

Study on the Impact of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games on Enhancing City Branding in the Greater Bay Area

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore the comprehensive impact of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games on enhancing the city brand of the Greater Bay Area and its role in regional synergistic development. Through literature review, current situation analysis and strategy suggestions, this paper reveals the positive role of the Games in shaping city image, promoting regional synergistic development, boosting economic growth and enhancing international competitiveness. At the same time, this paper also points out the challenges faced in the process of enhancing the international influence of sports in the Greater Bay Area, including insufficient supply of international events, differences in institutional mechanisms and imbalance in the supply of sports media. On this basis, the paper puts forward strategic suggestions such as innovating institutional mechanisms, cultivating diversified sports media supply and constructing an international communication system for sports in the Greater Bay Area. Finally, the paper summarizes the limitations of the study and suggests future research directions, with a view to providing theoretical and practical support for the development of the sports industry and the enhancement of the city brand in the Greater Bay Area of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

Keywords: Guangdong; Hong Kong and Macao National Games; City Branding; Regional Synergy; Sports Industry; International Competitiveness.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

As one of the largest, highest level and most influential comprehensive games in China, the background to the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao National Games is of far-reaching significance. The 15th National Games is the first national sports event jointly hosted by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. This is not only the first time that Hong Kong and Macao participate in hosting the National Games, but also an innovative attempt in the history of the Games. This initiative is conducive to serving the national strategy of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, enriching the practice of "One Country, Two Systems", promoting exchanges, communication and integration among the three places, and facilitating the better integration of Hong Kong and Macao into the overall situation of the country's development. In addition, the hosting of the Games by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao is also conducive to the effective convergence of rules and regulations, facilitating the flow of elements, exploring pragmatic initiatives for reform and innovation in sports, promoting the efficient and convenient flow of people, materials, capital and information, and actively exploring paths and accumulating experience for the integration process of the Greater Bay Area.

As a national strategy, the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Greater Bay Area has seen rapid development of its sports industry, which already boasts many brand-name events, such as the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens, the Macau Grand Prix, the Shenzhen WTA Year-End Finals, and the

Guangzhou Badminton World Tour Finals. The Greater Bay Area has very good foundation and advantages in sports events, sports headquarters, sports services, sports technology and sports culture. The hosting of the Games in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will further promote the integrated development of culture, sports, tourism and business, expand the consumption of sports, leisure and culture and tourism, attract the people of the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao to go in both directions and consume across the city, help the transformation and upgrading of industries, and inject new kinetic energy into high-quality development.

1.2. Significance of the Study

It is important to explore the potential impact of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games on enhancing the city brand of the Greater Bay Area and its role in regional development. The organization of the Games will not only enhance the level of sports competition in the Greater Bay Area, but more importantly, enhance the international influence of the region through sports events and shape a positive international image. This is an important impetus to realizing high-quality development and building a world-class city cluster with international competitiveness. In addition, the organization of the Games is also a comprehensive test of the ability of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to host the Games, allowing Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to accumulate more experience in synergistic cooperation through the 15th Games, and promoting the integration of the Bay Area to a deeper and deeper development.

1.3. Research Objectives and Issues

The problem that this study aims to solve and the goal that it achieves is to analyze in depth the effect of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games on the enhancement of the city brand of the Greater Bay Area, including but not limited to the following aspects: firstly, to explore the impact of the National Games on the city image and cultural inheritance of the Greater Bay Area; secondly, to analyze the role of the Games in the promotion of the economic development of the cities in the Greater Bay Area and the upgrading of the sports industry; thirdly, to study the function of the Games in the enhancement of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao regional Secondly, to analyze the role of the Games in promoting the economic development of the cities in the Greater Bay Area and the upgrading of the sports industry; thirdly, to study the function of the Games in strengthening the synergistic development of the three regions of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao and their international cooperation; and lastly, to put forward the corresponding strategic recommendations, with a view to providing theoretical support and practical guidance for the future organization of the Games and other large-scale sports events. Through this study, new ideas and directions can be provided for the development of the sports industry in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and a solid foundation can be laid for the creation of sports event brands with international influence.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Literature Review

In studies exploring the impact of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games on enhancing city brands in the Greater Bay Area, the existing literature provides a rich theoretical foundation and empirical cases. Scholars at home and abroad generally agree that large-scale sports events such as marathons and international soccer events have a positive impact on city brands by enhancing brand awareness, stimulating consumer emotions, strengthening brand loyalty, and increasing brand value (Liu, Jin, 2024). Especially in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, there have been numerous brand events, which not only promote the development of the sports industry, but also become a key factor in shaping the city's brand image (Zhu Wang et al., 2024). With the improvement of transportation infrastructure in the region, the Greater Bay Area has shown the potential to become a world-class mega-city cluster, in which sports events play an important role (Gao et al., 2024).

However, despite the widespread attention paid to the impact of the National Games, China's largest sporting event, on city brand image, there is still a lack of research on the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao National Games as a specific event. In particular, the mechanisms of how the Games specifically affect city branding in the Greater Bay Area and its role in regional synergistic development have not been fully explored. Existing studies have mostly focused on the direct economic impacts of sports events, while there is insufficient research on the deeper mechanisms of how the event affects city branding through multi-dimensional dimensions such as culture, society and politics.

2.2. Literature Review

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing in-depth the effect of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games

on enhancing the city branding of the Greater Bay Area, and exploring the role of the Games in promoting the economic development of the cities and the upgrading of the sports industry in the Greater Bay Area, as well as its function in enhancing the synergistic development of the regions of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao and their international cooperation. This not only helps to understand the multi-dimensional impacts of the Games, but also provides theoretical support and practical guidance for the organization of future National Games and other large-scale sports events. Through this study, we can better grasp the role of the Games in shaping city branding, provide new perspectives and strategies for the development of the sports industry and the enhancement of city branding in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and provide theoretical and practical support for the realization of high-quality development and the construction of a world-class city cluster with international competitiveness.

3. Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao National Games and city branding

3.1. The Games and the Shaping of the City's Image

The National Games, as the highest level of comprehensive games in China, is not only a stage for sports competition, but also an important platform for city image building. Through the Games, cities are able to show their unique cultural charm and urban vitality to the whole country and even the world. For example, the 14th National Games held in Xi'an effectively enhanced the city image of Xi'an through the dissemination of news pictures, which not only showed the image of the municipality, economy, science and technology and culture, but also the image of the people and the tourism environment. Similarly, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games will be held with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge as the link, the route connecting Zhuhai, Macao and Hong Kong, which is not only a sports event, but also an important link connecting the three places in terms of culture, tourism and sports, which will help to deepen the achievements of the synergistic development of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and promote Hong Kong and Macao to be further integrated into the overall situation of the country's development. In addition, the organization of the Games is also a test of the city's comprehensive emergency security capabilities, through the construction of smart cities, to enhance the city's comprehensive emergency security capabilities, and take multiple measures to promote the quality of the city.

3.2. The Games and Urban Cultural Heritage

The organization of the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao National Games is not only an event of sports competition, but also an important opportunity for the cultural heritage of the cities. The Games will deeply excavate the spiritual kernel and cultural essence of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, distill them into artistic styles, carefully observe their unique charms and contemporary values, transform them into creative elements, and carefully create an opening ceremony that is international first-class, Chinese style, Lingnan elegance, and the characteristics of the Greater Bay Area. This cultural heritage is not only reflected in the opening and closing ceremonies of the event, but also throughout the preparation and organization of the event.

Through the Games, the diverse culture and historical heritage of the Greater Bay Area can be showcased, while also providing new opportunities and platforms for the dissemination and development of urban culture.

3.3. The Games and Urban Economic Development

The Games have a significant role to play in promoting the city's economic growth and sports industry. The hosting of the Games can promote the construction of urban infrastructure, optimize the industrial structure of cities and enhance their competitiveness. For example, the preparation and holding of the 15th National Games will promote the renovation and construction of venues in Guangdong, highlighting the concepts of thrifty and green organizing, which not only meets the requirements of the event, but also provides venues for post-game operations and national fitness activities, and makes effective use of venue resources. In addition, the holding of the Games can also stimulate the development of the city's industrial economy. Through the event legacy planning, a complete event industry chain is formed to guarantee the operation of related industries after the event, thus enhancing the economic openness and stimulating the development of the city's industrial economy. The holding of the Games has brought direct and indirect economic effects to the city, including the development of many industries such as tourism, catering, accommodation and transportation, and has injected new vitality into the growth of the city's economy.

4. Regional Synergy of the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao National Games

4.1. Regional Synergistic Development Strategies

The organization of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games is not only a sports event, but also an important opportunity to promote the synergistic development of the region. According to expert Tan Jianxiang, the function of the Games is not only limited to competitive sports, but also has far-reaching strategic significance in promoting regional economic development, synergistic development of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Bay Area, and creating a world-class Bay Area. By creating a new concept of "National Games Economy", the Games will drive the economic and social development of the city and become an important highlight in revitalizing the sports industry in the Greater Bay Area, leaving behind the valuable legacy of the Games. In addition, the holding of the Games is also a test of the city's comprehensive emergency security capabilities, through the construction of smart cities, to enhance the city's comprehensive emergency security capabilities, and take measures to promote the quality of the city.

4.2. Regional Integration Processes

The organization of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games has provided new perspectives and impetus for the integrated development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The National Games boosts the goal of synergistic development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and proposes effective strategies. The study shows that the 15th National Games in 2025 will become an important symbol of the synergistic

development of the previous National Games and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in terms of regional synergy and institutional integration, organizational capacity and event level, publicity and mobilization and legacy value, venue facilities and operation mode, and Olympic spirit and sports culture. The Games will enhance the wholeness and balance of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area through the coordination of cities and events as well as the coordination among cities, strictly follow the requirements of "simplicity, safety and excitement" in organizing the Games, and carry out the concept of "green" throughout the whole process of hosting the Games by Making full use of the existing venues and facilities and strictly controlling the scale and specifications of the competition to ensure the sustainable development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

4.3. International Competitiveness and Impact

The hosting of the Games provides a platform for the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Greater Bay Area to showcase its development achievements and enhance its international visibility and influence. According to Zhang Zhigang, the hosting of the 15th National Games and the Special Paralympic Games jointly by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao is not only an important initiative of the Central Government to promote the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, but also an important opportunity to showcase the development achievements of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and to enhance the international visibility and influence of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area should firmly grasp the opportunity of hosting the Games to make the voice of the Greater Bay Area heard to the world, show the speed of the Greater Bay Area and highlight the charm of the Greater Bay Area. In addition, the hosting of the Games is also a test of the city's comprehensive emergency protection capacity, through the construction of smart cities, to enhance the city's comprehensive emergency protection capacity, and to promote the quality of the city through a variety of measures, thereby enhancing the international competitiveness of the Greater Bay Area.

5. Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games

5.1. Analysis of Blocking Factors

The enhancement of the international influence of sports in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area faces multiple challenges. Firstly, the supply of international events is insufficient and the development of the sports market needs to be improved. Compared with the international first-class Bay Area, the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Bay Area lacks sports events and professional sports clubs with international influence, and the international attractiveness, recognition and appeal of sports have not yet reached the level that they should be. Secondly, there are significant differences in institutional mechanisms, which impede the flow of sports resources and elements. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area has a special environment of "one country, two systems, three customs zones and three currencies", and there are obvious differences in the institutional mechanisms within the region, which have led to the poor circulation of

sports resources and the insufficient sharing and integration of high-quality sports resources. Finally, there is an imbalance in the supply of sports media, and international media cooperation and exchanges are limited. Sports events and news in the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Greater Bay Area have relatively little coverage in the international media, and foreign media coverage of Hong Kong and Macao and other regions mainly focuses on the discourse narratives of the elites, such as politics and finance, resulting in insufficient visibility and influence in the international sports arena.

5.2. Institutional Innovation and Market Development

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games provide an important opportunity for innovation in the sports system and market development in the Greater Bay Area. Through the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao National Games, the endowment of sports resources of different places can be utilized to create a brand of sports events in the Greater Bay Area. The organization of the Games has promoted the establishment of a cross-regional cooperation mechanism, provided a platform for the sharing and opening up of sports resources in the Greater Bay Area, eliminated the barriers to athletes' eligibility for participation, and smoothed the channels for exchanges and cooperation among the three places. In addition, the hosting of the Games has also promoted the establishment of a financial support system for sports events, which involves settlement and capital flow, and affects the raising and distribution of funds for the events, as well as the introduction of international sponsorship and investment. These institutional innovations and market development measures will provide a favorable policy environment for the development of the sports industry in the Greater Bay Area and facilitate the efficient flow of sports industry elements within the Bay Area.

5.3. Sports Media Supply and International Cooperation

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games provide new opportunities for sports media supply and international media cooperation. The holding of the Games can enhance the power of sports communication in the Greater Bay Area. In the process of organizing the event, it can not only enrich the content and form of international sports exchange in the Greater Bay Area, but also promote the development of sports media in the Greater Bay Area and create a favorable environment for sports communication. Through effective strategy implementation and sustained efforts, the Greater Bay Area is expected to leverage the platform of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games to enhance its sports competitiveness, and more importantly, to strengthen regional international influence and shape a positive international image through the sports events. In addition, empowering the international communication of sports in the Greater Bay Area with digitalization, expanding the application of emerging technologies in the field of sports communication in the Greater Bay Area, and creating a new mode of international communication of sports in the Greater Bay Area are also important ways for the Games to promote sports media supply and international media cooperation. Through these measures, the visibility and influence of sports in the Greater Bay Area on the international stage can be enhanced, laying a solid foundation for realizing high-quality development and building a world-class city cluster with

international competitiveness.

6. Strategic Recommendations

6.1. Innovative Institutional Mechanisms

In order to facilitate the flow of sports resource elements within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the organization of the Games provides an important opportunity to innovate institutional mechanisms. First, a cross-regional sports cooperation organization, such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Sports Development Committee, can be established to coordinate sports policies and resource allocation among the three regions to ensure efficient allocation and utilization of sports resources. Second, the integration of sports regulations should be promoted to reduce barriers to the flow of sports resources due to legal differences, and to facilitate the cross-border activities of athletes, coaches and sports enterprises. In addition, the upgrading and transformation of the sports industry can be promoted through the establishment of a sports industry development fund to support sports innovative projects and enterprises. Through these measures, geographical boundaries can be broken down and the free flow and optimal allocation of sports resources can be achieved, thereby enhancing the overall competitiveness of the sports industry in the Greater Bay Area.

6.2. Fostering a Diversified Sports Media Supply

Constructing an international communication system for sports in the Greater Bay Area requires efforts on several levels. First, strengthen the internationalization and diversification of sports media content to attract domestic and international audiences through the production of high-quality sports programs and event reports. Second, new media technologies, such as social media and mobile applications, should be utilized to expand the scope and influence of sports events. In addition, the international visibility of sports events in the Greater Bay Area can be enhanced through cooperation with international sports media and the introduction of advanced international communication concepts and technologies. At the same time, professional sports communication talents should be trained to enhance the professionalism and international competitiveness of sports media. Through these measures, a diversified and internationalized sports communication system for the Greater Bay Area can be built to provide strong media support for the development of the sports industry in the Greater Bay Area.

6.3. Constructing an International Communication System for Sports in the Greater Bay Area ()

To build a sports event brand of the Greater Bay Area through the Games, it is necessary to start from three aspects: brand positioning, brand dissemination and brand maintenance. First, clarify the positioning of the Greater Bay Area sports event brand and highlight its unique regional characteristics and cultural connotations, such as utilizing the historical and cultural resources of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to create a sports event brand with the characteristics of the Greater Bay Area. Secondly, the international visibility and influence of sports events in the Greater Bay Area can be enhanced through multi-channel and

multi-platform brand communication, such as international sports channels, social media and live broadcast of sports events. In addition, the international status of sports events in the Greater Bay Area can also be enhanced by organizing activities such as international sports forums and sports exhibitions, and strengthening cooperation with international sports organizations. Lastly, it focuses on brand maintenance to ensure the quality and standard of the events, and to win the recognition of spectators and participants by providing a quality event experience, so as to build up a good brand image. Through these strategies, the brand of sports events in the Greater Bay Area can be effectively built and enhanced, laying a solid foundation for the long-term development of the sports industry in the Greater Bay Area.

7. Conclusion

This study draws the following conclusions from an in-depth analysis of the comprehensive impact of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games on city branding in the Greater Bay Area:

1. City image-building: The National Games, as a national sports event, provides a platform for the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Greater Bay Area to showcase its city image and cultural charms. Through the Games, cities in the Greater Bay Area are able to showcase their modernized and internationalized image to domestic and international audiences, while at the same time passing on and promoting Lingnan culture and enhancing the cultural connotation of their city brands.

2. Regional synergistic development: The organization of the Games has promoted in-depth cooperation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in the field of sports, and has facilitated the implementation of the regional synergistic development strategy. Through the platform of the Games, the three places have shared and complemented each other in terms of sports resources, event organization and talent training, providing strong support for the integration process of the Greater Bay Area.

3. Economic development boost: The Games provided a significant boost to the economic growth of the cities in the Greater Bay Area and the development of the sports industry. The organization of the Games has driven the development of infrastructure development, tourism, catering, accommodation and other related industries, injecting new vitality into the urban economy.

4. Enhanced international competitiveness: The organization of the Games enhanced the international image and competitiveness of the Greater Bay Area. Through the dissemination of international media, the sports events and city brands of the Greater Bay Area received wider international attention, enhancing its position in the global network of cities.

5. Challenges and opportunities: While the Games have had a positive impact on city branding in the Greater Bay Area, they also face challenges such as insufficient supply of international events, differences in institutional mechanisms and imbalances in the supply of sports media. These challenges need to be overcome through institutional innovation, market development and international cooperation.

While this study provides a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games and city branding in the Greater Bay Area, there are some limitations:

1. Data limitations: The study relied mainly on existing literature and press materials and lacked the support of field research and primary data, which may have affected the depth and accuracy of the conclusions.

2. Time span limitation: The time span of the study is limited, failing to comprehensively cover the long-term impact of the Games, and future studies could extend the time span and conduct long-term tracking studies.

3. Insufficient quantitative analysis: this study mainly adopts qualitative analysis methods and lacks the support of quantitative data; future research can be quantitatively analyzed by constructing models and collecting data to enhance the scientific and persuasive nature of the study.

To address the above limitations, future research could take the following directions:

1. Interdisciplinary research: Combine multidisciplinary knowledge of economics, sociology, communication and other disciplines to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the economic, social and cultural impacts of the Games.

2. Long-term tracking study: A tracking study of the long-term impact of the Games to assess its continuing effect on city branding.

3. International comparative study: analyzing the performance and influence of the Games on the international stage through comparative studies with other major international sports events.

4. Policy evaluation study: To evaluate the implementation effect of the policies related to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao National Games, and to provide a basis for policy formulation and adjustment.

The expansion of these research directions can provide more comprehensive and in-depth theoretical and practical support for city branding in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

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