

Problems and Solutions of Leisure Sports Industry in China

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Abstract

With the improvement of material life, more and more people care about physical and mental health, and engage in leisure sports consumption. Leisure sports gradually walk up to industrialization with good development trend. Compared with developed countries, leisure sports industry in China is still in infancy. Firstly, this paper described the existing problems in the development of leisure sports industry in China. Secondly, according to these problems, it proposed the corresponding solutions to accelerate the promotion and population of leisure sports industry in China.

Index terms— leisure, leisure sports industry; development policies

1 Introduction

Although leisure sports industry develops rapidly in China, related researches are very few. Moreover, the researches mainly stated status and come up with development strategy partly, few stated existing problems in the development of leisure sports industry systematically, and proposed comprehensive strategies. So, to address this problem, in this paper, we systematically analyze its problems, and try our best to propose practical strategies from enterprises, government, and society according to actual situation of China.

II. Problems existing in the development of China's leisure sports industry

China's leisure sports as an emerging industry is facing many difficulties, and various kinds of problems have exposed in its development process. In this paper, we mainly analyze and conclude these problems from itself, enterprises, government and society. a) Internal problems of leisure Sports Industry i. Small-Scale, Low Level of Development

In the 1990s, leisure sports industry rose in China, in spite of its rapid development for three decades, leisure sports industry is still underdeveloped, and in its infancy. The investment in sports industry is always small, especially, the Sports-based investments only account for 0.1 percent of the country's total investment. Sports industry output just has a small percent in GDP because of the low investment. All of Author ? : School of Management, Guangdong University of Technology. Author ? : School of Management, Jiangnan University. e-mail : 983534367@Qq.Com these show that the sports industry in China still falls behind. According to statistics, China's sports industry output accounted for only 0.3% of GDP in 1999, while over the same period the proportion of Switzerland were 3.37% , Germany 1.25%, Spain 1.68%, UK 1.56%, Finland 1.70%, [1]these were much higher than that in our country. Besides, the proportion of the population of sports in China is far below that in developed countries, which only accounts for 31.2 percent of total population. There is no doubt that per capita stadium area is very limited due to the population. As a developing country, China's leisure sports development is equivalent to the level of most developed countries in the early 20th century. Moreover, the Chinese government gave the priority to the development of competitive sports, so they took more attention to the development of competitive sports, the less investment on the leisure sports industry, leading leisure sports industry in a very awkward position in its development process. While leisure sports industry gradually rose and became an important subject, the Chinese government gave less support, lagging its development.

Obviously, the development of leisure sports industry is very small-scale, low level. Compared with developed countries, it just belongs to a sun-rising industry, requiring further excavations of economic effects on economic development.

ii. Irrational Structure In terms of contents, leisure sports industry covers multiple aspects, yet, the development of each subdividing leisure sports industry was uneven.

Firstly, sports within the entertainment market should be a dominant market of the leisure sports industry. In growth process, it has formed a market pattern that various subjects of investment coexist, and high-middle and low sports service products cocompete. Its service items, prices, and service contents were gradually accepted by the public, appearing universal, diversification trend. However, the development of Sports Fitness Market is still smallscale, low level of service, and low consumer enthusiasm. Generally speaking, it's not mature, just in the early growth.

Secondly, sporting goods market was relatively mature in spite of its early development. Until 2008, companies running sporting goods have been over 4 million, including 25000 companies with certain scale. Over 50 percent of china's sports industry output value

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relied on the rapid development of sport goods industry, now, more than 65 percent of sports good were made in china, [2]indicating that the development of china's sport goods market had made certain achievements to some extent. However, some problems had been exposed, such as low-technology products, more lowend products, the relative lack of high-end products, less own brand, poor capability to update products, less producing of new sports goods and more supply of traditional OEM products.

Competitive show and spectator sport performance had made great progress. Comprehensive competition and various sports competitions market had been gradually developed. Market development tools of level sponsors, delegation sponsorship, Exclusive rights and TV Broadcast rights have been widely applied to these industries. However, slow growth of market players, not full development and utilization of events resources and non-standard event market administration were exposed in china's competitive performance, making it hard to form the professional race brand like NBA.

Apparently ,leisure sports industry structure is irrational, mainly appears as the core industry lagging behind and the absence of intermediary industry. Reviewing countrywide, competitive performance industry is of relatively rapid development, while the core industry such as sports within the entertainment, leisure service, tourism and media industry develop slowly. Moreover, there is absence of intermediary industry market, such as leisure sports labor and technology market. Besides, insufficient integration between the various sectors making it hard to form a significant scale, even a complete industrial system.

iii. Uneven Region Development At present, the problem that the development of regional leisure sports industry in China is not balanced is very prominent. As a result of a big difference in regional economic development, the eastern, southern and northern coastal regions over the Midwest and other inland areas have certain advantages in the development of leisure sports industry in terms of hardware and software environment. Leisure sports industry obviously exist gradient development in East, center and West. Beijing and Tianjin as the center of Bohai Bay economic circle, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai as the center of the Yangtze River Delta economic circle, and Guangzhou and Shenzhen as the center of the Pearl River Delta economic circle are particularly impressive in its development. Consumers' demand for leisure sports in these areas were greater, leisure sports industry in these areas started relatively early, besides, there are more casual institutions, service level and service quality is also higher, which showed a rapid development momentum, while the Midwest is still in its infancy in spite of its positive development. Leisure sports industry exist an imbalance between region and region , the same, there is an imbalance between the city and the city , the level of industrial development of leisure sports in first-tier cities are higher than that in second-tier cities and other ordinary cities; Furthermore, between urban and rural areas there is an imbalance , the level of development of the city 's leisure sports industry are much higher than that in rural areas, urban residents have become the main force in leisure sports industry consumption. The problem that leisure sports industry faced a serious imbalance in regional development is closely related to the development of China's regional economic imbalances. b) Leisure Sports Enterprises Defects i. Backward Business Philosophy?Lack of Operating Professional, Poor Operating Efficiency

As the impact of the planned economy China's sports undertakings have been given to public welfare nature, government action emphasized became the weather vanes for making the development policies of sports. China's current system is still running around sports to set up, configure resources, lack of attention to consumer demand for leisure sports, to a certain extent, separates the interoperability in the sports and the sports industry in the development process. Government behavior makes enterprises lack sufficient autonomy in the course of business. Consequently, the resulting business philosophy lagged behind and can't be accurate market positioning and service innovation. Leisure Sports industrial enterprises used outdated mode of operation, operated the contents of a single, besides, marketing tools fell behind and innovation was weak, which made it is difficult to meet the aspirations and needs of consumers when participating in recreational sports.

At the same time, the lack of operating professionals has been of great importance to restrict leisure sport industry further development. The operating professionals of leisure sports industry in china are difficult to achieve the required level of leisure sports industry whether in terms of quality or quantity. Currently, most of the sports managers are from athletes and coaches, though with a certain level of physical skills, they lack the knowledge of management theory and marketing skills, do not understand the laws of market functioning and economic means, making it difficult to push sports products and services effectively towards consumers. On the

other hand, though, some investors and operators are familiar with operating skills, lack the understanding of market features and market rules related to leisure sports and its products, unable to combine leisure sports with market-oriented management. Faced with the current competitive market environment, the lack of operating professionals in leisure sports industry are particularly prominent, has

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Volume XIV Issue I Version I Year () G been one of bottlenecks to restrict the development of leisure sports industry in china.

4 ii. Disordered Industrial Development, Poor Service Idea and Marketing Strategies

As leisure sports industry is still in its infancy, it has not formed a reasonable standard to develop, and market operating condition is relatively in chaos, mainly in the following respects: Firstly, Many investors jump to judgment, invest blindly prior to doing adequate market research, the results of the herd is the market oversupply, leading to intensifying competition in the industry, corporate economic decline, operating difficulties. Secondly, Investors who blindly follow the trend to gather, are keen to operate in all the city's commercial downtown areas, however, the operating point of the surrounding community is relatively scarce, Which led to excessive concentration, increased competition situation of leisure sports industry establishments in the space layout. Thirdly, though there are a lot of leisure sports industry operating divisions, as a whole, it has given public a false impression that leisure sports consumption are luxurious as its high price, making against popularizing its products and services.

At the same time, most fitness clubs did not implement price tag in its operating course. The operators did not take its products features and service quantity as selling points to attract customers. However, they launched the competition by price wars. The products and services they offered have a certain degree of flexibility, in order to compete among peers as a bargaining chip. Therefore, operating companies would put less energy to develop unique new products, promote service levels and improve the quality of services, easily lead to a lack of service awareness, the neglect of the service concept in service.

Besides, the current marketing strategies launched by leisure sports companies are ineffective. As we all know, Successful marketing mix is the key method to open markets, expand market share and develop stably. But, most leisure sport operating companies in china rarely integrated into green marketing, modern human and other advanced marketing concepts as the weakness of marketing awareness, poor marketing and lack of professionals, making the marketing strategies ineffective.

5 iii. Low Entry Barriers, Weak Products Innovation

The entry barriers for a company are decided by basic feature of the market. If it is large scale industry market, achieving obvious scale economics, and large advertising intensity, the barriers will be high, otherwise, low. Leisure sports industries are Emerging industries, have not achieved scale economics. Besides, the various products and natural barriers make leisure sports industry relatively isolation in space. [3] Therefore, the barriers are relatively low, easy for investors to enter.

However, these cut both ways for its developing, the advantages are that it can attract lots of investors, while there are too many investors, accordingly, intense competition and chaos will appear.

Currently, various forms of leisure sports industry business unions like small fitness centers and resorts in china have emerged such as bamboo shoots after a spring rain, especially in Beijing, shanghai and other large cities. Whereas, these business unions are generally isomorphic, of low quality and operating contents are of a single repeat for its major causes that leisure sports industry started late, and few related date to consult. Moreover, R&D and innovation capability are weak, still in imitation and learning stage. As the blind investment and copy mode, leisure sports industry is extremely unbalanced. At present, 90% percent of the leisure sports industry markets are without technology advantages, modem ideology and up-to-date management. Lack of innovation, inevitably, our leisure sports industry is still in its infancy, but in many cities, the markets have reached saturation point. Most of leisure sports are fitness, swimming, billiards, bowling and badminton. In all, industry difference is small and products differentiation is not high. [4] Moreover, leisure sports resource demands exploitation. China is multinational, vast in territory, and abounding in natural resources, each nation has its own geographical features and cultural charm. If these resources can be rationally exploit and utilize. Leisure sports industry will be very abundant, avoiding signal market, lack of innovation and individuality.

ii. Lack Synergistic Push Mechanism Leisure sports industry is a system engineering that supports each other and works side by side with other industries rather than a self-existent industry, involving lots of upstream and downstream industries and sectors, such as education, tourism, commercial, medical, security and culture. Therefore, to achieve the rapid development of leisure sports industry, in addition to focusing on its own development, coordinative development with other departments is necessary. In recent years, while our country is depending on hot consumption of holiday economy to stimulate domestic demands, development disharmony in industries has exposed. Catering mess, traffic jams, and poor service can't be solved well; education and

8 A) POLICIES ON GOVERNMENT RESPECT I. SETTING DOWN LEISURE SPORTS INDUSTRY FINANCING POLICIES

researches related to leisure sports industry is relatively less though much efforts has spent in education, leading to

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Volume XIV Issue I Version I Year () G misunderstanding in leisure sports industry; the leisure and entertainment projects lack innovation and characteristic with nonstandard operation and management. In addition, because of the low healthcare supervision in our country, we are not able to do regular examinations, and health assessment to participants, so that we lack scientific data on participants after their body-building exercises. In all, we still be lacking of a mechanism considering the overall and strategic planning to promote the development of leisure sports industry. [5] iii. Low Market Standard and Imperfect Market Systems

As leisure sports industry in our country is still in infancy, the market is in chaos and standard degree in not high. At present, leisure sports industry of low barriers to entry, more and more investors flooded in this market, leading to market saturation in many cities and aggravating competition. However, in the competition, taking price as the selling point is preventing standardization and fair development in the market; some business man using unfair competition means to keep its own advantageous position is undermining market order seriously. This happened mainly because of establish of supervision mechanism, lacking supervision and systems management on business unions. In addition, laws about leisure sports industry is not perfect, such as low legislative level, not formed legal framework and lack of systematicness and comprehensiveness, can't catch up the development pace of leisure sports industry. Therefore, the effective establishment of restriction mechanism becomes an important and efficient impetus for the development of leisure sports industry.

7 III. Relevant Policies Analysis on Leisure Sports Industry in China

Though, leisure sports industry has show rapid development trend and good developing prospect in our country, many problems have exposed, seriously impeding its development. After analysis its existing problems, the paper will focus on the policy that will push its development.

8 a) Policies on Government Respect i. Setting Down Leisure Sports Industry Financing Policies

To achieve the healthy and sustained development of leisure sports industry, improving and perfecting the investment and financing policies is of great importance in achieving this goal. Indeed, at present, setting down sound leisure sports industry investment and financing policies is of great significance to the development in of leisure sports industry in our country. In pushing its development, with the parallel principle that government investment and society investment go side by side, we should broaden the access to investment and financing, make a number of preferential policies to attract society investment, thus form a good situation with pluralistic investment and financing policies. Specifically, in the following aspects, first, encourage society investment on leisure sports industry, make sports management centers and the association on the investment of non-public economy component and non-sports system free from limitation. Second, encourage the establishment of sports investment companies and sports industry fund, transform investment bodies from single government to enterprise, non-profit organization, social groups and the public. Expand Investment mode from single government fund to various financing means such as sports lottery, sports bonds and fund, thus form pluralistic investment bodies and modes. Third, implement low-interest loans or interest subsidies on sports industry projects with innovation, encourage and foster leisure sports industry by arranging some policy loans.

ii. Optimization of Industry Structure and Promoting Linkage Development Among Industries

Optimizing industry structure, making rational adjustments to industrial layout simultaneously, and promoting linkage development among industries are of great significance in boosting the whole development of leisure sports industry. Firstly, in terms of optimizing industry structure, core industry like fitness and entertainment industry and event industry should be taken as the leading, thus through key cultivation, expanding and improving these core industries to achieve the adjustment and optimization of the whole industries. Secondly, in addition to focusing on its core industries, we should strongly support its intermediary market. Leisure sports industry is in promoting stage in our country, Sports operator demand for sports intermediary services will subsequently continue to rise, showing a dynamic situation.

Additionally, our country is vast in land, every region has its own culture and resources. Therefore, every area should develop leisure sports industry with regional features according to relative advantages themselves, reflecting its unique regional customs. At the same time, local government should find internal economical connection and combination between leisure sports industry and its related industries in the development course, mobilize the positive development of related industries together, and combine leisure sports industry with regional economy in development, merge leisure sports industry and other related industries like commerce, real estate and transportation together organically by relying, mining, integration and connection, cultivate leisure sports industry chain from Horizontality and Verticality, and optimize the structure, to achieve the overall progress and collaborative

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Volume XIV Issue I Version I Year () G development by these ways, thus improve the regional competitiveness.

10 iii. Popularizing Leisure Education, and Strengthening the Cultivation of Leisure Sports Industry Management Personnel

To develop stably and orderly in its operation, leisure sports industry must rely on professional managers. Therefore, our government should strongly popularize leisure education and cultivate management personnel, and ensure the supply of management talents.

Solving the problem that leisure sports industry lack professionals radically, the state and government need make a series of education policies. Specifics are as follows: first, open profession and courses about leisure sports industry in the major comprehensive universities or sports colleges, set up a high-level sports economy degree, educate students with solid management theory, offer training opportunities to students to combine theory with practice, achieve allround development mode. Second, establish relevant research institutions, strengthen its research, enhance and deep theory, form professional research guidance system, and offer guidance on its practice in time. Third, encourage staffs to carry on professional job training and further study in leisure sports companies, enhance service, and train more industry professionals in line with its development.

11 iv. Regulating the Market Environment, and Achieving the Legalization Development on Leisure Sports Industry

At present, the market of leisure sports in our country is not stable, relatively in chaos, and with no normative environment, which seriously preclude its development. In market economy, some problems can be solved by Spontaneous market forces, others must depend on relevant regulation to solve. Therefore, government must formulate corresponding policies, improve relevant legal documents, take some supervision and restraint mechanisms to ensure the normative leisure sports market environment, and achieve legalization of recreational sports industry. sports industry configured with sports law, which clearly defined the right, responsibilities and obligations of investors, sponsors, managers, associations, social agencies in sports industry, depend on laws and regulations to protect leisure sports industry, take full advantages of laws to beat and crack down on infringement acts. Thus truly follow laws and regulations to manage leisure sports market, ensure its healthy development.

b) The Policies on Enterprises.

i. Industrial Expansion and Broadening the Field of Leisure Sports Industry

There are close connection between leisure sports industry and other industries, such as tourism, media, manufacturing and insurance. Therefore, enterprises can merge relevant industries according to characteristic of relevance of leisure sports industry, jointly develop, and expand business. For example, promote the development on the products of leisure sports tourism. Sports tourism is not only a kind of tourism, but also a emerging field with the combination in sports and tourism. Sport tourism can be developed by the establishment of leisure clubs and resort, attract tourists to experience leisure sports while in tourism. Some travel agencies have discovered the business brought by the mutual penetration of tourism and sports industries, positively exploit various kinds of sport tourism products around major sport events at home and abroad, sports study, sports communication and sports watch, to meet demands of customers, and promote the development of sports media. Sports media industry belongs to emerging industry, with rapid development and high profits. Enterprises can cooperate with major TV networks, deep and expand sports media business.

Though, Sports industry is in the rising period, it's still in lower stage, with great space to growth. As long as we can effectively integrate and exploit sports and other related industries, and broaden leisure sports industry business, it will develop rapidly with no doubts.

ii. Updating Business Philosophy, Exploiting Marketing Mix, and Improving Economic Benefits Currently, the philosophy of leisure sports industry falls behind. With fuzzy market positioning, old operation modes, single contents, backward market means, and weak innovation, enterprise is hard to meet most consumers' desires and demands when they participate in the leisure sports projects. Therefore, enterprises urgently need to renew its philosophy, create the market with various and unique products. Some worth references of international leisure industry are as follows: firstly, clear its market positioning, exploit, shape and strengthen products features, such as ski resorts and rafting resorts; secondly, introduce the concept of franchising, like camping?diving and golf;

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The legalization on leisure sports industry is the fundamental guarantee to develop healthily, orderly and normatively. Currently, regulations on sports industry promulgated by the state are mostly comprehensive management approaches, not specific and considerate on each link and sport, lacking maneuverability in

implementation process, for example, some sports projects still apply to the management approaches of culture and entertainment. Moreover, Leisure sports industry belongs to emerging industry in our country, the development on sports industries are still in immature exploration stage, relevant regulatory mechanism has not form. Therefore, the government should formulate laws and regulations of market management in leisure. Thirdly, intensify products associating and chain sales, like opening the chain fitness clubs.

At the same time, enterprises need to analyze the factors that influence its operation, study and adopt appropriate marketing mix and means. With intense competition, the traditional 4P, namely product, price, place and promotion, has not work efficiently, to meet consumers' psychological needs, enterprises must integrate into modern humanities, green marketing with certain features and other advanced ideas.

Additionally, enterprises also need to intensify its innovation, develop new products line and projects, and increase the product technology, especially products of manufacturing companies whose products are mostly low-tech and low-cost, though, with large output and lack of technology supports, they are not able to occupy the high-end market. Therefore, enhancing the R&D capabilities and technology not only improve benefits, but also help to promote its competition.

iii. Intensifying Marketing and Building Brands with Its Own Characteristics

Compared with advanced leisure sports enterprises abroad, the capabilities in product promotion, marketing and brand planning are extremely weak because of lacking professionals. So, enterprises need to establish its own brand with characteristic, intensify marketing and enhance brand awareness, in addition to focusing on improving products and service. Leisure sports activities bring people not only pleasurable experience, but also the process of culture experience and communication. Then, enterprises should take emphasis on the inheritance and development of leisure sports culture, and establish its own brand features and positioning by combined leisure sports traditional culture with fashion.

To create a own well-known brand, enterprises need to make comprehensive marketing strategies, popularize its brands by various media advertising, press conferences, and sponsoring popular sports events or establishing good image by participating in large-scale public welfare to promote the brand, thus establish a good brand effect. For example, the success of Olympic Games in 2008 and Asian Games in 2010 is rather than an opportunity to propagate and move towards the world stage. c) Policies in Social Aspect i. Development policies of sports association Currently, there are many sports association in china involving in sports development. While in charge of varieties of professional events, sports association should take more efforts on popularizing each sport of the association, organizing various leisure sports activities by scientific popularization and management methods, not only improve the ability of leisure sports activities, but also deep its multi-understanding, then speed its popularization, moreover, increase experience and competence in organization and management. most sports association in our country are guided by the government, consequently, sports association can take measures actively to enhance its management and operation, for example, communicate and cooperate with advanced association with rich experience in abroad by culture communication among countries. The enhancement of sports association is benefit to the popularization of leisure sports activities, thus promote the development of leisure sports industry from the side.

ii. Transformation from Community Sports Management System to Public Oriented System Community sports are the basic carrier for national sports development, and basic unit to carry out leisure sports activities. Community sports management system in our country is still government-oriented, the current sports mechanism still takes competitive sports as the centre to set up institution and deploy resources, lacking attention on the consumption demand of leisure sports, to some extent, this separates the sports from the sports industry, and is easy to hinder the development pace of leisure sports industry. Therefore, community sports should change government-oriented management system into public-oriented system, and make more people involve in grassroots sports, carrying on leisure sports activities according to their own habits and interests. These surly mobilize people' enthusiasms, as well as offer benefits to stimulate demand for leisure sports industry. To change into public-oriented management system we can implement from two aspects, first, launch leisure sports activities, namely setting up vertical organizational system from streets to neighborhood, and to family, regularly organize residents to participate in these activities for neighborhood harmony by mobilizing public participation. Then, establish civil society organizations, which forms the network that community sports association is in charge of the general jurisdiction, yet each organization is mutual independence. Each organization carries on activities independently, and offer moderate help when necessary. Consequently, this is benefit to popularize leisure sports activities as well as push its further development.

14 IV. Conclusions

Though, China's leisure sports industry is still in primary stage, facing many difficulties and pressures, through the analyzing existing problems and putting up corresponding policies in this paper, it has huge development space. With the development of society and economy and the improvement of life, we believe it will become a pillar industry to push china's economy in the near future, an inevitable consumption trend. ^{1 2}

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Figure 1:

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