

The Rise and Prospect of China's Sports Tourism Economy

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Abstract—The rapid development of the sports tourism economy in China has been comprehensively discussed, including the expansion of market size, the uniqueness of consumer groups, and the role of the policy environment in promoting the development of the industry. This paper analyzes in detail the development, product innovation and marketing strategies of sports tourism resources, and emphasizes its role in enhancing the city's brand and promoting local economic development. At the same time, the article points out the challenges faced by the industry, such as security risks, market irregularities, and lack of international competitiveness. In response to these challenges, countermeasures are proposed, including establishing a sustainable development model, strengthening industry supervision, improving service quality, and expanding international cooperation. Finally, the paper predicts the potential of combining sports tourism with the healthy China strategy, as well as its development opportunities in the global context.

Keywords—Sports tourism, regional development, consumer groups

I. INTRODUCTION

As an emerging form of tourism, sports tourism combines sports activities with tourism experience to provide tourists with unique physical and mental enjoyment. According to the World Tourism Organization, sports tourism refers to the travel that people make in order to participate in or watch sports activities. This category of tourism encompasses a wide range of activities, from conventional sports competitions like the Olympics, the FIFA World Cup, and other prominent international sporting events, to active participation sports such as marathon runs, bicycle rides, ski trips, and scuba diving excursions (Petroman & Văduva, 2021). The China Sports Tourism Progress Report indicates that the sports tourism sector in China has witnessed an average yearly growth rate exceeding 15% during the past five years, highlighting a robust and dynamic trend of expansion. Taking marathons as an example, more than 1,800 marathons were held in China in 2019, attracting more than 7 million participants and spectators. This data not only reflects the participatory nature of sports tourism, but also reveals its positive impact on the local economy. Another distinguishing feature of sports tourism is its sustainability, which encourages tourists to enjoy sports activities while paying attention to environmental protection and cultural heritage. It is through this change that sports tourism promotes the harmonious development of the economy, society and the environment.

In recent years, the sports tourism sector in China has exhibited robust growth dynamics, emerging as a pivotal driver for the domestic tourism economy. Data unveiled by the Puhua Industry Research Institute's China Research

Division indicates that the value of China's sports tourism market will amount to \$589.49 billion in 2024, constituting 56% of the worldwide sports tourism market share. Projections suggest that China's sports tourism market will sustain its rapid expansion in the forthcoming years, with an anticipated Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 16.2% spanning from 2024 to 2029. This upward trajectory can be attributed to several factors: the unwavering support from national policies, heightened health consciousness among residents, and the ongoing enhancement of urban infrastructure. A case in point is the proliferation of marathon events, which has not only fueled the sports tourism economy of host cities but also spurred the growth of local hotel, restaurant, and transportation industries. The Beijing Marathon stands as a testament to this phenomenon, drawing tens of thousands of participants from both domestic and international realms, and generating hundreds of millions of yuan in direct economic revenue annually. Furthermore, technological advancements, such as the integration of Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies within the sports tourism domain, are offering tourists novel experiential avenues, thereby further widening the market's developmental horizon. These innovations are poised to revolutionize the way sports tourism is perceived and enjoyed, cementing China's position as a global leader in this thriving industry.

With the vigorous development of China's sports tourism economy, the main consumer groups are showing a trend of diversification and youth. According to the data of the China Research Institute of Puhua Industry Research Institute, in terms of consumption frequency, compared with 2019 before the epidemic, the number of orders related to outdoor sports in 2023 will increase by 14.99%, and the year-on-year growth rate in the first half of 2024 will reach 59.78%. The younger generation, especially the post-80s and post-90s, has become the main force of sports tourism, they pursue a personalized, experiential and healthy lifestyle, and the demand for sports tourism is not limited to traditional tourism, but also pays more attention to participation and interaction. For example, marathon tourism, bicycle riding, ski vacations, and other programs are widely popular (Baosheng, 2019). In terms of demand analysis, consumers are increasingly inclined to choose travel products that can combine sports activities with natural scenery and cultural experiences. With the model of "sports + tourism", such as the Tour of Qinghai Lake International Road Cycling Race, it not only attracts professional athletes, but also attracts a large number of amateurs and spectators, becoming a new engine to promote local economic development. In addition, with the popularity of the Healthy China strategy, sports tourism, as a healthy lifestyle, is gradually becoming an important choice for

people to pursue physical and mental health (Duan et al., 2022).

II. DRIVERS OF THE GROWTH OF THE SPORTS TOURISM ECONOMY

A. Government Policies and Industry Synergy

The burgeoning sports tourism economy in China owes much to the robust policy support that has catalyzed industrial integration and progress (Li et al., 2022). Collaborative efforts between the General Administration of Sport of China and the National Tourism Administration have yielded a suite of policies designed to foster the seamless fusion of the sports and tourism sectors. Notably, the “Healthy China 2030” initiative explicitly outlines the strategic objective of advancing sports tourism, underscoring the significance of integrating sports with tourism to enhance public health and stimulate regional economic prosperity. This policy framework serves as a cornerstone for the sustained development and expansion of China’s sports tourism landscape. Under the guidance of policies, sports tourism projects such as marathons, bicycle races, and ski tourism have risen rapidly, becoming a new engine to stimulate domestic demand and promote consumption (Wang et al., 2022.).

Policy support is not only reflected in macro planning, but also in specific financial subsidies, tax incentives, land use facilitation and other aspects. For example, some local governments have provided preferential policies such as land transfer fee reduction and exemption and loan interest discounts to attract investment in sports tourism projects. The implementation of these policies has effectively reduced the operating costs of sports tourism projects and stimulated market vitality. In Zhejiang Province, for example, the province has successfully built a number of sports tourism demonstration bases, such as the water sports center at Qiandao Lake and the mountain bike park in Anji, through the implementation of the “Sports + Tourism” action plan, which not only enrich tourism products, but also promote the diversification of the local economy.

Spurred by favorable policies, the convergence of the sports and tourism industries has ushered in novel business paradigms and groundbreaking practices. Leveraging big data analytics and artificial intelligence technologies, tourism enterprises can now precisely assess consumer behavior, enabling them to tailor sports tourism services to individual preferences. Furthermore, policies incentivize collaboration between sports tourism firms and technology providers to create innovative products, such as smart wearable devices and immersive virtual reality experiences, catering to the escalating demand for unique consumer experiences. In this ongoing integration of sports and tourism, innovation emerges as the pivotal force propelling the industry towards sustainable growth and development.

B. The Role of Urban Infrastructure Construction in Promoting Sports Tourism

The improvement of urban infrastructure is one of the key factors to promote the development of sports tourism economy (Li et al., 2022). Taking Beijing as an example, the successful hosting of the 2022 Winter Olympics not only

demonstrated the international image of China’s sports tourism, but also greatly promoted the upgrading of urban infrastructure. According to official data, during the Winter Olympics, Beijing carried out large-scale renovation and upgrading of transportation, accommodation, communications and other infrastructure, providing a solid material foundation for sports tourism. The improvement of these infrastructures not only provides convenience for tourists, but also attracts more sports events and tourism activities to be held here, forming a benign interaction between sports tourism and urban development, and good infrastructure is the skeleton of urban development and the cornerstone of sports tourism economic prosperity (Hong-Min et al., 2021).

C. Synergy between Sports Events and Tourism Activities

The interplay between sports events and tourism activities has been instrumental in the ascent of China’s sports tourism economy. A quintessential illustration is the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, which not only elevated China’s global profile but also significantly accelerated the growth trajectory of the sports tourism sector. This symbiotic relationship underscores the profound impact of high-profile sports events on stimulating tourism and fostering economic vibrancy. According to official statistics, Beijing received more than 1 million foreign tourists during the Olympic Games, which directly led to a significant increase in local tourism revenue. This phenomenon proves that sporting events can act as a catalyst for tourism activities, attracting a large number of tourists, thereby promoting the development of related industrial chains. In addition, the holding of sporting events can also enhance the visibility and attractiveness of the destination, forming a new model of “event tourism”. For example, the F1 Shanghai race attracts tens of thousands of international visitors every year, bringing huge economic benefits and international exposure to Shanghai and the surrounding area. In terms of analytical models, we can draw on the theory of “event tourism”, which argues that a major sporting event is a special event that is able to attract tourists and boost tourism consumption by creating unique experiences and memories. Therefore, through careful planning and management, the interactive effect of sports events and tourism activities will provide a strong impetus for the continuous growth of China’s sports tourism economy (Jiang et al., 2021).

III. REGIONAL DISPARITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPORTS TOURISM ECONOMY

A. Flourishing Sports Tourism in the Eastern Coastal Region

The eastern coastal region, being at the vanguard of China’s economic prosperity, has witnessed a remarkable surge in the sports tourism economy. Exemplified by the year 2019, the sports tourism market in these provinces accounted for over half of the national market share, demonstrating robust and sustained growth dynamics. This underscores the region’s prominent position and its significant contribution to the overall expansion of the sports tourism sector in China. This phenomenon is not only due to the strong economic foundation and perfect infrastructure of the region, but also

due to its rich sports tourism resources and diversified sports tourism products. For example, Shanghai's F1 car, Qingdao's sailing and Hainan's golf tourism have become important business cards to attract domestic and foreign tourists. In addition, the eastern coastal region is also at the forefront of innovative practices in sports tourism, such as the introduction of VR technology in the sports tourism experience to provide tourists with an immersive sports experience, which not only enhances the interest of tourism, but also promotes the upgrading of the sports tourism industry. However, in the face of the vigorous development of the sports tourism economy, the eastern coastal region is also facing challenges such as environmental protection and market standardization, and it is necessary to pay attention to sustainable development while pursuing economic benefits to ensure the long-term prosperity of sports tourism.

B. Untapped Potential and Unique Challenges of Sports Tourism in Central and Western Regions

The central and western regions of China emerge as nascent yet promising fronts for the advancement of the country's sports tourism economy. These regions harbor immense potential, yet they also face distinct challenges that set them apart in the landscape of sports tourism development (Liu, 2024). Taking Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and other provinces as examples, these areas not only have beautiful natural scenery, but also have rich ethnic culture and historical relics, providing unique resources for sports tourism. For example, Jiuzhaigou in Sichuan, the ancient town of Lijiang in Yunnan and Huangguoshu Waterfall in Guizhou are all popular destinations that attract domestic and foreign tourists. However, the progression of sports tourism in the central and western regions encounters obstacles such as outdated infrastructure, a dearth of professional expertise, and an underdeveloped market. Data from the China Tourism Statistical Yearbook reveals that although the share of sports tourism revenue in these regions has shown an annual uptick, a significant disparity persists when compared to the eastern coastal areas. To fully harness the potential of sports tourism in the central and western regions, collaborative efforts from both government and enterprises are imperative. This entails boosting investments, upgrading transportation and accommodation infrastructures, focusing on the innovation and diversification of sports tourism offerings, enhancing service quality, and fostering a distinctive sports tourism brand (Liu, 2024).

C. The Interaction between Special Sports Tourism Projects and the Regional Economy

In the rise of China's sports tourism economy, the interaction between characteristic sports tourism projects and regional economy has become a key factor in promoting local development. Taking the Zhangjiajie International Rock Climbing Festival as an example, this characteristic sports tourism project not only attracts many rock climbing enthusiasts at home and abroad, Moreover, it also stimulates the growth of local accommodation, catering, transportation, and other ancillary industries. According to statistics, during the Zhangjiajie International Rock Climbing Festival, the local tourism revenue increased by more than 30% year-on-year. Effectively, sports tourism projects catalyze the diversified development of the regional economy. By

leveraging natural resource advantages, these initiatives can be transformed into economic boons, thereby fostering sustainable growth in the regional economy (Pedauga *et al.*, 2022).

The interaction between the special sports tourism project and the regional economy is also reflected in the promotion of employment. Take the Tour of Qinghai Lake International ROAD Cycling Race, for example, which not only enhances the international profile of Qinghai Lake, but also provides a large number of temporary employment opportunities for local residents. According to relevant studies, such large-scale sporting events can bring direct and indirect jobs to the host city, creating an average of more than 1,000 local jobs per year. This not only alleviates the pressure of employment, but also improves the living standards of residents and promotes social harmony and stability.

When analyzing the interaction between characteristic sports tourism projects and the regional economy, we can also draw on Porter's "diamond model" to gain a deeper understanding. The model underscores the influence of four pivotal factors on industrial competitiveness: factors of production, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, and corporate strategy, structure, and competition. These elements collectively shape the competitive landscape of an industry and determine its ability to thrive and grow in the marketplace. Taking Hainan Island Cycling Race as an example, Hainan Island has attracted a large number of domestic and foreign cycling enthusiasts with its unique climate and geographical conditions. The success of the event not only enhanced Hainan Island's sports tourism brand, but also promoted the development of related industrial chains, such as bicycle manufacturing, event operation, sporting goods sales, etc., forming a virtuous cycle of economic ecosystem (Zuo *et al.*, 2021).

IV. INNOVATION AND PRACTICE IN SPORTS TOURISM ECONOMY

A. The Development Case of an Emerging Sports Tourism Project

With the vigorous development of China's sports tourism economy, new sports tourism projects have sprung up like mushrooms after a rain, becoming a new engine for the growth of the industry. Taking outdoor adventure as an example, according to data released by the China Tourism Academy, the size of the outdoor adventure tourism market has exceeded 100 billion yuan in 2019, with an annual growth rate of more than 15%. Among them, rock climbing, hiking, kayaking and other projects are warmly sought after by young consumer groups. Taking the Zhangjiajie Grand Canyon Glass Bridge as an example, the world's longest glass bridge has not only become a tourist check-in place, Indeed, the emergence of such projects has not only fueled their own growth but also propelled the rapid development of the surrounding sports tourism economy. Zhangjiajie, for instance, has adopted an innovative "sports + tourism" model, which has significantly enhanced the value of its tourism products. This strategic approach has successfully captured the interest of both domestic and foreign tourists, making Zhangjiajie a quintessential example of sports tourism economic development. By integrating sports activities with

tourism, Zhangjiajie has demonstrated how this fusion can create a unique and appealing tourist experience, thereby boosting the local economy and setting a precedent for other regions to follow.

In the development of emerging sports tourism projects, the application and innovation of technology are also indispensable. For example, the application of Virtual Reality (VR) technology in sports tourism projects such as skiing and diving provides tourists with a new way to experience. According to the China Sports Tourism Development Report, technology-enabled sports tourism projects increased by 30% in 2020, showing a strong momentum of development. Technology not only enhances the visitor experience, but also provides a guarantee for the safety management of sports tourism projects. For example, the physiological indicators of tourists are monitored in real time through smart wearable devices, ensuring the safety of outdoor sports. In the field of sports tourism, technology is becoming an important force for the advancement of the industry (Bichler & Pikkemaat, 2021).

The harmonious coexistence of sports tourism and environmental protection is paramount to the sustainable development of burgeoning sports tourism projects. In the case of marathons, an increasing number of cities are recognizing the importance of incorporating environmental conservation principles when staging these events. By adopting eco-friendly practices, such as reducing waste, promoting the use of renewable energy, and preserving natural landscapes, cities can ensure that their marathon events not only provide a thrilling experience for participants but also contribute positively to the local environment. This approach fosters a sense of responsibility towards sustainability and sets a precedent for future sports tourism projects to prioritize environmental protection alongside economic growth. For example, the Beijing Marathon implements strict waste sorting and recycling measures during the event to reduce the environmental impact of the event. At the same time, race organizers encourage participants to use public transport to reach the starting point to reduce carbon emissions. Through this practice, the sports tourism project not only provides participants with a healthy lifestyle, but also makes a positive contribution to environmental protection. Sports tourism is playing an increasingly important role in promoting harmony between man and nature (González-García *et al.*, 2022).

B. Application and Innovation of Technology in Sports Tourism

With the rapid development of science and technology, the sports tourism economy is ushering in unprecedented opportunities for innovation. For example, the application of Virtual Reality (VR) technology, allowing tourists to experience the excitement of alpine skiing or deep-sea diving at home (Tang *et al.*, 2023), has greatly expanded the experience of sports tourism. According to a report by the International Data Corporation (IDC), the global VR market is expected to reach \$7.3 billion in 2023. In addition, Augmented Reality (AR) technology also plays an important role in sports tourism, through which visitors can obtain real-time information about attractions, historical background, and even participate in interactive games,

making the travel experience more interesting and educational. For example, some sports tourism attractions have made use of AR technology to allow visitors to see historical sports events recreated through mobile phones or special devices, enhancing the interactivity and immersion of tourism (Hong-Min *et al.*, 2021).

The proliferation of smart wearable devices, such as smartwatches and health trackers, provides sports travelers with the ability to monitor their health in real-time, which not only enhances the personal experience, but also provides valuable data support for travel service providers. By analyzing this data, travel businesses can better understand customer needs, optimize service offerings, and even anticipate market trends. For example, a travel company stands out in a highly competitive market by analyzing data such as heart rate and step count during exercise to provide customers with personalized travel routes and health recommendations.

In the innovative practice of sports tourism economy, the application of technology is not only limited to improving experience, but also reflected in the improvement of operational efficiency and the optimal allocation of resources. For example, big data analytics can help tourism companies more accurately predict peak travel periods, so that resources and personnel can be rationalized and waste can be reduced. At the same time, the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in tourism services, such as intelligent customer service robots, can provide 24-hour uninterrupted consulting services, which greatly improves service efficiency and customer satisfaction. The application and innovation of technology in sports tourism is constantly pushing the industry towards a more intelligent and personalized future.

C. Coordinated Development of Sports Tourism and Environmental Protection

With the vigorous development of China's sports tourism economy, environmental protection has become an important issue that cannot be ignored in this field. Sports tourism activities often involve the use of the natural environment, such as mountain biking, trekking adventures, water sports, etc., which can also cause damage to the natural environment while providing tourists with a unique experience. Therefore, the coordinated development of sports tourism and environmental protection is not only related to ecological balance, but also the key to the sustainable development of sports tourism. For example, according to the United Nations Tourism Organization, the sports tourism industry is growing at a rate of 14% per year and currently accounts for 10% of global tourism spending. The market size is \$564.7 billion in 2023, and the growth rate of sports tourism is estimated to be 17.5% between 2023 and 2030. Under such a growth trend, how to balance economic benefits and environmental protection has become the focus of common attention of the industry and academia.

In practice, some regions have begun to explore the coordinated development path of sports tourism and environmental protection. For example, Anji County in Zhejiang Province has not only attracted a large number of sports tourism enthusiasts by promoting green cycling and eco-hiking projects, but has also successfully combined ecological protection with tourism economy. The case of

Anji County shows that through scientific planning and management, the harmonious coexistence of sports tourism activities and the natural environment can be realized. In addition, the introduction of an environmental impact assessment model to conduct a preliminary assessment of sports tourism projects can effectively prevent and reduce the negative impact on the environment. The development of sports tourism must take into account the impact on future generations and ensure the long-term sustainable use of natural resources.

In the future landscape of the sports tourism economy, environmental stewardship will emerge as a central component. As the “Healthy China” initiative gains traction, the advancement of sports tourism—a vital avenue for enhancing public health—must harmonize with ecological preservation. Sports tourism ventures ought to embrace green innovations, like harnessing renewable energy sources and advocating for low-carbon transportation options, to mitigate environmental impact. Concurrently, fostering tourist participation in eco-friendly activities and elevating public environmental consciousness are crucial for the sustainable growth of sports tourism. On the global stage, the proliferation of concepts like “ecotourism” offers a benchmark for the synergistic development of sports tourism and environmental protection. In short, the rise of the sports tourism economy should not be at the expense of the environment, but should become a new driving force to promote environmental protection and ecological civilization construction.

V. CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS FACING THE SPORTS TOURISM ECONOMY

A. *Sports Tourism Safety Issues and Risk Management*

With the vigorous development of China’s sports tourism economy, safety and risk management have become important issues that cannot be ignored in the industry. According to statistics, the frequent occurrence of safety accidents in sports tourism activities not only affects the experience of tourists, but also causes damage to the reputation of tourist destinations. For example, in a well-known mountain bike event in 2019, several competitors were injured due to sudden weather changes and improper route planning, which attracted widespread attention from the society. This incident highlights the loopholes in the safety management of sports tourism and reminds the industry of the need to take a more scientific and systematic approach to preventing and responding to risks.

In terms of risk management, the introduction of internationally advanced risk management models, such as Swiss Re’s “Risk Triangle Model”, can help sports tourism companies identify, assess and control potential risks. The model emphasizes the comprehensiveness of risk identification, including natural risk, technical risk, market risk and legal risk, so as to provide a comprehensive risk management strategy for sports tourism projects. At the same time, combined with big data analysis, historical accident data can be mined to predict possible future risk points, so as to take preventive measures in advance.

In addition, the government and industry associations should play a leading role in formulating and improving

sports tourism safety standards and norms, strengthen safety training for practitioners, and improve their risk awareness and emergency response capabilities. Only by translating the concept of safety into concrete actions can the safety and sustainable development of sports tourism be truly guaranteed. At the same time, by establishing an effective risk management system, consumer confidence in sports tourism products can be enhanced, which in turn can promote the healthy development of the entire industry.

B. *Standardization of the Sports Tourism Market and Improvement of Service Quality*

With the vigorous development of China’s sports tourism economy, market standardization and service quality improvement have become the key to the development of the industry. According to the China Sports Tourism Development Report (2020–2021), the scale of China’s sports tourism market reached 1,271.8 billion yuan in 2021, an increase of 30% over 2020. It is estimated that by 2026, the size of China’s sports tourism market will reach 3,881.45 billion yuan. In this context, it is particularly important to improve service quality and standardized management. For example, by introducing the international quality management system ISO 9001, it is possible to provide sports tourism companies with standardized service processes to ensure the consistency and reliability of the visitor experience. At the same time, combined with big data analysis, tourism enterprises can more accurately grasp consumer needs and provide personalized services. Therefore, sports tourism enterprises must continue to work hard to improve the overall industry level through standardized management and service innovation to meet the growing market demand.

C. *China’s Sports Tourism in International Competition and Cooperation*

In the context of globalization, the rise of China’s sports tourism economy has not only attracted widespread attention in the domestic market, but also gradually demonstrated its competitiveness in the international arena. According to the World Tourism Organization, the sports tourism market size was valued at USD 564.7 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 17.5% between 2023 and 2030. As a rising star in the sports tourism market, China is actively embracing this global trend through a series of international cooperation and competitive strategies (Aryawiguna, 2021). For example, China’s cooperation with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) led to the successful hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, which not only enhanced the international image of domestic sports tourism, but also laid a solid foundation for subsequent sports tourism projects. In addition, the sponsorship and investment of Chinese sports tourism companies such as Wanda Group in international sports events, such as the sponsorship of FIFA, also reflects China’s influence and competitiveness in the field of international sports tourism.

However, in the face of international competition and cooperation, China’s sports tourism economy is also facing many challenges. On the one hand, there is fierce competition in the international sports tourism market, and China needs to absorb the world’s advanced sports tourism management experience and service models while maintaining its own

cultural characteristics. On the other hand, China's sports tourism needs to be strengthened in the promotion and brand building of the international market to enhance the attractiveness of international tourists. For example, China can learn from Spain's "sports tourism destination" model and attract global sports tourism enthusiasts by building internationally competitive sports tourism brands, such as the "Great Wall Marathon" and the "Zhangjiajie International Rock Climbing Festival". At the same time, the sustainable development path of China's sports tourism economy needs to be combined with international experience (Wu *et al.*, 2022), such as referring to the Swiss concept of "green sports tourism", combining environmental protection with sports tourism development, and achieving a win-win situation of economic and ecological benefits.

VI. FUTURE TRENDS AND PROSPECTS OF SPORTS TOURISM ECONOMY

A. *The Combination of Sports Tourism and the Healthy China Strategy*

With the in-depth promotion of the Healthy China strategy, sports tourism, as an important way to promote national health and improve the quality of life, is increasingly valued by the government and all sectors of society. Sports tourism can not only drive the development of related industrial chains, but also effectively promote people's physical and mental health. For example, marathon tourism has become a bright spot in China's sports tourism market, attracting thousands of participants and spectators every year. Taking the Beijing Marathon as an example, the event has not only brought huge economic benefits to the city, but also become an important platform to promote a healthy lifestyle and enhance the city's image.

Under the guidance of the Healthy China strategy, the development model of sports tourism is also constantly innovating. The comprehensive development model featuring "sports + tourism + health" is gradually becoming a new trend in the industry. For example, Hainan Island, with its unique natural environment, has successfully created a sports tourism brand based on golf, surfing, diving, etc., attracting a large number of domestic and foreign tourists. The case of Hainan shows that by combining sports tourism with local resources, it can not only enrich tourism products, but also effectively promote the sustainable development of the local economy. As the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has emphasized, "tourism is the key force for achieving sustainable development", and the role of sports tourism in the Healthy China strategy cannot be ignored.

However, the combination of sports tourism and a healthy China strategy is not without its challenges. While pursuing economic benefits, how to ensure the safety, standardization and environmental protection of sports tourism activities is an urgent problem to be solved. For example, outdoor adventure tourism programs can provide a thrilling experience, but there are also certain safety risks. Therefore, the establishment of a sound sports tourism safety management system and quality monitoring mechanism is the key to ensure the health of tourists and improve the tourism experience. At the same time, through scientific and technological means, such as smart wearable devices and big

data analysis, the health status of tourists can be monitored in real time and personalized health tourism suggestions can be provided for tourists, so as to promote the deep integration of sports tourism and the healthy China strategy.

B. *The International Development Trend of Sports Tourism*

With the deepening of globalization, the international development trend of sports tourism economy is becoming more and more significant. China's sports tourism market is actively integrating into the global sports tourism network, and by holding international sports events, such as the Beijing Winter Olympics and the Shanghai Marathon, it has not only enhanced the international popularity of domestic sports tourism, but also attracted a large number of international tourists. As an important participant in this growth trend, China is promoting the international development of sports tourism through the dual role of policy guidance and market mechanism. For example, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has provided a new platform for international cooperation in sports tourism and promoted the cross-border sharing of sports tourism projects and resources. At the same time, Chinese sports tourism enterprises have also begun to explore cooperation with internationally renowned sports tourism brands, such as cooperation with the International Olympic Committee, FIFA and other institutions, to jointly develop sports tourism products and improve service quality and international competitiveness.

C. *Exploration of the Sustainable Development Path of Sports Tourism Economy*

With the vigorous development of China's sports tourism economy, it is particularly important to explore the path of sustainable development. Sustainable development requires not only economic growth, but also environmental protection and social responsibility. In this context, sports tourism projects must take innovative measures to ensure long-term environmental and social benefits. Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, for example, has successfully combined sports tourism with environmental protection by limiting the number of visitors, promoting eco-tourism, and implementing strict environmental protection measures, achieving a win-win situation for the economy, society, and the environment. In addition, the introduction of the concept of "green GDP" and the inclusion of environmental costs in the economic accounting system can more accurately assess the sustainability of sports tourism projects. Therefore, the future of China's sports tourism economy must be built on the basis of sustainable development, through scientific planning and management, to ensure that sports tourism activities not only meet the needs of the present generation, but also do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Lianlian Chen is mainly responsible for the conceptual conception and design of the whole article, the writing and revision of the paper; Baosheng Pu is mainly responsible for

the refinement of the theoretical framework and the editing and proofreading of the paper; both authors had approved the final version.

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