriptive-interpretative qualitative approach to understand the socio-economic dynamics behind running activities as part of the healthy lifestyle of the community in the public spaces of Makassar City. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with runners, sports communities, and local businesses, participant observation at strategic locations such as Losari Beach and Karebosi Field, and analysis of documentation related to events and city policies. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns of meaning that connect healthy lifestyle practices with economic aspects and social interactions, while triangulation of sources and methods was used to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings. The results of the study show that running in public spaces, such as Losari Beach and Karebosi Field, not only serves as a means of maintaining fitness but is also intertwined with consumptive economic logic. This activity has given rise to new consumption patterns that include branded shoes and clothing, health supplements, and supporting accessories, which also serve as symbols of social status. Thus, a healthy lifestyle is integrated with consumption and prestige, reinforcing the economic dynamics of urban lifestyles. In addition, running contributes to the local economic ecosystem through the involvement of microeconomic actors, such as street vendors, healthy drink sellers, photography service providers, and fitness app developers. This confirms that public spaces serve a dual function: as arenas for health and social interaction, as well as economic spaces that support the livelihoods of urban communities.

**Keywords:** Consumer Economy, Healthy Lifestyle, Public Space.

### INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of healthy living among urban communities increasingly emphasizes the importance of physical activities that are easy to do, inexpensive, and can be done collectively. In this context, running occupies a prominent position. Not only as a fitness activity, running has developed into a social phenomenon that involves lifestyle, community, and supporting industries. The development of running communities in major Indonesian cities, including Makassar, shows how this sport fills public spaces, drives local economic dynamics, and shapes new social identities.

In recent years, running has experienced a significant increase in popularity as part of the healthy lifestyle of urban communities. International studies show that since the COVID-19 pandemic, the patterns of runner participation have changed. Many people have turned to running in open spaces as a way to maintain fitness and mental health, with a shift in motivation from competition to relaxation and personal

health. Global survey results confirm an increase in the volume of running activities despite a decrease in intensity and competitive orientation (DeJong, Fish, & Hertel, 2021). These findings reinforce the argument that running is not only a sporting activity but also a lifestyle that is ingrained in the daily lives of urban communities in various major cities.

This phenomenon is also evident in Makassar. Public spaces such as Car Free Day (CFD), Losari Beach Pier, and stadiums have become the main venues for running communities to engage in regular activities. Studies on public spaces in Makassar show that Losari plays an important role as a center for recreation and social interaction. However, the research also reveals challenges in the effective use of space, ranging from limited accessibility to inequality in the distribution of usage time (Ekawati, Ali, Trisutomo, & Ghani, 2020). This fact confirms that the development of the running community cannot be separated from the availability and quality of public spaces as places for social expression and physical activity.

Furthermore, running activities are closely related to socio-economic dimensions. Local to international running events have been proven to drive regional economic growth through increased hotel occupancy, consumption of MSME products, sports tourism, and increased demand for sports attributes such as shoes, special clothing, and health products. A study on sporting events in Indonesia found that mass running events, such as marathons, contribute to local economic growth by creating business opportunities and opening up new tourism networks (Rahmah, Triadi, & Prasetyo, 2024). This shows that running is not just a fitness activity, but also part of a growing economic ecosystem in urban areas.

At the same time, it is important to view public space as a dual arena. On the one hand, public space functions as an economic arena that drives both formal and informal activities. On the other hand, it also becomes an arena for the reproduction of social identity where communities affirm their existence and solidarity. The latest systematic review emphasizes that the physical quality of public space, such as accessibility, comfort, and safety, along with social perception factors, influences the extent to which the space can support social cohesion while also supporting local economic dynamics (Qi, Mazumdar, & Vasconcelos, 2024). In the context of the running community in Makassar, public spaces serve not only as places for exercise but also as arenas for interaction, consumption, and the formation of collective identity. Thus, the trend of running as a healthy lifestyle, the growth of the running community in Makassar, its connection to socio-economic aspects, and the role of public spaces as social and economic arenas form an important basis for examining this phenomenon in greater depth.

In recent years, Makassar has become one of the cities that actively organizes various running events such as fun runs, charity runs, and marathons. This phenomenon can be seen from the return of the Makassar Half Marathon, which regularly attracts participants from various regions and even foreign countries. These events not only serve as a means of exercise and entertainment, but also have a real impact on the local economy, especially through the MSME sector, accommodation, and consumption of food and beverage products around the event location (Rahmah, Triadi, & Prasetyo, 2024; Makassar Half Marathon, 2024). Other studies also confirm that sport tourism,

including running events, plays an important role in strengthening the image of tourist destinations while opening up new business opportunities in the service and sports product sectors related to the needs of participants (Run H2O Ride, 2024).

In addition to event organization, social media plays an important role in promoting healthy lifestyles and expanding the market for sports products. The credibility of fitness influencers has been proven to increase people's intention to exercise and influence their consumption of sports attributes such as clothing, shoes, and health products (Li et al., 2024). Furthermore, the authenticity strategy applied by influencers in presenting sports content has been proven to increase audience engagement and encourage the formation of broader healthy lifestyle trends in society (Massi, Piancatelli, Vocino, & Rojas-Méndez, 2024). In the local context, the running community in Makassar widely utilizes social media as a means of promoting events, sharing experiences, and expanding social networks, which ultimately contributes to the growth of the sports and fitness product market.

From the perspective of urban consumption, the trend of increasing demand for sports products, healthy foods, and fitness services has been growing stronger since 2019 and has accelerated significantly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Industry reports show that the sportswear market in Indonesia continues to grow, in line with increasing public awareness of the importance of health and fitness (Euromonitor, 2024). Empirical studies in Yogyakarta also show that sports tourism has an impact on microeconomic growth through direct transactions involving healthy food products, sports equipment, and fitness services, most of which involve MSME players (Sari, 2023). This situation shows that urban running is not only a healthy lifestyle practice but also an increasingly complex socio-economic phenomenon, where public spaces become an important arena for connecting sports, the economy, and the social identity of urban communities.

Studies on sports, particularly the phenomenon of running in urban areas, have close theoretical relevance to Pierre Bourdieu's thinking on social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital. Running is not merely a sporting activity, but also a means of accumulating capital that can be transformed into social status and economic gain. Through participation in communities, the use of sporting attributes, and involvement in running events, individuals seek to establish their

position in the wider social arena (Hilgers & Spaaij, 2024; Spinks, 2021). From this perspective, sports are seen as a social practice that combines aspects of fitness, consumption, and identity reproduction. Bourdieu and Wacquant (2025) emphasize that contemporary sports practices need to be understood as strategies actors use to maintain or increase their symbolic capital in the public sphere.

Additionally, Erving Goffman's ideas on impression management provide a relevant conceptual framework for understanding the phenomenon of sports in the digital age. The presence of social media allows runners to performatively present their identities, whether through posts about running activities, mileage achievements, or healthy lifestyles displayed visually. This phenomenon reflects how individuals manage their impressions to gain social legitimacy, community support, and even economic opportunities such as endorsements from the sports industry (Performing Performance, 2024; Massi et al., 2024). Thus, sports have become a performative arena that emphasizes not only physical fitness but also the representation of identity in the digital public sphere.

Furthermore, a healthy lifestyle can be positioned as a form of cultural capital with economic implications. Recent research confirms that health literacy, healthy eating patterns, and access to fitness facilities are part of the cultural capital that distinguishes social classes in society (Young Adults' Deployments of Health-Focused Cultural Capital, 2022; Association between Cultural Capital and Health Literacy, 2023). This cultural capital can then be converted into economic benefits, for example, through participation in the sports industry, fitness tourism, and the health products market. In this context, a healthy lifestyle is not only a personal reflection but also a socio-economic strategy that influences an individual's position in the social structure.

The research problem is formulated from empirical observations that running activities taking place in public spaces in Makassar, such as fun runs, charity runs, and the Makassar Half Marathon held at the Losari Beach Pier and CFD corridor, not only serve as fitness practices but have also become part of the healthy lifestyle economy. Literature on sport tourism and case studies of running events in Indonesia show that organizing running events can stimulate the local economy through increased demand for accommodation, food and beverage consumption, and

business opportunities for local MSMEs; but this impact depends on the scale of the event and the management's commitment to involving local stakeholders (Rahmah, Triadi, & Prasetyo, 2024; case studies of marathon/half-marathon events in Indonesia). Documentation of the event and participant registration data for the Makassar Half Marathon reinforces empirical evidence of a relative increase in the frequency of events and participation post-pandemic, making it relevant to examine how running activities link public spaces with micro to medium-scale economic activities (Makassar Half Marathon, 2024; event reports on the organizer's social media).

In addition, the development of the sports product and fitness service market is strongly influenced by the role of social media and fitness influencers. Research on the credibility of fitness influencers and authenticity strategies on digital platforms shows that convincing and authentic content increases the intention to exercise and encourages the consumption of related products (Li et al., 2024; Massi, Piancatelli, Vocino, & Rojas-Méndez, 2024). In local practice, event promotion through Instagram, TikTok, and running community platforms also creates demand for apparel, running accessories, health supplements, and training services, all of which are elements of the healthy lifestyle economy that are visible from activities in public spaces. Research on the context of sport tourism and MSMEs in Indonesian cities confirms that sporting events have the potential to trigger real local economic transactions, although the benefits are not always evenly distributed without policy intervention and collaboration between stakeholders (Sari, 2023).

Based on empirical observations and previous studies, the objective of this research is to analyze the relationship between running, the healthy lifestyle economy, and the reproduction of social identity in public spaces in Makassar. This objective includes efforts to understand the mechanisms by which running events and practices shape economic value chains (from product consumption to services), as well as how these practices contribute to the production and reinforcement of social identity through the display of a healthy lifestyle (the concepts of cultural capital and impression management). Theoretical studies on cultural capital related to health practices emphasize that health-related habits, knowledge, and consumption function as cultural capital that can influence an individual's social position and economic opportunities.

Therefore, this research is expected to provide empirical and conceptual benefits for urban planners, event organizers, local businesses, and academics who study the relationship between sports, consumption, and social identity (Mollborn & Modile, 2022).

## METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-interpretative approach to understand the socio-economic dynamics behind running as part of a healthy lifestyle in public spaces in Makassar City. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the subjective meanings, motivations, and social practices of runners in utilizing public spaces for health and social interaction. In line with Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research aims to explore the experiences of individuals and groups in specific social contexts, making it relevant for uncovering the socio-economic realities of runners in depth.

The main data was obtained through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation analysis. Interviews were used to capture first-hand narratives from runners, sports communities, and local businesses regarding their strategies in building a healthy lifestyle and economic activities arising from running. This is in line with Flick (2019), who emphasizes that qualitative interviews provide space for participants to express their experiences and perceptions. In addition, participant observation was conducted by participating in running activities at strategic locations (e.g., Losari Beach or Karebosi Field) to understand social interactions and patterns of public space utilization. Documentation such as community records, sports event data, and city policy information was used to strengthen data validation.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis model as described by Braun and Clarke (2021), through a process of coding, theme identification, and interpretation of patterns of meaning that emerged from the field data. Using this technique, researchers can link healthy lifestyle practices and economic aspects of runners with the socio-cultural context of Makassar City. The analysis process was conducted interactively and continuously, as emphasized by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), in that data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing took place simultaneously.

To ensure the validity of the findings, this study used triangulation of sources and methods. Triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews between informants, matching the findings of observations with documentation data, and linking the results of the study with the latest academic literature. Denzin (2019) emphasizes that triangulation is an important strategy for increasing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, so that the results are more credible and accountable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on preliminary studies and research that have been conducted, the findings of this study can be categorized as follows:

### Healthy Lifestyle Practices and Consumptive Economy

Running in the context of urban communities is no longer viewed as merely a physical activity, but rather as part of a healthy lifestyle that is integrated with physical health, fitness, and disease prevention needs. A number of international studies confirm this. For example, a meta-analysis conducted by Arem et al. (2020) shows that running is consistently associated with a reduced risk of death from all causes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. These results underscore the role of running not only as a recreational sport but also as a preventive strategy in modern public health.

On the other hand, a large-scale cohort study reviewed by Lee et al. (2020) shows that running in one's free time contributes to an improved quality of life while reducing the risk of cardiovascular mortality. These findings reinforce the argument that running is a long-term health investment. Meanwhile, research by Schuurman and Lear (2024) highlights recreational runners' preference for their running environment, which also supports psychological health. Runners feel more motivated and consistent in running when there are comfortable, green, and safe public spaces available, thereby creating continuity in a healthy lifestyle.

In the national context, several recent studies also support the importance of running for the health of urban communities. For example, Prasetya, Primajati, and Angesti (2024) found that jogging among students can improve physical fitness while helping to manage stress and mood. This indicates that running has a dual function: improving physical condition while providing

psychological benefits. In line with this, research by Mulyana et al. (2024) on elementary school students proves that running plays an important role in improving fitness, concentration in learning, and reducing stress, so that from an early age, this sport can shape healthy lifestyle patterns.

Based on these findings, it can be confirmed that running is a healthy lifestyle practice that emphasizes physical health, fitness, and disease prevention. Furthermore, the existence of public spaces such as Losari Beach and Karebosi Field in Makassar is an important factor that enables running activities to be carried out sustainably as part of the healthy lifestyle identity of urban communities.

The connection between running and the consumer economy is evident in various recent studies and reports. Thibaut, Vos, and Scheerder (2019), through a diary-based study, found that runners not only purchase sports equipment for functional needs but also adjust their consumption patterns to their social status and the type of running activities they participate in. At running events, their spending on sportswear tends to be higher than during regular training, confirming the transformation of healthy sports into a consumption practice laden with symbolic meaning.

In the industrial context, a Statista report (2025) estimates that the market for running shoes in Indonesia will reach US\$213.01 million by that year. This projection shows that as more and more urban communities adopt running as a lifestyle, demand for related products will also increase. This is in line with a systematic review conducted by Widyanti and Rusfian (2023), which states that sportswear consumption in Indonesia is now not only related to fitness functions but is also influenced by aesthetics, brands, and fashion trends. Thus, running has created new economic opportunities while shaping the consumption patterns of urban communities.

Furthermore, consumption patterns in running are not limited to sports equipment but also extend to the use of health supplements. Isenmann, Tolle, Geisler, Flenker, and Diel (2024) show that athletes with high training intensity, including runners, are more likely to consume supplements as part of their health and performance maintenance strategy. This indicates that running as a healthy activity simultaneously encourages broader consumption behaviors, ranging

from branded shoes and clothing to supplements and supporting accessories.

Overall, these studies confirm that running in public spaces is not merely a health activity, but also a socio-economic practice. It fosters new industries, revitalizes the market for sports goods and services, and transforms the consumption patterns of urban communities into something more complex and integrated with lifestyle identities.

Public spaces in urban areas are no longer seen solely as locations for physical activity, but also as social and economic arenas. According to Low and Iveson (2020), public spaces function as places of interaction that enable the formation of social networks, cultural exchange, and informal economic practices. In the context of running, public spaces such as beaches, city parks, or open fields become arenas where sporting practices meet consumption practices. A study by Schuurman and Lear (2024) even shows that runners' preferences for recreational environments influence their involvement in communities and consistency in healthy lifestyles. Thus, the existence of public spaces not only supports fitness but also creates space for the emergence of a market for sports goods and services.

This phenomenon coincides with the emergence of new consumption patterns resulting from running. Thibaut, Vos, and Scheerder (2019) found that runners tend to increase their spending on certain sports equipment, especially when participating in running events or communities. This consumption goes beyond utilitarian functions and enters the symbolic realm, where sportswear brands and designs become representations of self-identity. This is also in line with the findings of Widyanti and Rusfian (2023), who explain that sportswear consumption in Indonesia is influenced by lifestyle factors, social status, and fashion trends inherent in urban communities.

Furthermore, running shows the integration between health, consumption, and social status. Are et al. (2020) emphasize that running is one of the most effective sports in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease while improving quality of life. However, on the other hand, participation in running activities is often manifested through the consumption of branded goods, participation in communities, and the publication of activities on social media. Prasetya, Primajati, and Angesti (2024) add that among adolescents, running not only improves fitness but also

shapes self-image as healthy, active, and modern individuals. Thus, running is understood as a practice that unites health orientation with a consumptive lifestyle, where the consumption of goods and the experience of running serve as symbols of status, prestige, and modern identity in urban public spaces.

### **The Impact of Running Activities on the Local Economic Ecosystem in Public Spaces**

Running activities have been proven to encourage new economic transactions in public spaces. An economic report on marathons in Minnesota noted that “spending from runners and visitors during the Grandma's Marathon weekend generated millions of dollars in direct and indirect local business revenue” (University of Minnesota Extension, 2019). Similarly, a report by Running USA (2024) emphasized that running events provide “significant economic impact, benefitting local hotels, restaurants, and service providers.”

In Indonesia, research by Dixon et al. (2023) on the “Run H2O Ride” running tourism event found that “sports tourism activities generate a multiplier effect, stimulating micro, small, and medium enterprises through food, beverage, and local product sales.” These findings are relevant to the context of Makassar, where street vendors and photography service providers also benefit from regularly running activities and community events. Informal contributions are also very real. A study by Widjajanti et al. (2024) emphasizes that “the sustainability of informal traders depends on their ability to capture opportunities from public space activities, including sports and recreation.” This means that public spaces are not only arenas for sports, but also economic arenas for small businesses.

Furthermore, a report by the National Recreation and Park Association (2022) reinforces this argument by stating that “local parks and recreation facilities contribute billions to the U.S. economy annually by supporting jobs, tourism, and small businesses,” demonstrating a universal pattern that sports activities in public spaces have a double effect on the local economy.

Running activities in public spaces not only impact individual runners but also create economic opportunities for micro-businesses. In Indonesia, research by Susanti and Wibowo (2021) found that mass sports activities in open spaces encourage an increase in the turnover of street vendors, especially food and beverage sellers who adapt to the needs of

health-conscious consumers. This is in line with Widjajanti et al. (2024), who emphasize that the sustainability of the informal sector is greatly influenced by their ability to utilize public activities, including sports, as a source of livelihood.

In an international context, Edensor and Larsen (2020) state that urban sports activities not only shape healthy body identities but also create “micro-economies of leisure” in which photography service providers, fitness applications, and sports equipment sellers take advantage of public crowds. Similarly, a report by the National Recreation and Park Association (2022) shows that the existence of sporting events in public spaces creates new economic opportunities, especially for small businesses and supporting service providers.

Furthermore, Pereira and Costa (2021) emphasize that community-based sports in global cities generate spillover effects for the informal sector through the sale of healthy lifestyle products, ranging from local energy drinks to sports accessories. Thus, it can be seen that running activities in public spaces in Makassar, such as at Losari Beach and Karebosi Field, also have similar potential in supporting the livelihoods of small traders while strengthening the urban economic ecosystem.

Today, urban public spaces are not only understood as venues for recreation and sports, but also as economic spaces that support the livelihoods of communities. Low and Iveson (2020) explain that public spaces are always multifunctional, where social interactions, public health, and informal economic activities converge, thereby generating added value for local communities. This perspective is reinforced by Mehta (2019), who emphasizes that public spaces are “urban living rooms” that provide economic opportunities for small traders while supporting social cohesion.

In the Indonesian context, Hastuti and Nurmandi (2021) found that urban public areas are a source of livelihood for street vendors, parking service providers, and local culinary businesses. The study confirms that public spaces are not only social infrastructure but also “crucial economic arenas for vulnerable groups in urban areas.” Widjajanti et al. (2024) expressed a similar view, showing how the informal sector survives by utilizing public activities, including sports and recreation, to sustain their economy after the pandemic.

Meanwhile, a report by the National Recreation and Park Association (2022) confirms that public

facilities not only support public health but also contribute billions of dollars to the local economy by supporting small businesses, tourism, and employment. On the other hand, Gehl's book (2021) highlights both the health and economic dimensions, noting that urban spaces designed for walking and running create spillover effects on the local trade sector. Thus, public spaces such as Losari Beach and Karebosi Square in Makassar can be understood as multifunctional arenas: a venue for health through sports, a social arena through community interaction, and an economic arena through consumption activities and livelihood opportunities for the community.

## CONCLUSION

Running in public spaces in Makassar, such as Losari Beach and Karebosi Field, shows how healthy lifestyle practices are intertwined with consumptive economic logic. Running is no longer understood solely as a means of maintaining fitness and health, but also gives rise to new consumption patterns related to sporting needs, ranging from branded shoes and clothing to supplements and supporting accessories. This phenomenon shows that healthy lifestyles have been integrated with symbols of social status while strengthening the dynamics of the urban lifestyle economy.

On the other hand, running activities in public spaces also have a tangible impact on the local economic ecosystem. Regular activities and community running events encourage a new economic cycle that involves various segments of society, particularly micro-economy actors such as street vendors, healthy beverage sellers, photography service providers, and fitness app developers. Thus, public spaces serve a dual function: in addition to being arenas for health and social interaction, they are also economic spaces that support the livelihoods of urban communities.

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