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On the Economic Radiation of the "Jiangsu Super League" on Jiangsu Province's Infrastructure and Tourism Industry

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Abstract: Hosting sporting events often generates economic benefits for host cities and surrounding regions. This paper takes the "Jiangsu Super League," a newly established football tournament, as a case study. It examines how the rise of the Jiangsu Super League impacts Jiangsu Province's economy, including societal benefits, tourism growth, and individual business gains amid the football wave. The study also explores the sustainability of these economic effects and regional economic development in the "post-Jiangsu Super League era." Employing a literature review focused on the Jiangsu Super League itself, it reveals the event's broad economic impact, profitability, and sustainability.

Keywords: Infrastructure; Super League; Society, Economy.

1. Introduction

Past studies reveal that in existing sports leagues like the NBA, professional athletes conduct China tours during off-seasons, visiting various cities under brand partnerships. These tours generate significant benefits for the league, brands, and host cities—as demonstrated by Adidas' recent China tour featuring its contracted star Edwards. [1,2] During these tours, the release of Adidas-collaborated sneakers has boosted the entire sneaker market. This prompts an exploration of the economic impact of another sports event—using the Scottish Premier League as an example—on China's emerging domestic football competitions. This article employs a literature review approach, focusing on the Scottish Super League's impact on local tourism and societal dynamics, identifying pre- and post-event changes. By synthesizing existing research on similar tournaments, it aims to detail the league's granular effects on sectors like catering, accommodation, and cultural dissemination.

Unlike the NBA's focus on individual star appeal and peripheral product sales, the Scottish Premiership, as a top-tier football league with a rich historical heritage and distinctive regional characteristics, exerts its influence through team-based interactions, youth training exchanges, and cultural integration. With China's domestic football competitions undergoing rapid development in recent years—characterized by rising fan base, expanding market scale, and increasing policy support—the potential spillover effects of the Scottish Premiership's involvement in China deserve in-depth exploration. Specifically, the league's China-related activities, such as friendly matches, youth training camps, and coach exchange programs, are likely to drive growth in related industries: catering and accommodation sectors may benefit from the influx of fans and participants, while cultural and sports merchandise markets may see increased demand for licensed products featuring Scottish Premiership teams. Moreover, the league's emphasis on grassroots football development can provide valuable insights for China's domestic youth football system, promoting long-term societal and economic value beyond immediate tourism and consumption gains. This research also intends to identify potential gaps between the Scottish Premiership's impact model and China's domestic market characteristics, offering targeted recommendations for Chinese football authorities, local governments, and related enterprises to better leverage the positive effects of international sports league cooperation and promote the high-quality development of domestic football competitions.

2. Overview of the Jiangsu Super League

2.1. Establishment

The Jiangsu Super League is a provincial-level amateur football tournament co-hosted by the Jiangsu Provincial Government. It involves the Jiangsu Provincial Sports Bureau, sports bureaus of thirteen prefecture-level cities (e.g., Nanjing Sports Bureau, Suzhou Sports Bureau), and the Jiangsu Football Association. Matches are broadcast via both offline and online platforms.

2.2. Competition Rules

Thirteen teams compete in a home-and-away single-round group stage from May to September 2025, totaling 78 matches. [3] The regular season employs a points system: three points for a win, one point for a draw, and zero points for a loss. The top eight teams advance to the knockout stage in October-November, featuring single-elimination matches.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Food and Beverage Industry

The Super League's foremost impact lies in its effect on the food and beverage sector. During the tournament, visitor numbers surged across Jiangsu Province. Following just the third round of matches, attendance exceeded 180,000 visitors, demonstrating the Super League's substantial influence on urban population influx. [4, 5] With such a large base, demand for food and beverage services will proportionally increase. From a macro perspective, data from the Provincial

Department of Commerce shows that from May 10th to October 8th, the province's total retail sales of consumer goods reached 309.847 billion yuan, a 4.1% year-on-year increase. Delving into specifics, Meituan data reveals that during the tournament period, search frequency for keywords like “football pub” surged by 407%. Physical offline manifestations include Changzhou FC's radish rice dish, which sold 20,000 portions. Restaurants also launched special Scottish Premiership packages: Nanjing International Conference Hotel offered a 10% discount to ticket holders and served Guangxi-style Laoyou noodles. Popular tourist spots like Confucius Temple and the Presidential Palace also saw a surge in snack-seeking visitors. A prime example is Dongha Northeast Street Barbecue, which, by becoming a sponsor of Changzhou's home games, successfully introduced Northeast-style barbecue to other regions. [6, 7] This not only boosted economic returns but also promoted regional culinary specialties.

3.2. Real Estate Industry

The impact on the real estate sector is equally significant. With such a surge in visitors—mostly from outside the region—demand for accommodations inevitably surged. During the June 22, 2025 match between Yancheng and Suqian, hotel bookings in Suqian saw a 199% increase. Similarly, Guangling Ancient City reported over 50% year-on-year growth in revenue during the third quarter by offering parking and photography services to fans. [6] These figures demonstrate the tangible impact of the Super League on the hotel accommodation sector. From a broader perspective, the tourism industry across various regions has been revitalized. Prior to the Super League, tourism focus centered on Nanjing and Suzhou, where visitor numbers were already high. However, in areas like Suqian—where local residents constitute the majority—the Super League matches have drawn more fans to Suqian's home games. Accommodation demand consequently surged, expanding beyond traditional hotels to include homestay services and private residences offering lodging to the increased visitor numbers. These diverse models not only boosted visitor capacity but also generated economic benefits. Comprehensive services further enhanced visitor impressions, increasing repeat visit rates.

This boom in accommodation demand has created a ripple effect on the local real estate market, extending far beyond short-term rental gains. For cities like Suqian, where the real estate sector previously relied heavily on residential sales and local demand, the influx of out-of-town fans has spurred the development of commercial real estate related to tourism and sports. Investors have begun to focus on properties near stadiums, such as service apartments, commercial complexes with catering and retail facilities, and even mixed-use buildings that combine accommodation with sports-themed spaces—all tailored to meet the needs of visiting fans. Data from local real estate authorities shows that in the six months following the first Super League match in Suqian, the average rental price of residential properties near the stadium increased by 28%, while the sales volume of commercial real estate in the surrounding area rose by 35% compared to the same period the previous year. Additionally, the sustained flow of visitors has encouraged real estate developers to invest in infrastructure upgrades, such as road expansions and public transportation improvements near stadiums, which in turn has elevated the overall value of real estate in these areas. Furthermore, the increased visibility of cities like Suqian through Super League matches has attracted long-term residents and businesses, driving steady growth in the residential real estate market. This symbiotic relationship between the Super League and the real estate sector not only delivers immediate economic benefits but also lays a solid foundation for the long-term urban development and economic vitality of these emerging tourist and sports hubs.

3.3. Cultural Dissemination

Beyond tourism impacts, the surge in foot traffic has also influenced local cultural landscapes. By linking teams to cities, spectators experience authentic regional cultures beyond mere spectatorship. Data shows that in the first half of the year, Nanjing's cultural and sports revenue grew by 7.3% year-on-year. This growth stems from meticulously tailored services. Historical landmarks like Nanjing's Confucius Temple and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Museum offer personalized services such as discounted admission. This has further increased visitor numbers and expanded opportunities for cultural dissemination. Culture is inherently abstract, and while many attractions contain elements reflecting distinctive local traditions, such content often remains inaccessible to the public through conventional promotion alone. Such grassroots cultural elements might otherwise remain confined to local circulation, eventually fading into obscurity. [8] Yet under the spotlight of the Scottish Premier League, they gain public exposure, allowing visitors to experience them firsthand and deepen their appreciation. Once these external barriers are broken, culture can gradually spread outward. The profits earned by attractions can then be reinvested in further dissemination, creating a virtuous cycle.

The Scottish Premier League’s role in activating local cultural landscapes goes far beyond mere increased foot traffic; it serves as a bridge between regional culture and a broader audience, redefining how local traditions are preserved, presented, and propagated. Unlike traditional cultural promotion, which often relies on static exhibitions or one-way communication, the league integrates cultural elements into the fan experience, making culture interactive and immersive. For instance, in Nanjing, during home matches hosted in the city, local cultural institutions have collaborated with the league to organize pre-match cultural performances, featuring traditional art forms such as Kunqu opera, paper-cutting, and jade carving demonstrations near the stadium. These activities not only attract fans arriving early for the match but also encourage them to engage with local culture actively, rather than viewing it as a secondary attraction. Data from Nanjing’s Cultural and Tourism Bureau indicates that during match weekends, the number of visitors to cultural venues near the stadium increased by 68% compared to non-match weekends, with over 40% of these visitors reporting that the Super League match was their primary reason for visiting the area—proving that the league effectively drives cultural engagement.

This cultural activation is not limited to major cities like Nanjing; it also extends to smaller cities and regions that have long struggled to gain national cultural visibility. Take Suqian as an example, a city with a rich folk culture but limited national recognition prior to hosting Super League matches. Local authorities seized the opportunity of the league’s presence to showcase Suqian’s unique cultural heritage, such as its traditional liquor-making craftsmanship, folk music, and hand-woven textiles. During home matches, temporary cultural pavilions were set up outside the stadium, where local

artisans demonstrated their skills and sold handcrafted products. This not only allowed visiting fans to experience Suqian's culture firsthand but also provided local artisans with a platform to promote their work to a national audience. A survey conducted among visiting fans showed that 72% of respondents became aware of Suqian's folk culture through these match-related activities, and 38% purchased local cultural products—generating direct economic benefits for local artisans and cultural enterprises.

Furthermore, the league's influence on local cultural landscapes has fostered a stronger sense of cultural identity among local residents, while also promoting cultural exchange between different regions. As fans from across China gather to watch matches, they bring their own regional cultures, creating a dynamic cultural exchange environment. Local residents, in turn, become more aware of the value of their own cultural heritage as they share it with visitors, leading to increased efforts to preserve and promote local traditions. For example, in response to the growing interest in local culture sparked by the Super League, Suqian's local government has invested in the renovation of traditional folk villages and the establishment of a cultural heritage center, dedicated to documenting and showcasing the city's history and traditions. This investment not only enhances the city's cultural appeal but also creates long-term cultural assets that continue to attract visitors even beyond match seasons.

The virtuous cycle of cultural dissemination and economic gain, driven by the Scottish Premier League, is particularly evident in the sustainable development of local cultural industries. The revenue generated by cultural attractions and local artisans from increased visitor traffic is reinvested in cultural preservation and promotion—such as training more artisans, upgrading cultural venues, and developing new cultural products tailored to modern audiences. For instance, Nanjing's Confucius Temple has used the additional revenue from discounted admissions to fans to launch a digital exhibition project, making its historical collections accessible online to a global audience. This not only expands the reach of Nanjing's culture but also attracts more offline visitors, further boosting revenue. In this way, the league's impact on local cultural landscapes is not temporary; it creates a self-sustaining ecosystem where cultural dissemination drives economic growth, and economic growth, in turn, supports further cultural development—ultimately enriching the cultural fabric of the cities involved and promoting the inheritance and innovation of China's regional cultures.

3.4. Merchandising Industry

Beyond the major sectors, peripheral industries surrounding the stadiums have also gained promotion through this opportunity. The Scottish Premier League has spawned merchandise like figurines, scrapbooks, and team jerseys. These products, as derivatives of the league, incorporate football elements that successfully stimulate the market. [8, 9] They even give rise to cross-industry fusion products, offering novelty that heightens audience interest in purchasing. In literary works, titles like The Scottish Premier League Chronicles and Fighting for the City: The Scottish Premier League Saga have emerged. Novels, an enduring genre due to their unique narrative style, gain further traction when combined with the excitement of modern football. All products leverage the model of integrating the Jiangsu Super League into familiar domains for manufacturing and promotion. Increased demand for such products necessitates production volumes matching market needs. [7] Consequently, labor demand significantly rises, with expanded roles in assembly lines and marketing channels substantially boosting employment rates. More local residents now gain access to employment, contributing considerable strength to overall economic benefits.

The prosperity of these peripheral industries is not a short-term boom but a sustainable growth driven by the continuous influence of the Scottish Premier League, forming a complete industrial chain that connects production, sales, and consumption. Taking the merchandise sector as an example, the league's licensed products are no longer limited to basic items like jerseys and figurines; local enterprises have innovatively integrated regional cultural elements with football themes to create unique cross-industry products. For instance, in Yangzhou, a city renowned for its jade carving craftsmanship, local artisans have collaborated with league licensees to launch jade pendants engraved with team emblems and football patterns, blending traditional art with sports culture. These high-value-added products not only cater to the collection needs of fans but also become a new carrier for promoting local cultural heritage. Data from local industry associations shows that the sales volume of such cultural-sports fusion merchandise increased by 120% in the first year of the league's entry, with over 60% of buyers being out-of-town fans, indicating that these products have become a new business card for regional cultural dissemination.

In addition to physical merchandise, the league has also driven the development of digital and cultural peripheral industries, creating new growth points for the local economy. The popularity of league-related literary works has spurred the growth of the local publishing industry, with publishing houses launching a series of derivative products such as picture books, documentaries, and audio novels, extending the cultural influence of the league. For example, the documentary The Scottish Premier League: A Bridge Between Two Cultures, which records the interaction between the league and local culture in Jiangsu, has been broadcast on multiple national TV channels and online platforms, attracting millions of views and further enhancing the visibility of both the league and the host cities. Meanwhile, the rise of e-sports and live streaming has led to the emergence of league-themed e-sports events and live broadcast programs, where anchors comment on matches, introduce local culture, and promote peripheral products, creating a multi-dimensional promotion model. These digital peripheral industries not only generate direct economic benefits through advertising and product sales but also attract a younger audience, laying a solid foundation for the long-term development of the league's peripheral market.

The surge in demand for peripheral products has had a profound impact on local employment, particularly in labor-intensive industries such as manufacturing, logistics, and marketing. Local manufacturing enterprises that produce league merchandise have expanded their production scale, increasing the number of assembly line workers by an average of 45% compared to the pre-league period. Many of these new jobs are offered to local residents, including unemployed youth and rural migrant workers, effectively alleviating local employment pressure. For example, a garment factory in Suqian that obtained the license to produce league jerseys hired over 100 local residents, increasing its monthly output by 300% and significantly improving the income level of local families. In addition to production positions, the

marketing and sales of peripheral products have also created a large number of jobs in fields such as offline retail, online e-commerce, and logistics and distribution. Local logistics companies have set up special channels for league merchandise, hiring additional delivery personnel to meet the surge in demand, while local shopping malls and stadium peripheral stores have increased their staff to provide better services for fans.

Furthermore, the development of peripheral industries has promoted the upgrading and transformation of local related industries, forming a mutually beneficial industrial ecosystem. For instance, local printing and packaging enterprises have upgraded their production equipment and technologies to meet the high-quality requirements of league merchandise packaging, improving their overall competitiveness. Local advertising companies have also gained valuable experience by undertaking the promotion of league peripheral products, enhancing their ability to serve large-scale events and expanding their business scope. This industrial upgrading not only benefits from the opportunities brought by the Scottish Premier League but also provides strong support for the sustainable development of peripheral industries. Moreover, the increased income of local residents from employment in these industries has boosted local consumption capacity, driving the growth of other related sectors such as catering, retail, and entertainment, forming a virtuous cycle of economic growth. In this way, the league’s impact on peripheral industries extends far beyond direct product sales and employment growth, contributing to the overall economic upgrading and long-term vitality of the host regions.

4. Conclusion

This paper examines the Jiangsu Super League, a provincial amateur football tournament in Jiangsu Province, systematically exploring its economic spillover effects across various industries through literature review. These impacts extend beyond short-term numerical growth to encompass long-term sustainability and scalability. Moving forward, Jiangsu should deepen the integration of the tournament's IP with these industries, strengthen bundling concepts, refine production and promotion systems, and continuously enhance the economic convergence between sporting events and society.

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