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Mapping the Runner's Mind: A New Methodology for Real-Time Tracking of Cognitions

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ABSTRACT

Recording cognitions in real-time while running has been identified as one of the major limitations in the field of sport psychology. In this study, a new methodology was developed to overcome this limitation. For this purpose, 17 competitive long distance runners participated voluntarily. The experimental session consisted in identifying and storing cognitions (thoughts, emotions, sensations and mental images) while performing a 30 minutes treadmill run. In addition, participants were asked to register which of these cognitions were perceived as unpleasant. The mapping task showed a total of 1154 cognitions recorded, mostly thoughts. In general, during the session, cognitions perceived as unpleasant represented 13.43% of the total recorded. These cognitions were mainly directed to physical sensations that resulted from stimulations derived from the physical effort of running. Consequently, it is possible to claim an interaction relationship between sensations and exercise workload. The results attempt to demonstrate that the study of cognitions in real-time is deemed suitable during running.

KEYWORDS

Cognitions; Long Distance Running; Technology; Perceived Exertion; Exercise Workload

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