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Exploration of the Development Path of Leisure Sports Industry under the Background of National Fitness

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Abstract: With the in-depth advancement of the national fitness policy, the leisure sports industry is facing great opportunities of development, such as growing market demand, increased health awareness, technological progress, local policy support, infrastructure construction, etc. In the face of development opportunities, China's leisure sports industry should actively innovate and explore more development paths. This paper discusses the development path of leisure sports industry under the background of national fitness from the aspects of policy support, infrastructure construction, talent cultivation, brand promotion, market expansion and social participation. These opportunities should be fully grasped to promote the rapid development of the leisure sports industry, meet the increasing health needs of citizens, and boost the sustained growth of the national economy and the all-around progress of society.

Keywords: All-round Fitness; Leisure Sports; Industry Development.

1. Introduction

National fitness is a key part of building a sports power in China, and the national fitness plan plays an extremely important role in improving the physical health of the people throughout the country. With the continuous decline of national physique and frequent health problems in China, the state has put forward a national fitness plan to solve such problems, and vigorously carried out national fitness campaigns nationwide to improve the current situation of national physique and health. The considerable figures show that the sports industry is gradually becoming a pillar industry of the national economy. “There can be no overall well-off society without national health.” [1] The prosperity of the sports industry is of great significance to the improvement of national physical fitness, transformation of the mode of economic development, the decisive victory of all-round well-off society and promotion of the construction of spiritual civilization in China.

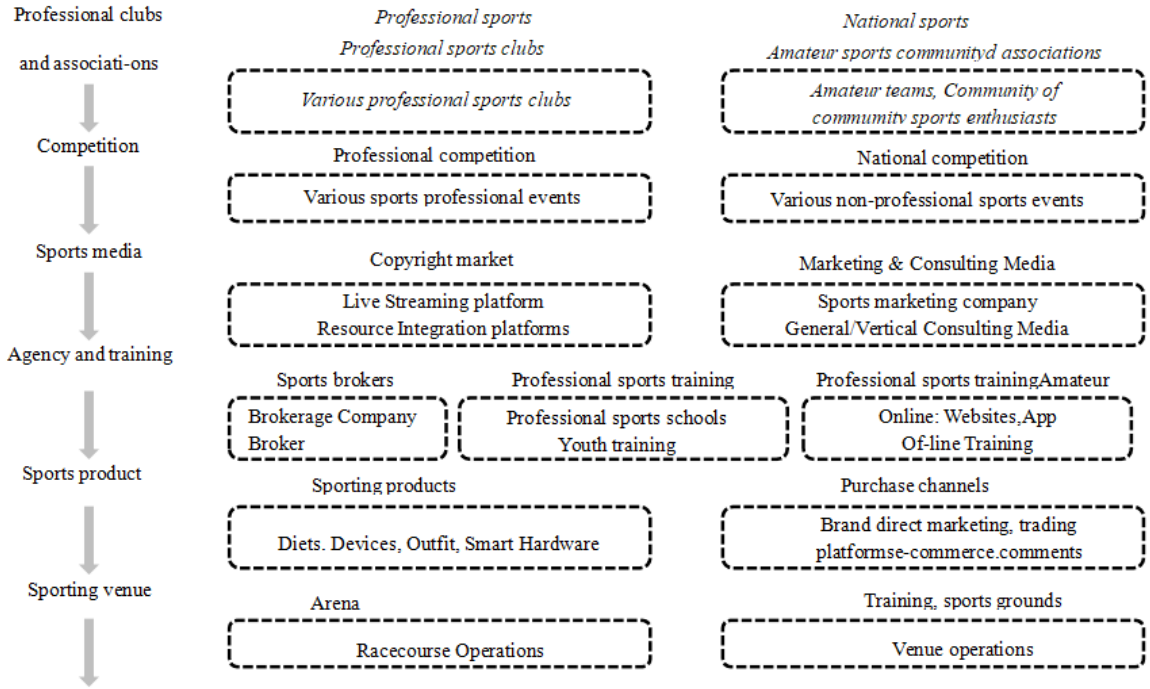


Figure 1. Sports Industry Chain [2]

In recent years, China has issued a series of policies and regulations to support the development of national fitness and leisure sports industry. For example, *Outline of the Healthy China 2030 Plan*, *Work plan on restoring and expanding sports consumption*, etc. were released to provide important policy support for the development of the leisure sports industry. Furthermore, the government has also granted a certain degree of preferential policies in terms of finance and taxation to encourage social capital to enter the leisure sports industry. However, behind the "accelerated running" of the sports industry, there are also bottlenecks such as difficulties in financing sports enterprises, implementing sports policies,

stimulating the sports market, and cultivating sports talents, etc. Therefore, in the background of the national strategy focusing on national fitness, it has profound research implication to put forward specific path and countermeasures for the difficulties, obstacles and pain points highlighted in the process of high-speed development of the sports industry

2. Opportunities for the Development of the Leisure Sports Industry under the Background of National Fitness

2.1. Growth in Market Demand

After the epidemic in COVID-19, all kinds of splendid sports events, such as the World Cup and the Asian Games, rekindled residents' enthusiasm for participating in sports, and the potential of "sports plus consumption" was continuously released. Sports and its derivative consumption were becoming the new engine and new growth point of residents' consumption upgrading. Consumer demand for the leisure sports industry is increasing year by year. People not only have a higher requirement for sports and fitness, but also show a strong willingness to spend money on sports tourism, sports event appreciation and so on. Such continuously growing market demand provides a broad space for the development of the leisure sports industry. In National Fitness Program (2021-2025), the State Council proposes that by 2025, the total size of the nation's sports industry will expand to 5 trillion yuan at a compound annual growth rate of 9.2% from 2.95 trillion yuan in 2019, and the proportion of people who regularly participate in physical exercise increased from 37.2% during the 13th Five-Year Plan period to 38.5%. [3] In addition, diversified participation in the leisure sports industry will bring more opportunities for industry development, namely, to encourage social capital to enter the leisure sports industry, promote the integration and development of the industry with education, culture, tourism and other fields, and foster international exchanges and cooperation, which will be beneficial for enhancing the comprehensive competitiveness of the industry. At the same time, attention should be paid to the talent cultivation and introduction, enhancement of the specialization for each link in the industrial chain, and improvement of industrial development. [4]

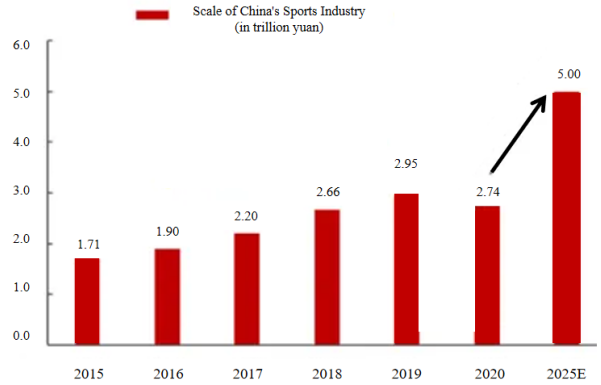


Figure 2. Scale of China's Sports Industry [5]

2.2. Improvement of Health Awareness

Improvement of health awareness is an important driving factor in the development of the leisure sports industry. People are increasingly valuing their physical and mental health, recognizing the importance of daily fitness exercises for good health. The 2022 National Fitness Trend Report released by the "People Love Fitness", a service platform for scientific fitness guidance organized by People's Daily under the guidance of the Mass Sports Department of the State General Administration of Sports, with the academic support of the Institute of Sports Science of the State General Administration of Sports, shows that the percentage of people who participate in physical activity at least once a week in China reaches 67.5%. This increase in health awareness will directly contribute to the progress of the leisure sports industry and bring more business opportunities to the industry.

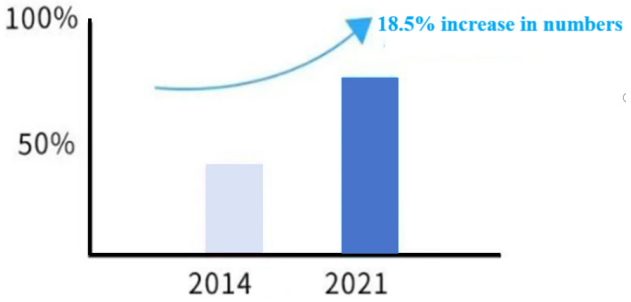


Figure 3. Growth in the Number of People Participating in Physical Activity [6]

2.3. Driven by Technological Advancements

Technological advances have offered a strong motivation for the development of the leisure sports industry. With the wide application of Internet technology, big data, and artificial intelligence, the leisure sports industry will be significantly improved in terms of product innovation, marketing, management efficiency and so on. For example, the application of intelligent fitness equipment and online sports platforms has provided consumers with more convenient ways to do exercise and also brought new economic growth points for the leisure sports industry. [7]

2.4. Support from Local Policy

Local governments have given strong support to the development of the leisure sports industry. The government encourages the development of the leisure sports industry through the introduction of relevant policies, the establishment of special funds and the provision of tax incentives, as a solid policy guarantee for the rapid development of the industry. The development of the leisure sports industry requires complete infrastructure construction. At present, China has made remarkable progress in sports facilities and fitness equipment, but there are still problems as insufficient facilities and poor quality in some areas. In the future, it should continue to increase investment in infrastructure construction and improve the quality of services to meet the growing needs of consumers.

3. Problems in the Development of Leisure Sports Industry under the Background of National Fitness

3.1. Uneven Development Across Regions

The implementation of the National Fitness Program has led to the notable achievement of the leisure sports industry in some regions. However, the development of each region is unbalanced. This is mainly manifested in the following aspects. Firstly, the distribution of resources is uneven. Some areas are rich in leisure sports resources, such as urban centers

and coastal areas. While other areas, as rural and mountainous areas, are relatively scarce. Secondly, the pace of development varies. The leisure sports industry growing rapidly in some regions, but others may be constrained by diverse factors and the development is relatively slow. Finally, the industrial structure is irrational. There are large differences in the structure of the leisure sports industry in various regions. Some regions may be overly dependent on a certain kind of sports project or service, with a weaker ability to resist risks. [8]

3.2. Inadequate Social Sports Services

The advancement of the leisure sports industry needs the support of complete social sports services. However, there are two problems in the current social sports services. On the one hand, shortage of services and limited number of existing social sports service programs make it difficult to satisfy the diversified sports demands of the masses. On the other hand, the quality of services is insufficient, with the services quality of some social organizations to be improved, such as the quality of coaches and site facilities. In the meantime, there is still a problem of inadequate facilities and services. Adequate facilities and services are needed for the healthy development of the leisure sports industry. At present, problems in the leisure sports industry also exist in some areas like lagging behind in the construction of facilities and having a single service, and the sports facilities in some areas are too insufficient to meet the sports demands of the masses, especially in urban centers and rural areas. [9] Moreover, some areas offer too limited leisure sports services, such as providing only gym or swimming pool services, lacking diversified sports programs and activities.

3.3. Inappropriate Publicity and Services

The development of the leisure sports industry requires strong advocacy and services. However, the current leisure sports industry in some areas has problems like single-way publicity and low-level service. Many areas still rely on traditional publicity methods, such as posters and leaflets, which cannot effectively attract the attention of young people. Besides, the service personnel in some areas are not very professional and unable to conduct effective guidance and services for participants, thus affecting the participation and experience of the masses. In order to promote the sustainable development of the leisure sports industry, it is necessary to take targeted measures to address these issues. For example, the allocation of resources should be optimized, the social sports service system should be improved, the construction of facilities and the diversification of services enhanced, as well as the quality of services improved through innovative publicity methods. Only by solving these problems can the healthy and sustainable development of the leisure sports industry truly be realized to fulfill the diversified sports needs of the people.

4. The Development Path of Leisure Sports Industry under the Background of National Fitness

4.1. Reinforcement of Infrastructure Construction

The development of the leisure sports industry requires comprehensive infrastructure construction, including sites, facilities and equipment. At present, there are problems in some areas, such as insufficient sports facilities and poor quality, which restrict the development of leisure sports industry. Data from "2022 National Fitness Trend Report" released by People Love Fitness shows that the number of people who consciously take the initiative to participate in physical fitness is increasing year by year. 75% of the people engage regular fitness, with an average of 1-3 days a week for sports. 25% of them are active fitness group, with an average of more than 3 days a week for sports and fitness. Therefore, it is more necessary to increase the investment in infrastructure construction, and improve the site facilities to realize the diversified fitness requirements of the people. [10]

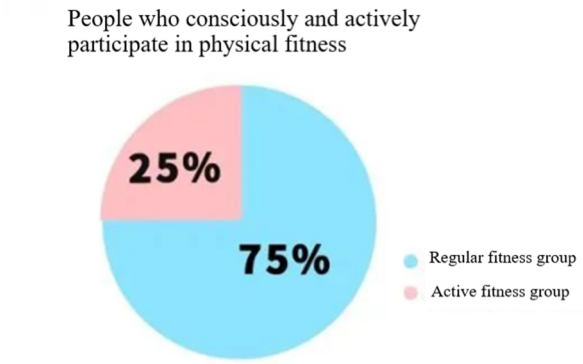


Figure 4. Percentage of people who consciously and actively participate in physical fitness [11]

4.2. Focus on Talent Cultivation

Talent is a key factor for the development of leisure sports industry. It is essential to emphasize the cultivation and introduction of professional talents and improve the professionalism and management of practitioners. By setting up professional educational institutions, strengthening cooperation with social organizations and introducing international excellent talents, a group of high-quality and professional talents could be cultivated and introduced for the leisure sports industry, so as to provide a strong talent guarantee for the sustainable development of the industry. The development of leisure sports industry needs a high-quality talent team, including education, training, management etc. On the one hand, it is required to intensify the cultivation of professional sports talents and improve their professional quality and management ability; on the other hand, it is vital to encourage all sectors of society to participate in the leisure sports industry, and to give full play to the advantages of all aspects to jointly promote the development of the industry.

4.3. Intensification of Brand Promotion

Brand promotion is critical to enhance the influence of the leisure sports industry. According to the data from "Analysis of the Development Status of China's National Fitness Activities" released by Wisdom Research Consulting, the proportion of adults and the elderly participating in sports fitness organizations is 34.4%, among which the proportion of participating in the organizations set up by friends and acquaintances accounts for 24.7%, that of participating in the community fitness team is 21.1%, and that of fitness activity centers is 17.1%. [12] The development of the leisure sports industry should perform accurate position and enhanced promotion, combined with the types of sports activities participated by different groups of people. Effective brand promotion includes brand positioning, brand communication, brand management and so on. For example, brand popularity

and reputation can be heightened through tournaments, celebrity endorsement, and social media campaigns. At the same time, the quality and characteristics of the brand must be focused on to elevate its competitiveness.

4.4. Expansion of the Market

The development of the leisure sports industry requires continuous market expansion, including the domestic market and the international market. As for expanding the domestic market, it is possible to increase the market share by sinking the market and developing second and third-tier cities. In expanding the international market, the combination of "going out" and "bringing in" can be adopted to strengthen the exchange and cooperation with the international market and enhance the international competitiveness of China's leisure sports industry. International cooperation and communication are supposed to be an important way for the development of leisure sports industry. By reinforcing international sports and cultural exchanges, jointly organizing international competitions and carrying out education and training, it is advisable to learn from international advanced experience and upgrade the development of leisure sports industry in China. Simultaneously, this will also open up a broader international market for China's leisure sports industry and increase the international influence.

4.5. Social Participation

The development of leisure sports industry needs the collaboration of the whole society, especially the involvement of social capital and all types of social organizations. On the one hand, social capital should be encouraged to enter the leisure sports industry and provide powerful financial support for the development of the industry; on the other hand, it is imperative to fully play the role of various social organizations to promote the integration and development of leisure sports industry with education, culture, tourism and other related industries, in order to raise the added value of the industry.

5. Conclusion

The proposal of the concept of national fitness is not only a change in the mode of sports industry, but also a major opportunity and challenge for the development of sports industry. As an emerging industry, sports industry has great potential, but there are many problems to be solved. This paper discusses the development path of leisure sports industry under the background of national fitness from the aspects of policy support, infrastructure construction, talent training, brand promotion, market expansion and social participation. Through the joint efforts of all parties, it is believed that China's leisure sports industry will embrace a brighter future. In a word, the development of sports industry plays an important role in the construction of healthy China and a strong economy. Under the trend of national health, people's demand for health is gradually increasing, and the consumption demand for health industry is bound to rise. With the further perfection of the sports industry, the health sports industry is expected to have a more promising prospect.

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