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DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**EXAMINING THE LEGACY OF THE 2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS
AND 2022 WINTER OLYMPICS ON MASS SPORTS
PARTICIPATION IN CHINA**

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SUMMARY

Yiran Wu: Examining the Legacy of the 2008 Summer Olympics and 2022 Winter Olympics on Mass Sports Participation in China
(Under the supervision of Ourania Vrontou, Professor)

This study investigates the ongoing and potential impacts of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics on sports participation in China through a mixed-method approach. By systematically reviewing and analyzing key policy documents, including the *National Fitness Plan*, *Health China 2030 Planning Outline*, and various policies, the study explores the theoretical underpinnings and policy evolution associated with the Olympics in China. The quantitative analysis employs data from national sports industry reports, facility surveys, and nationwide fitness studies conducted between 1995 and 2023. This analysis reveals significant trends in the increase in sports facilities and a substantial rise in national fitness participation rates, largely attributed to the strategic use of Olympic infrastructure and the implementation of related policies. The findings indicate that both Olympic events served as crucial catalysts for expanding China's sports industry and enhancing public fitness engagement. Additionally, the study finds that these events have left a legacy by embedding a culture of physical fitness into everyday life, significantly altering public attitudes toward sports and health. The study highlights the importance of sustained government support to ensure the ongoing benefits of these developments while also addressing regional disparities in access to sports facilities and participation opportunities. This research enriches the understanding of the Olympic legacy in the context of national sports development, providing valuable insights for future policy-making. It underscores the importance of sustained governmental support and strategic planning in leveraging large-scale sporting events to achieve sustained public health and social development goals.

Keywords: Olympic legacy, sports participation, sports industry, China

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

The Olympic Games, recognized as one of the most significant global sporting events, go beyond being merely a stage for athletic competitions. They symbolize the profound cultural, economic, and social impact that a host country can project (International Olympic Committee, 2017). For the host country, hosting the Olympic Games offers an opportunity to elevate its international image and foster overall societal development. On a global scale, sports participation has increasingly been tied to public health initiatives, with the Olympics serving as a pivotal factor in promoting active engagement in sports and influencing countries worldwide. As such, it is imperative to examine the role of the Olympics in shaping sports participation, particularly in key host nations such as China. Beyond sports, the Games also drive broader national fitness campaigns and cultural enrichment.

Studies indicate that the Olympic Games are not merely a promotional tool for sports development but also a catalyst for cultural promotion, economic advancement, and social unity (Cashman, 2003; Chappelet, 2014; Preuss, 2007;). For China, the 2008 Beijing Olympics represented a landmark achievement, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the country's reform and opening-up era (Brownell, 2008). As China's inaugural Olympics, it marked a transformative phase for the nation's sports development. Hosting the Olympics allowed China to showcase its economic and cultural accomplishments, projecting a modernized national image to the world. During the Olympic Games, Beijing built and renovated many new stadiums, and also significantly upgraded the city's transportation and environmental protection facilities (Xu, 2006). These infrastructural improvements not only ensured the smooth organization of the Olympic Games but also made an important contribution to improving the quality of life of Beijing citizens (Bao et al., 2010). In addition, the

Olympic Games demonstrated China's organizational capabilities and sporting achievements, and greatly stimulated national enthusiasm for sport, increasing the popularity of national fitness activities and making sport a part of more people's daily lives (Jinxia & Mangan, 2008).

The Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games marked the first instance of China hosting the Winter Olympics, representing a significant milestone in the nation's development of winter sports. Unlike the Summer Olympics, which have had a substantial influence in China, the Winter Games historically made a comparatively modest impact. To prepare for hosting the event, the Chinese government significantly boosted investments in winter sports infrastructure, including constructing numerous ski resorts, skating rinks, and related facilities (Zhang, 2022). These efforts were complemented by extensive promotional campaigns, which dramatically heightened public interest and participation in winter sports across the country. With the challenges posed by a global pandemic, the Games successfully advanced the growth of winter sports programs within China, garnering unprecedented attention and funding (Bao et al., 2010). This progress enhanced the popularity of winter sports nationwide and propelled the integration of winter activities into broader national fitness initiatives.

1.2 Research questions and aims

The main purpose of this study is to explore in depth the specific impact of the two Olympic Games from 2008 to 2022 on the sports participation of all Chinese people. By combining qualitative and quantitative analyses and comparing the changes in sports participation data before and after the Olympics, the study aims to reveal how the Olympics changed the sports participation habits, sports consumption behaviors, and overall attitudes towards sports of the Chinese people, to assess the impact of the two Olympic Games on the national fitness activities, and to explore the main factors that influenced the changes in sports participation rates.

This study takes a fresh approach, carefully investigating the impact of the 2008 Summer Olympics and the 2022 Winter Olympics on public sports participation in China. The study focuses on how these two Olympic Games have continued to promote the development of mass sport in China and analyzes the far-reaching impacts they have had. This provides new perspectives for understanding the actual impact of the Olympic legacy in China and empirical support for future sports policy making. Through descriptive statistical analysis, comparative analysis, and a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, the study will reveal the role of the Olympic Games in promoting national fitness activities and explore how policy intervention and resource allocation can further enhance the rate of mass sports participation and promote the development of national fitness.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research holds considerable theoretical and practical value. On a theoretical level, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge regarding the influence of Olympic sports events on mass sports participation. It offers fresh perspectives and empirical evidence to support academic discourse. As a major global event, the Olympics' impact extends beyond immediate effects during the Games, contributing significantly to the host nations over time sports development (Gratton & Preuss, 2008).

Practically, the study provides crucial insights for policymakers aiming to refine sports development strategies and promote nationwide fitness (Houlihan & Green, 2006). The Chinese government has made substantial investments in fostering national fitness, introducing a range of policies and initiatives, such as the *13th Five-Year Plan for National Fitness* (General Administration of Sport of China, 2016), *The Regulations on National Fitness* (State Council, 2009), and *The Healthy China 2030* plan (State Council, 2016), etc. However, how effective these policies and measures are in concrete terms, and how to further optimize these policies to maximize the rate of mass sports

participation are issues that need to be studied and explored in depth. This study can provide the government and relevant departments with policy recommendations based on empirical data to help them make more scientific and effective decisions on resource allocation and policy formulation.

This research aims to enhance public awareness and engagement in sports and health. By analyzing the positive effects of the Olympic Games on national fitness initiatives, the study aspires to foster a healthy and vibrant sports culture within society. It seeks to inspire greater participation in sports activities while promoting improvements in national fitness levels (Wakefield et al., 2010). The incorporation of quantitative analysis in this research will offer precise insights into the Olympics' impact, provide robust data support, and reinforce the scientific credibility of the study's findings.

Through browsing the academic research on the Olympic legacy in China, compared to foreign countries, the domestic research on the Olympic legacy started later, with less relevant literature and research content. There is even less content on the legacy of sports participation. Yilamu (2023) research on the legacy of the event, only one of the domestic research articles on the legacy of the event between 2011 and 2021 focused on the legacy of sports participation. In contrast, 38 out of 149 relevant foreign studies dealt with this area. This indicates that there is still a lot of room for development in Chinese research in the field of sport participation legacy.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the current and potential impacts of the Olympic Games on sports participation in China. Through systematic empirical analysis, it enhances the theoretical understanding of the subject, offering fresh perspectives and empirical evidence to support academic research. Practically, the study delivers valuable insights and actionable recommendations for policymakers and relevant organizations. It aims to foster the growth of national fitness programs and contribute to improving the overall health and quality of life of the public.

2. Bibliographical Review

2.1 Sports Participation

2.1.1 Concepts and Classifications of Sports Participation

Sports participation has garnered increasing global attention due to its significant impact on individual health and societal well-being. Physical exercise serves dual purposes in contemporary health science, functioning both as a physiological enhancer and psychosocial regulator (Bailey et al., 2013). Beyond its well-documented benefits for bodily fitness, sustained workout routines demonstrate measurable impacts on psychological well-being, interpersonal connectivity, and life satisfaction. In response to escalating public health challenges, current research prioritizes the development of integrated approaches combining policy interventions, educational reinforcement, and community-based support mechanisms to increase population-wide physical activity engagement. Contemporary research frameworks categorize sports engagement into three distinct modalities: leisure-oriented physical pursuits, performance-driven athletics, and structured group programs. While all modalities demonstrate measurable benefits across psychosocial domains, the magnitude of effects exhibits significant variation contingent on activity characteristics. This differential impact pattern finds empirical support in Eime et al.'s (2013) analysis, which establishes empirical linkages between sustained physical engagement and developmental outcomes in youth populations, specifically the mitigation of affective disorders and the cultivation of prosocial bonding mechanisms.

2.1.2 Factors Influencing Sport Participation

Sport participation is influenced by various factors, which can be categorized into individual factors, social factors, environmental factors, and policy factors.

Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective interventions and policies.

2.1.2.1 Individual Factors

Age significantly shapes physical activity engagement, with participation patterns and motivations differing across life stages. Research highlights adolescence as a pivotal window for developing sustainable exercise habits, though sustained involvement often decreases with aging (Biddle & Asare, 2011). Younger demographics—particularly teenagers and young adults—typically maintain more active lifestyles and greater exercise commitment than older populations (Bailey, 2006). This trend may stem from younger individuals' physical advantages, fewer caregiving or career pressures, and stronger social engagement needs through sports.

Gender differences are also evident in sports participation. Evidence suggests males tend to favor competitive sports requiring higher physical exertion, whereas females show stronger preferences for moderate fitness routines and cooperative group activities (Caspersen et al., 2000; Telford et al., 2016). In addition, sociocultural expectations of gender roles influence the choices and frequency of sports participation for both men and women. For example, males tend to be more encouraged to participate in competitive sports during adolescence, which may limit their opportunities to participate in sports activities (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2000).

Economic standing emerges as another critical determinant. People with higher incomes usually have more resources to spend on physical activity, including paying for gym memberships, purchasing sports equipment, and attending professional training (Stalsberg & Pedersen, 2010). In addition, high-income groups usually have more leisure time and can organize physical activities more freely. In contrast, low-income people may face financial pressures and time limitations that make it difficult

for them to devote sufficient resources and time to physical activity (Gidlow et al., 2006).

2.1.2.2 Social Factors

Social support and community involvement are important social factors that promote sports participation. Support from family, friends, and the community can significantly increase an individual's motivation and frequency of participation in sports activities (Heaney & Israel, 2008). Wallace, Buckworth, Kirby, and Sherman's (2000) research show that people with good social support networks are more likely to participate in physical activity. This is because they have access to emotional support, information resources, and practical benefits. Community involvement is also an important factor influencing sports participation. Community sports activities and organizations can provide opportunities and platforms for residents to participate in physical activity. Community sports clubs, teams, and fitness activities not only provide residents with opportunities to exercise but also promote social interaction and community cohesion (Cohen et al., 2007).

Education and publicity are equally critical in promoting sports participation. Physical education serves as a foundation for imparting essential sports skills and health knowledge, extending its influence from schools to lifelong learning (Bailey, 2006). Through systematic physical education, students can obtain basic sports skills and health knowledge and develop a lifelong interest in and a habit of participating in sports activities (Owen & Sallis, 1998). Similarly, public health campaigns and media promotions play a vital role in increasing public awareness about health and encouraging sports involvement. Governments and NGOs can leverage various media channels, such as television, radio, newspapers, and social media, to highlight the benefits of physical activity and motivate the public to engage in it (Wakefield et al., 2010). For instance, the widespread publicity surrounding mega sporting events such

as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup has proven effective in inspiring public interest and increasing sports participation (Toohey & Veal, 2007).

2.1.2.3 Environmental Factors

The accessibility and quality of sports facilities are important environmental factors that influence sports participation. Research has shown that sports facilities that are close to home and well-equipped can significantly increase an individual's sports participation rate (Humpel et al., 2002). High-quality sports facilities provide a safe and comfortable environment for sports and can also meet the sports needs of different groups of people (Giles-Corti & Donovan, 2002).

The sports culture atmosphere of communities and cities is also an important factor influencing individual sports participation. A positive sports culture can inspire residents' interest and participation in sports. Bauman et al. (2012) believe that a strong sporting culture and social networks within a community can promote individual sports participation behaviors. The sports culture environment in communities and cities can be created through various ways, such as organizing sports events and activities, promoting national fitness programs, and building sports parks and trails (Rowe et al., 2004). Furthermore, community sports organizations and volunteer-driven activities can strengthen residents' sense of belonging while promoting the dissemination and growth of sports culture (Spaij, 2009).

2.1.2.4 Policy Factors

Government policies and regulations are important tools for guiding and regulating sports development. Through the development and implementation of relevant policies and regulations, governments can create a positive environment and policy support for sports participation (Houlihan & Green, 2006). Green and Houlihan (2005) highlight that governments can protect public rights in sports by formulating laws and regulations

to define the rights and obligations associated with sports participation. The government can also encourage the construction and operation of sports facilities through financial support, tax incentives and subsidies to reduce the cost of sports participation and improve the accessibility and availability of sports activities (Gratton et al., 2005).

Sports development plans and programs also play a critical role in promoting national fitness. By developing and implementing comprehensive plans, governments can clearly define objectives, streamline the management of sports initiatives, and ensure the integrated construction of sports facilities (Coalter, 2007). For instance, in China, key policy documents such as the *Outline of the Regulations on National Fitness* and the *Healthy China 2030 Plan* provide clear guidance and robust support for advancing national fitness initiatives (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2009, 2016).

2.2 Literature Review on Olympic Legacy and Participation Legacy

2.2.1 Research on Olympic Legacy

At first, the benefits of sporting events were said to be the impact (Hall, 1992). The concept of the impact of sporting events has since evolved to include benefits (Li & McCabe, 2012) or outcomes (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007). The phrase "event legacy" has been widely used to describe the lasting benefits that events provide as academic viewpoints have changed (Chappelet, 2012). Draws attention to a crucial difference between impacts and legacies, contending that the former are inevitably durable and long-lasting, whereas the latter are frequently connected with hosting large events.

The concept of Olympic Legacy was officially acknowledged when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) integrated it into the Olympic Charter in 2003. A report titled *Olympic Legacy* was released by the IOC in 2013, defining the legacy through five dimensions: sports, social, environmental, urban, and economic aspects. The

framework introduced a systematic method for analyzing the diverse effects of the Olympic Games. In 2017, the IOC's *Legacy Strategic Approach* further refined the concept, emphasizing distinctions between tangible and intangible legacies. The updated framework introduced seven specific areas: organized sports development, social development through sports, skill-building and innovation, cultural and creative advancements, urban development, environmental sustainability, and economic and brand value (International Olympic Committee, 2017; Sun et al., 2021). These advancements demonstrate the evolving understanding of how the Olympic Games contribute to sustained advantages for host regions and their broader surroundings.

The recognition of the Olympic legacy is an ever-deepening process, and as a complex and multidimensional concept, scholars have explored this complex concept from different perspectives, proposing a variety of theoretical frameworks and analytical methods when synthesizing the definition of the Olympic legacy. Chappelet (2003) categorizes the Olympic legacy into five key components: sports facilities, tourism and economy, infrastructure, urban and natural environments, and socio-cultural aspects. This systematic framework aids in understanding the diverse and multifaceted impacts of the Games on host cities.

Cashman (2006) expands on this idea by defining the Olympic legacy as encompassing not only infrastructure and economic development but also six distinct dimensions: sports, education, public life, culture and politics, symbols, memory, and history. According to him, the benefits of the legacy naturally extend to local communities at the conclusion of the Games. Similarly, Hiller (2003) identifies four primary "outcomes" of the Olympic legacy: built environment, economic development, memory, and community. Preuss (2007) further broadens the scope, arguing that the legacy of mega-sports events includes all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created by the event. Beyond the actual event, these legacies continue to exist and support the ongoing development of the host region. The IOC

outlines five key categories of Olympic legacy: sporting, social, environmental, economic, and urban (International Olympic Committee, 2012). This comprehensive classification reflects the multidimensional and enduring impact of the Olympic Games on various aspects of host cities and nations.

Studies have revealed that the legacy of the Olympic Games extends beyond physical and economic impacts to include multiple dimensions such as social, cultural, environmental, and psychological aspects. By integrating these perspectives, researchers can more comprehensively evaluate the sustained effects of the Olympic Games on host cities and understand their socio-economic significance on a global scale. This multidimensional framework facilitates the analysis and management of complex legacy effects, providing valuable insights for practical research and policy development.

The influence of the Olympic legacy is not confined to the host city alone; it often extends to the national and even global levels. For instance, the Olympic Games can enhance a country's international reputation and strengthen global branding (Preuss, 2007). Furthermore, the legacy of the Olympic Games is dynamic, with varying effects across different stages. In the short term, legacy impacts are typically concentrated on infrastructure and economic development, whereas in the long term, social, cultural, and psychological legacies may become more significant (Cashman, 2005). The intricate relationship between these short- and long-term effects warrants deeper exploration to optimize the legacy outcomes.

To better comprehend and manage the legacy of the Olympic Games, it is crucial to explore its far-reaching impacts from sociological and psychological perspectives. The Olympic Games play a significant role in enhancing social cohesion, strengthening collective memory, and fostering national pride. These elements contribute to the broader socio-cultural benefits of the Games, extending their influence beyond the

immediate host community. In addition, incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into the analysis of the Olympic legacy allows for a better exploration of the role of environmental legacy and socio-cultural heritage in supporting or challenging sustainable development (Chappelet, 2008).

The presentation and impact of the Olympic legacy differ significantly across cities and countries, shaped by factors such as economic development, political systems, cultural contexts, and international positioning. For example, the 2008 Beijing Olympics served as a platform for China to showcase its economic ascent and political confidence on the global stage. The Games spurred large-scale infrastructure projects, including new stadiums, expanded subway systems, and urban beautification (Xu, 2006). While these facilities continue to host public and international events, challenges such as under-utilized venues have emerged post-Games (Zimbalist, 2016). Conversely, the 2012 London Olympics are often cited as a model for sustainable legacy management. A core achievement was the regeneration of East London, which saw significant investment and infrastructure upgrades. The Olympic Village was repurposed into affordable housing, benefiting local communities. The Games also promoted community sports participation and bolstered the UK's sports industry (International Olympic Committee, 2017; University of East London, 2015). The Olympic Village was converted into low-cost housing after the event, supporting the local community. The London Olympics were seen as a key opportunity to promote community sports participation and enhance the UK sports industry (Weed, 2012). Through various policy measures, the Government has attempted to capitalize on the opportunity of the Olympic Games to promote the national fitness program and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. However, the legacy of the Rio Olympics is more complex and controversial. While the Rio Olympics brought some infrastructure improvements, the city is heavily indebted for having organized the Games. As a result of the economic crisis and political unrest, many of the Olympic facilities quickly fell into disrepair after the Games and provided

limited long-term boosts to the local economy (Gaffney, 2015). On the environmental front, Rio's environmental legacy has been criticized even though several environmental measures promised before the Games have not been fully realized (Zimbalist, 2017). At the same time, the mass demolitions and social unrest during the Olympics had a negative impact on the community, making its social legacy controversial.

2.2.2 Sports Participation legacy

The legacy of sports participation is an important aspect of the Olympic legacy and has been gradually attracting academic and social attention in recent years. This legacy generally refers to the impacts of the Olympic Games or other mega sports events on mass sports participation. Mass sport is also often described as community sport, grassroots participation, or sport for all. Cashman (2006) explores the broader concept of "sports legacy," highlighting the enduring effects that major sporting events can have within and beyond the community, particularly in terms of increased sports participation. He emphasizes that the legacy of sports participation is not confined to the short-term impacts during the event but encompasses long-term improvements in community participation and public health. Preuss (2007) agrees that the legacy of sports participation is complex and multidimensional and that the legacy of sports participation includes not only improvements in facilities and infrastructure but also socio-cultural transformations, such as increased interest in sports and improved health habits. Veal, Toohey, and Frawley (2012) argue that the legacy of sports participation reflects the positive effects of the Olympic Games on public involvement in sports. This influence begins during the early stages of the bidding process and continues well beyond the Games, supported by policies and initiatives aimed at encouraging broader participation in sports and fostering long-term changes.

To further deepen the understanding of the legacy of sports participation, it is essential to analyze it through the lens of policies and interventions. Countries and cities typically adopt a variety of measures to promote community sports and encourage broader sports participation both before and after the Olympic Games. For example, during the London Olympics, a range of policy initiatives was implemented to boost public interest in sports and increase participation rates. The effectiveness of these measures and their long-term impacts on sports participation merit further in-depth discussion (Grix & Carmichael, 2011; University of East London, 2015).

The legacy of sports participation extends beyond infrastructure and participation rates to encompass community health and social well-being. Long-term sports participation can enhance public health indicators and improve the overall quality of life, creating a broader societal impact. When examining the legacy of sports participation, it is crucial to consider its durability and breadth, as these aspects are often linked to long-term improvements in health and social well-being (Bauman et al., 2015).

Finally, research on the legacy of sports participation can be advanced through quantitative analysis and empirical studies. By leveraging specific statistical data and time-series analyses, scholars can more accurately assess the ongoing and potential impacts of the Olympic Games on sports participation. This approach also enables the exploration of whether these impacts are sustainable or whether there is a gradual decline after the "peak of the legacy" (Gratton et al., 2006).

2.2.3 The Impact of the Olympics on Mass Sports Participation

Governments have adopted various policy measures to enhance mass participation in sports, with active bidding for mega sports events often viewed as a key strategy. The underlying rationale for this approach is the legacy of sports participation fostered by such events. The promotion of grassroots sports participation through mega sports events has gained widespread academic attention, though it remains controversial.

Hindson et al. (1994) introduced the concept of the "trickle-down effect," suggesting that high-level sports events can gradually encourage public participation in sports. This effect may operate through both direct and indirect mechanisms. Directly, individuals are drawn to sports by the excitement and excellence demonstrated during the Olympic Games. Indirectly, hosting the Games enhances societal support for sports, improves infrastructure, and increases the availability of organizations and activities, thereby providing more opportunities for broader public engagement in sports (Hindson et al., 1994; Veal et al., 2012; Yang & Zhang 2017; Fan & Liu, 2023).

Evidence for this effect exists in various success stories. For example, data from the organizing committee of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games indicates that the proportion of physically active individuals in Spain rose significantly from 1985 to 1995 (COOB'92). Similarly, research by Jinxia & Mangan (2008) revealed an increase in physical activity among Chinese residents following the Beijing Olympics, particularly among younger populations.

However, not all Olympic Games result in a substantial legacy of sports participation. Hanstad and Skille (2010) observed that while the Sydney Olympics led to a short-lived surge in participation, its long-term impact was minimal. Similarly, the Australian Sports Commission, analyzing data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, reported no conclusive evidence that the event significantly boosted mass sports participation (Kristine Toohey, 2008).

The London 2012 Olympics, with its slogan "Inspire a Generation," garnered praise for its efforts to motivate global youth participation in sports. According to Sport England, the number of individuals engaging in weekly physical activity in the UK grew by over one million (Sport England, 2014; University of East London, 2015).

Considering these achievements, experts such as Weed et al. (2015) warn that the link between the Olympics and increasing sports participation is neither direct nor assured.

They believe that, while the Olympics may increase exercise frequency among current athletes, they do not necessarily attract new participants. They underline that creating a lasting legacy necessitates specific policies and ongoing work.

In South America, the Rio Games organizing committee sought to inspire youth across the continent to participate in sports and embody the Olympic spirit through the event (Reis et al., 2013). IOC President Bach highlighted youth participation as a critical theme of the Agenda 2020 reforms, stressing its importance for fostering future athletic development (International Olympic Committee, 2014). Additionally, before the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, the Chinese government implemented a policy aimed at engaging 300 million people in winter sports. This initiative was successfully executed, underscoring the role of government policies in promoting sports participation (Zhang, 2022).

2.3 Policy orientation and sports participation

2.3.1 Policy background and theoretical basis

Since the establishment of New China, sports-related policies have evolved through various developmental stages. Initially, these strategies focused on promoting widespread participation in sports and increasing engagement levels. Over time, with socio-economic progress and the growing variety of public health needs, the emphasis of these policies gradually shifted. They began to prioritize developing sports infrastructure, providing sports-related services, and integrating sports with healthcare initiatives (Fan & Liu, 2023).

The State Council of the People's Republic of China released the Outline of National Fitness Program for the Whole People in 1995, marking a significant milestone in formalizing the nation's fitness agenda. This policy intervention established a conceptual framework for national fitness advancement while demonstrating

governmental prioritization of population health outcomes. The strategic alignment between institutional commitments and public wellness objectives reflects evolving paradigms in health governance.

This policy shift marks a move from focusing on individual sports to creating wider social programs. Current national sports plans now target two main goals: boosting public health through exercise and growing the economy by building up the sports sector (Fan & Liu, 2023). Major sporting events like the 2008 and 2022 Olympics accelerated the integration of fitness initiatives into core national strategies, directly enabling nationwide implementation of programs like Healthy China. The current policy framework establishes essential guidelines for future sports planning while ensuring fitness opportunities reach diverse population groups. By systematically connecting exercise programs with healthcare services and educational curricula, the government has developed a coordinated approach to physical activity promotion. This integration creates clearer pathways for public engagement in fitness activities, as evidenced by improved interdepartmental collaboration and resource allocation mechanisms (Chen et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2018). These developments demonstrate how physical activity initiatives now function as cross-sectoral tools for achieving broader social and economic goals.

2.3.2 Analysis of the stages of policy evolution

With socio-economic advancements and successful bids for major sporting events, China's national fitness policy has undergone significant evolution. Based on the timeline of the Olympic Games and corresponding updates to policy documents, the development of China's national fitness policy can be categorized into four distinct stages:

Phase I (1990s): Initial construction of a policy framework

China's national fitness program began to take shape in the 1990s. The *Outline of the National Fitness Program's* introduction and implementation in 1995 was a turning point in the history of sports development in New China and marked the start of the National Fitness Program era. Addressing gaps in national sports legislation, the National People's Congress formally established the legal framework for mass sports activities for the first time in August 1995 with the promulgation of the *Sports Law of the People's Republic of China* (National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, 1995).

In this context, the government further issued key policy documents, including *The Ninth Five-Year Plan for the National Socio-Economic Development of the People's Republic of China* and *The Program for the Long-Term Objective by 2010* (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1996), as well as a series of related policy directives. During this period, the foundational system for promoting national fitness began to take shape, with a clear focus on enhancing the public's recognition of national fitness and its significance in society (Liu et al., 2022).

Phase II (2000-2008): comprehensive promotion of fitness for all

After Beijing's successful bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games in 2001, China's national fitness program entered a new phase of extensive marketing as the twenty-first century began. The government gave building sports facilities priority during this time and actively promoted the growth of national fitness initiatives. The State Council (2002) published its *Opinions on Strengthening and Enhancing Sports Work in the New Era* in July of that year. This report placed a strong emphasis on using the 2008 Olympic Games as a tactical chance to meet the public's growing desire for sports and cultural interaction. It also sought to establish increasing physical fitness as a primary national objective. The Communist Party of China's 16th National Congress in November 2002 marked a significant turning point when it explicitly suggested starting a national fitness

drive. This marked a significant shift toward recognizing national fitness as an essential component of policy initiatives. Subsequent regulatory frameworks, such as the *Regulations on National Physical Fitness Monitoring* (General Administration of Sport of China, 2001) and the *Opinions on Further Strengthening the Work of Physical Fitness Instructors for Society* (General Administration of Sport of China, 2005), were enacted to sustain the development of fitness programs across the country. This period saw a major policy shift in how sports were viewed nationally. Earlier approaches centered on "using Olympic success to showcase socialist achievements" evolved into "guiding youth development through Olympic values while advancing sports in China and developing countries" (Shen et al., 2023; BOCOG, 2010). This strategic redirection moved beyond competitive sports excellence to establish inclusive public fitness programs, reflecting a fundamental reorientation from event-driven priorities to population-wide health objectives.

Phase III (2009-2014): Transformation from a major sports country to a leading sports nation

The 2008 Beijing Olympics catalyzed a fundamental restructuring of China's sports policy framework. This global event accelerated the transition from a singular focus on cultivating elite athletes for international accolades to implementing dual-track strategies that concurrently developed competitive sports excellence and grassroots participation infrastructure. The transition emphasized goals aligned with transforming China from a "Major Sporting Nation" into a "Leading Sports Nation."

During the 2008 Beijing Olympics and Paralympics Summary and Commendation Ceremony, the General Secretary introduced a strategic vision aimed at advancing China's development into a globally recognized leader in sports (Hu, 2008). This vision not only prioritized maintaining dominance in competitive sports but also sought to expand the social impact of sports through initiatives that promoted widespread public

participation and enhanced national fitness (Zhang, 2010). Achieving this ambition required balancing excellence in sports performance with initiatives encouraging broader participation, thus driving the parallel development of the sports industry and fostering societal engagement with fitness.

The Regulations on National Fitness, the first law in China that particularly addresses public health and fitness, were promulgated in August 2009, demonstrating the government's commitment to institutionalizing exercise. The significance of national fitness within the nation's legal framework was raised by this legislation, which formally acknowledged individuals' legal rights to participate in fitness activities (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2009). In addition, the government launched the *National Exercise Program (2011–2015)* in 2011 with the goals of promoting the social advantages of exercise, improving service accessibility, and strengthening the infrastructure for public fitness. These measures collectively facilitated the increased participation of citizens in various physical activities while fostering a culture of health and wellness (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2011).

The 2014 released *Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption* elevated national fitness to a strategic priority. By aligning industrial growth with public health objectives, the framework established sustainable development pathways for both competitive and recreational sports sectors. These measures reaffirmed the government's commitment to equitable fitness access while pioneering an innovative public-private partnership model for health promotion (State Council, 2014).

Phase IV (2015-present): National Stratification of National Fitness

Beijing's successful bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics in 2015 initiated a new phase for China's fitness policies. The government strategically utilized this event to expand sports participation and drive socioeconomic development, entering an intensive

planning period for nationwide fitness programs. Multiple policy documents were subsequently issued to implement the national fitness strategy, ensuring systematic support for achieving these objectives.

The 2016 introduction of landmark policies including the *Healthy China 2030 Plan* and *National Fitness Program (2016-2020)* marked a strategic reorientation of national priorities. These frameworks redirected governmental focus from cultivating athletic excellence to implementing population-wide fitness solutions that address public health challenges (State Council, 2016). Key implementation measures prioritized establishing accessible sports infrastructure and creating adaptive fitness initiatives responsive to shifting health demographics. This policy evolution gained momentum during the 19th CPC National Congress (2017), which formally recognized comprehensive fitness systems as essential for achieving global sports leadership. The strategic continuum culminated in the 2019 *Outline for the Construction of a Leading Sports Nation*, explicitly positioning national fitness programs as the operational foundation for sports modernization objectives.

These efforts were furthered by later policy releases such as *the Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of a Public Service System for National Fitness (2022)*, the *Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of National Fitness Venues and Facilities and Developing Mass Sports (2020)*, and the *Opinions on Promoting National Fitness and Sports Consumption and Promoting the High-Quality Development of the Sports Industry (2019)*. Collectively, these documents have fostered sustained growth and widespread implementation of national fitness programs, solidifying their importance in promoting the well-being and physical health of the population.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to systematically examine how the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics have shaped sports participation patterns in China. The study specifically analyzes the impacts of these events on public engagement with sports, particularly their roles in advancing national fitness objectives and cultivating a sports-oriented culture through enhanced facilities and policy reforms. Through document analysis of academic publications and government policies, the qualitative component explores the theoretical frameworks and decision-making processes underlying Olympic-related sports strategies. Simultaneously, quantitative methods assess measurable outcomes including participation rate fluctuations, sports service consumption trends, and infrastructure development metrics using official statistical data. The integration of these methodologies provides comprehensive insights while ensuring analytical rigor.

3.2 Research sample and data collection

3.2.1 Research sample

The sample for this study consists of key sports policy documents issued by the Chinese government between 1995 and 2023, as well as data about the country's sports industry published by reputable agencies like the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the General Administration of Sport of China. The impact of the two Olympic Games on sports participation and policy is highlighted in the analysis. The following sections are covered by the statistics:

1. Total Scale and Added Value of the National Sports Industry: This data evaluates changes in China's sports economy, focusing on the economic impacts of the Olympics and their role in driving sustained growth through policy initiatives.

2. National Sports Venue Census Reports: Covering infrastructure development, these reports highlight changes in the number and distribution of sports venues, providing insights into the influence of Olympic-related policies on physical infrastructure.
3. National fitness survey report: the core source of data for this study, the report records in detail the sports participation of Chinese urban and rural residents, especially the changes in the sports participation rate of residents before and after the Olympic Games, covering five-time points: 1996, 2001, 2007, 2014 and 2020; the report covers people of different ages, genders, and regions through a large-scale census. The report covers key indicators such as sports participation rate, participation mode and frequency of participation through a large-scale census. This study will extract the core data for specific analysis. The data comes from the National Fitness Survey Report of the General Administration of Sport of China.

3.2.2 Data Selection

The statistical information utilized in this research originates from reputable sources, including the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the General Administration of Sport of China. These sources offer a robust foundation for comprehensive analysis. The time span of the data ranges from the late 1990s to the present, encompassing significant periods before, during, and after China's involvement in Olympic bidding, preparation, and hosting. This extensive timeframe enables a thorough examination of how the Olympic Games have influenced mass sports participation across the nation, highlighting shifts and developments at various stages. Furthermore, the dataset comprises national survey reports and census data, ensuring high representativeness and comprehensive coverage through rigorous collection methodologies. The application of scientific data collection and processing methods ensures that the census reports provide insights not only into a vast number of individuals but also across diverse geographic regions. These reports capture multiple dimensions of sports participation, offering in-depth background information. Such detailed data facilitates

an analysis of temporal and regional trends, allowing for precise assessments and the derivation of evidence-based conclusions.

In selecting policy documents, the research emphasizes policies directly influencing sports participation, particularly those addressing national fitness, the Olympic legacy, and sports industry development. These critical documents were chosen based on an initial review of relevant literature and consultations with experts. This process ensures alignment with the research objectives and enhances the study's focus on pertinent issues. Additionally, cross-referencing these findings with established academic studies guarantees the validity and reliability of the conclusions drawn.

3.3 Data collection

Comprehensive data regarding the total scale and added value of the national sports industry, released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, were gathered to understand developmental trends and the Olympics' role in these transformations. Additional datasets from national sports venue census reports, detailing the number and area of sports venues, were analyzed to evaluate the influence of infrastructure development on mass participation. The "National Fitness Survey Report" issued by the General Administration of Sport of China provided crucial insights, with a focus on data from 2001, 2007, and subsequent years. These datasets were systematically reviewed and standardized to ensure consistency and enable comparative analysis across different time frames. Such rigorous data processing allowed the study to identify key patterns and offer credible conclusions about the legacy impacts of the Olympic Games on sports participation in China.

3.4 Methods of data analysis

3.4.1 Qualitative analysis

This study conducted a comprehensive qualitative analysis by systematically reviewing and examining relevant policy documents and scholarly literature. Using the literature analysis method, special attention was paid to assessing how the two Olympic Games advanced sports-related policies. Content analysis was utilized to categorize key policy documents, identify central themes and evolving trends in sports participation, and assess the mechanisms through which these policies were influenced by the Olympic Games. The study investigated the ongoing impact of national fitness initiatives on sports participation by setting the analysis in the context of the Olympic Games. This qualitative framework provided a deeper understanding of the formulation and evolution of these policies and served as a foundation for the subsequent quantitative evaluation.

3.4.2 Quantitative analysis

The quantitative segment applies statistical tools, including descriptive analysis, time series evaluations, and other techniques, to delve into survey data on national fitness activities and sports facility developments. The main emphasis is placed on examining how the Olympic Games influence sports participation rates, levels of sports consumption, and infrastructure advancements. Descriptive statistics highlight trends in participation and consumption indicators, uncovering causal links between the Olympic Games and sports engagement metrics. Time series analysis further assesses changes over time, evaluating the evolving and enduring effects of the Games on sports involvement and infrastructure expansion. This quantitative approach also scrutinizes variations in these impacts at distinct time intervals. By using these techniques, the study offers measurable insights into how the two Olympic Games have affected

Chinese sports participation over time. The results provide a foundation of information to inform future policy-making initiatives and strategic suggestions.

4. Research Results

4.1 Analysis of the legacy of sport participation and policy facilitation

This analytical segment assesses how hosting the Olympics has impacted two parallel developments in China: increased public involvement in sports activities and progressive reforms in sports-related policies. The investigation prioritizes examining fundamental changes in national sports strategies originating from Beijing's Olympic experiences.

4.1.1 Impact of the 2008 Summer Olympics and the 2022 Winter Olympics on Chinese Sports Policy

An evaluation of key policy documents highlights the pivotal contributions of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics and the 2022 Winter Olympics in the progression of sports policies across China. These international events significantly bolstered efforts to expand mass participation in sports while also establishing a distinctive and enduring legacy for the nation's sporting culture.

4.1.1.1 The role of the Olympic Games as a boost to national sports policy

Beginning with the *11th Five-Year National Fitness Strategy* introduced in 2007 and extending to the 14th iteration in 2021, a range of governmental policies, including the *National Fitness Regulations* and related programs, have underscored the strategic utilization of the Olympic Games as a catalyst for encouraging widespread public involvement in sports. This consistent theme has appeared across literature for over 20 years (General Administration of Sport of China, 2007, 2011, 2016, 2021; State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2021). In addition to enhancing China's reputation in international sports, the Olympic Games greatly raised funding for and support for sports-related programs. The development of specific goals and workable strategies made it possible for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics to act as a

major catalyst for the growth of winter sports in China. These included initiatives like the *Winter Sports Development Blueprint (2016-2025)*, the *Infrastructure Development Plan for Winter Sports Venues (2016-2022)*, and the *Implementation Outline aimed at engaging 300 million participants in winter sports (2018-2022)*. These initiatives promoted winter sports at the policy level (General Administration of Sport of China, 2016, 2018).

4.1.1.2 The Olympic Games and sports policies promote a steady increase in sports participation rates

The rise in sports participation rates is closely linked to strong policy backing. Specifically, policies aimed at advancing winter sports have directly resulted in a notable growth in the population engaging in these activities, marking a significant achievement in this sector. *The Legacy Report (Post-Games): Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 (2022)* highlights that the meticulous planning and successful execution of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics served as a powerful catalyst for the expansion of winter sports, ultimately involving approximately 346 million individuals in winter sports activities (Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, 2023). One of the most striking effects of the Beijing Winter Olympics was its lasting impact, which considerably increased international participation in winter sports while also having a significant impact on the global winter sports scene and the Olympic Movement. When they take place, the Olympic Games provide a great incentive for the general population to participate in sports. They also contribute significantly to the future growth of public sports participation through continuing government programs. Following Beijing's successful campaign to secure the 2008 Olympics, the nation has experienced a rapid surge in sports participation rates, underscoring the event's lasting influence on public engagement in physical activities.

4.1.1.3 Sports Policy and the Formation of a Lasting Sporting Legacy

The Olympic Games play a crucial role in promoting sustained sports participation and improving the branding of host towns. Their impact extends beyond immediate economic and political advantages, leaving a profound influence on societal sports culture and ensuring the sustainable utilization of sports infrastructures. For instance, the *Summary Report on the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games* and the *Legacy Plan of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022* emphasize the strategic use of numerous sports facilities established during the Olympic Games (BOCOG, 2010; Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, 2020, 2023). These facilities have become integral to national fitness strategies, serving as venues for mass fitness activities and being made accessible to the public through well-structured policies and plans. The enduring importance of these sports venues in embodying the Olympic legacy is indisputable. Furthermore, the promotion of mass sports derived from these facilities is mutually reinforcing, as the comprehensive planning and effective use of such infrastructures not only increase public enthusiasm for fitness but also underscore the government's commitment to advancing public health and ensuring the sustainable progression of the Olympic legacy.

4.1.2 Systematic analysis of policy documents

In the systematic analysis of the literature, particular attention was given to key documents such as the *Regulations on National Fitness*, *Five-Year Plans for Sports*, *National Fitness Plans*, and the *Healthy China 2030 Plan*. These documents demonstrate the state's systematic and targeted strategies for promoting sports participation.

4.1.2.1 Progressive and Systematic Policy Framework

China's sports policy has evolved in a methodical and progressive manner. Early initiatives, including foundational policies like the National Fitness Program and the Five-Year Plans for Sports, laid a solid foundation for promoting national fitness (General Administration of Sport of China, 1995, 2007). Subsequent policies, such as the *National Fitness Program (2021–2025)* and the *14th Five-Year Plan for Sports*, further enhanced implementation and amplified the overall impact of these policies (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2021; General Administration of Sport of China, 2021). These measures were continuously refined during implementation to meet the demands of hosting international events like the Olympic Games. This strategic plan has promoted ongoing, sustainable development in national fitness programs, resulting in widespread engagement across the country.

4.1.2.2 Hierarchy of policy content and implementation targets

Analysis highlights that China's sports policies exhibit a clear hierarchical structure tailored to address the needs of various social groups, ensuring targeted and inclusive implementation. This structured approach aims to maximize participation across different demographics in national fitness initiatives. For example, the *13th Five-Year Plan for Youth Sports* emphasizes cultivating a lifelong interest in sports among young people by enhancing physical education in schools and encouraging participation in extracurricular activities. This strategy focuses on embedding sports into the daily lives of students, fostering early habits of physical activity that contribute to their overall well-being and fitness. Similarly, the *Basic Public Service Standards for National Fitness (2021 Edition)* outlines specific requirements for public sports facilities to cater to the elderly population. These provisions prioritize access to specialized services that enable older adults to engage in fitness activities and recreational sports, thereby promoting their health and quality of life. Addressing the needs of rural residents,

policies such as the *Interim Provisions on Rural Sports and the 14th Five-Year Plan for Sports* focus on improving sports infrastructure in rural areas. These initiatives aim to enhance the availability and quality of sports facilities and expand access to fitness activities for rural communities, reducing disparities in sports participation between urban and rural populations. This hierarchical and inclusive framework not only broadens participation across various population groups but also seeks to bridge the urban-rural divide in sports engagement. By doing so, it contributes to the overarching goal of fostering widespread national fitness and promoting equity in access to sports resources and opportunities.

4.1.2.3 Policy characteristics of inclusive and differentiated support

China's sports policies have demonstrated significant features of inclusiveness and differentiated support in their design and implementation. By formulating a series of policies targeting different social groups, the government has ensured the broad coverage and implementation of national fitness policies. For example, starting with *11th Five-Year Plan for Sports*, it has been mentioned that special attention has been paid to the accessibility of sports facilities and activities in economically underdeveloped areas and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, and that the level of participation in sports in these areas has been raised through specialized financial support and projects. Meanwhile, for people with disabilities, such as in *Opinions on Strengthening Community Work for People with Disabilities* issued in 2000, and *Opinions on Further Strengthening Sports Work for People with Disabilities* in 2008, equal participation is ensured through sports programs and facilities suitable for these groups (General Administration of Sport of China, 2000; State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2008). This inclusive and differentiated support strategy not only promotes the development of diversity in social sports culture, but also demonstrates the State's sense of responsibility and foresight in promoting national fitness.

4.1.2.4 Health and economic effects of sport participation

The role of sports policy can also be explored in depth from the perspective of health and economic effects. In addition to the familiar *National Fitness Program* and *Five-Year Plan for Sports*, the *Healthy China 2030* plan integrates health into all policies, making the improvement of national health a core objective. The subsequent *National Fitness Program (2016-2020)* begins by explaining the logical dialectical relationship between national fitness and national health, arguing that “national health is an important manifestation of a country's comprehensive strength, and an important symbol of economic and social development and progress” (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2016). The national fitness policy has been crucial in lowering healthcare expenses and enhancing the standard of national health. An advantageous relationship between the sports business and health promotion has been formed as a result of the rise in the rate of sports participation and the growth in the demand for sports consumption. In addition to confirming the many advantages of sports policy, this twofold effect serves as a helpful guide for future policy development.

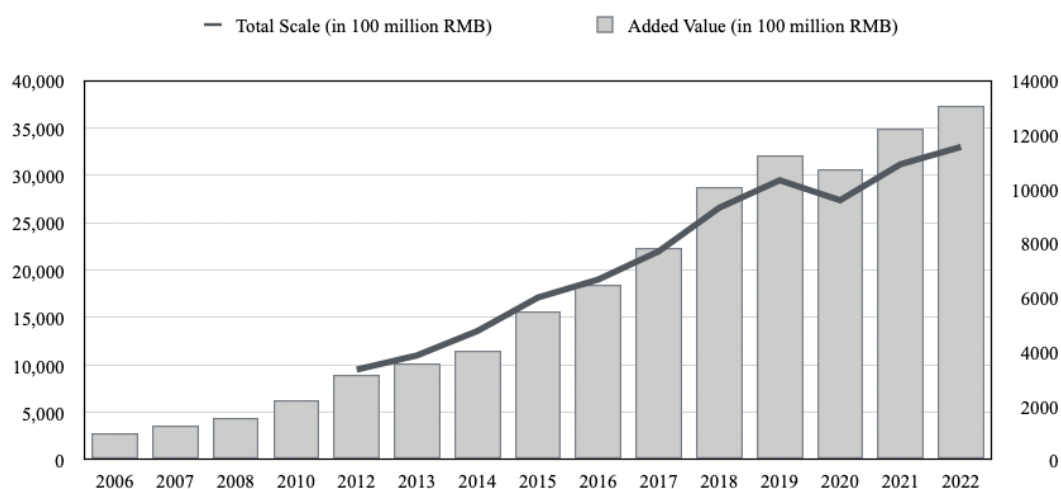
4.2 Analysis of the scale of the national sports industry

In June 2008, the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the General Administration of Sport of China jointly introduced the *Classification of Sports and Related Industries (for Trial Implementation)*. This marked a significant milestone as it established the first standardized statistical framework tailored for China's sports industry. By doing so, it laid the groundwork for unifying statistical methodologies across various regions, facilitating consistent data compilation and the development of a sustainable mechanism for data collection. This initiative enabled the systematic gathering and analysis of data pertaining to the sports industry (National Bureau of Statistics of China & General Administration of Sport of China, 2008). The General Administration of Sport of China and the National Bureau of Statistics provide data on the overall size

and added value of the country's sports business every year. These books provide important perspectives on the dynamics and organization of the sports sector. They are fundamental sources for comprehending the general development patterns in the sector and how significant events, like the Olympic Games, influence these patterns.

The metrics of total industry scale and added value are important indicators for assessing the expansion of China's sports sector. These indicators show how the sports industry is growing and how much it contributes to the national economy. The growth trajectories that have been seen, for instance, show how the sports business has changed over time, reflecting both the effects of regulation and market factors. The national sports industry's overall size and added value are depicted in the chart below (Figure 1), which shows a consistent rise in recent years.

Figure 1 The data on the total scale and added value of the national sports industry



4.2.1 Analysis of the total scale of the national sports industry

The total value of all sports-related goods and services generated by different organizations inside a nation during a given period of time is referred to as the overall size of the sports industry. The economic contribution of the sector and its role in the

overall growth of the country are fully understood thanks to this measure (National Bureau of Statistics of China & General Administration of Sport of China, 2008).

Between 2012 and 2022, China's sports industry experienced consistent and significant growth. In 2012, the market size was estimated at approximately RMB 950 billion. By 2022, this figure had expanded to RMB 3,380 billion, representing a remarkable 3.5-fold increase over a decade (National Bureau of Statistics of China & General Administration of Sport of China, 2022). Such consistent expansion highlights the industry's evolving importance as an economic sector.

The observed growth trajectory is closely aligned with strategic government policies implemented during this period. For example, after Beijing secured the bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympics in 2015, the sports industry saw accelerated growth. Policies such as the *Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption* were introduced to position the sports industry as a key pillar of the national economy (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2014). These initiatives led to substantial investments in infrastructure and facilities, further boosting the industry's capacity.

For instance, the market size increased from RMB 1,500 billion in 2013 to RMB 1,957 billion in 2015, marking a 23.5% growth over two years. Additionally, between 2015 and 2017, the average annual growth rate exceeded 15%, a surge primarily driven by preparation activities for the Winter Olympics. This underscores the critical role that hosting national and international sporting events plays in driving industrial development (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013–2017).

However, the sports industry faced challenges during the global pandemic in 2020. The market size decreased by 7.2%, dropping from RMB 3,245 billion in 2019 to RMB 3,012 billion. With this temporary setback, the industry demonstrated resilience, rebounding strongly to RMB 3,380 billion by 2022. This rebound was largely driven

by revived public interest in sports and continued government support, demonstrating the sector's potential for stable growth and expansion.

4.2.2 Analysis of the Added Value of the National Sports Industry

The concept of "added value" within the sports sector refers to the cumulative economic contribution generated by all entities engaged in producing goods and services related to sports over a designated period. This metric serves as a vital indicator of the economic significance of the sports industry, as it reflects its influence on national GDP and its broader role in driving economic growth and development (National Bureau of Statistics & General Administration of Sport, 2008).

The added value of the sports sector in China has shown a noteworthy rising trend. For example, the value increased thirteen times between 2006 and 2022, from RMB 98.3 billion to RMB 1,309.2 billion. Such expansion demonstrates the sports industry's growing economic influence and emphasizes how crucial it is to the country's overall economy (National Bureau of Statistics & General Administration of Sport, 2022).

Significant national events and policy support combined to produce the rapid growth that was seen during this period. For instance, the added value of the sports industry increased from RMB 126.5 billion to RMB 155.5 billion between 2007 and 2008, representing a growth rate of 16.05%. The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games' economic knock-on effects, which boosted endeavors like stadium construction, event planning, and the growth of associated industries, were directly associated with this acceleration. The sports industry's added value increased significantly as a result of these advances taken together (National Bureau of Statistics & General Administration of Sport, 2008).

Government policies have played a pivotal role in this growth trajectory. Strategic documents like the 11th Five-Year Plan for Sports and the Regulations on National Fitness established a strong foundation for developing sports infrastructure and

promoting national fitness activities. These policies laid the groundwork for the sports industry's expansion by fostering a conducive environment for economic activity and public engagement in sports (General Administration of Sport of China, 2007; State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2009).

The sports industry's expansion was further accelerated by the successful bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics. The sector's added value grew at an average annual growth rate of 20.6% between 2015 and 2017, rising from RMB 549.4 billion to RMB 781.1 billion. As national interest in winter sports expanded, this period of faster growth highlights the impact of focused policy actions and higher market demand (National Bureau of Statistics & General Administration of Sport, 2015, 2016, 2017).

With the obstacles provided by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which resulted in a 4.6% decrease in the sports industry's added value, the sector showed resilience. The value rebounded to RMB 1,224.5 billion in 2021 and further rose to RMB 1,309.2 billion in 2022, reflecting the robustness of policy-driven recovery efforts and sustained public interest in sports (National Bureau of Statistics & General Administration of Sport, 2020, 2021, 2022).

4.3 Data analysis of sports facilities

The National Census of Sports Facilities report, compiled by the General Administration of Sport of China, serves as a comprehensive dataset, having been issued periodically since 1974. Over its publication history, the report has seen twelve iterations, with the period between 1974 and 2013 marked by variable survey cycles that resulted in five releases. Since 2018, the report has adopted an annual release schedule, culminating in six subsequent editions. The most recent report, published in March 2024, covers data collected up to December 31, 2023, reflecting a continued commitment to providing updated and accurate statistics (General Administration of Sport of China, 1995, 2003, 2013, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023).

This analysis draws on data from nine reports spanning 1995 to 2023, offering a longitudinal view of the evolution of sports infrastructure and its alignment with national fitness goals. The data highlights the promotion of fitness and the upgrading of sports facilities before and after two landmark events: the 2008 Summer Olympics and the 2022 Winter Olympics. These reports facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between the availability of sports facilities and their impact on mass participation in physical activities. Using this dataset, the study seeks to clarify the connection between population participation in fitness and sports-related activities and the growth of sports infrastructure.

Table 1 Number of sports venues, Total area of sports venues, Per Capita Area of Sports Venues in China

Year	1995	2003	2013	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of Sports Venues (in 10,000 units)	73.21	85.01	169.46	316.2	354.44	371.34	397.14	422.68	459.27
Total Area of Sports Venues (in 100 million square meters)	7.8	13.3	19.92	25.94	29.17	30.99	34.11	37.02	40.71
Per Capita Area of Sports Venues (in square meters)	0.65	1.03	1.46	1.86	2.08	2.2	2.41	2.62	2.89

When examining the expansion of sports venues, it is evident that significant policy initiatives have played a critical role. The substantial increase in both the quantity and dimensions of sports venues across China reflects not only the government’s sustained

financial commitment to infrastructure development but also underscores the effective implementation of targeted policies.

From 1995 to 2023, the number of sports venues in China exhibited an extraordinary upward trajectory. In 1995, the nation hosted approximately 732,100 sports venues. By 2023, this figure had risen dramatically to 4,592,700, representing an astounding growth rate of 527%. Similarly, the total area of sports venues and the per capita area of these facilities experienced remarkable expansions, with increases of 422% and 344%, respectively (General Administration of Sport of China, 1995, 2023).

Particularly during the lead-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the pace of sports venue construction accelerated significantly. In 2003, there were 850,100 sports venues nationwide, encompassing a total area of 1.33 billion square meters and a per capita area of 1.03 square meters. By 2013, these numbers had surged to 1,694,600 venues, covering 1.992 billion square meters in total, with a per capita area reaching 1.46 square meters (General Administration of Sport of China, 2003, 2013). The building of multiple stadiums and public sporting facilities in anticipation of the Olympic Games was a major factor in this expansion. These advancements served as a crucial resource for encouraging national fitness after the Games in addition to providing the necessary infrastructure for organizing the events.

The momentum continued following Beijing's successful bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics in 2015. During this period, the growth in the total area of sports venues became even more pronounced. For instance, between 2015 and 2023, the total area of sports venues increased from 2.594 billion square meters to 4.071 billion square meters, marking an impressive growth of nearly 57% (General Administration of Sport of China, 2015, 2023). Policies such as the "Driving 300 million People to Participate in Winter Sports Implementation Outline (2018-2022)" further bolstered this trend by not

only supporting the construction of winter sports facilities but also enabling broader improvements across various types of sports infrastructure nationwide.

According to data from the General Administration of Sport of China, as of January 2021, there were 803 indoor and outdoor ski rinks across the country, a significant rise from over 500 in 2015, reflecting an increase of 41%. Similarly, the number of standard ice rinks expanded from over 200 in 2015 to 654, representing a remarkable growth of 317% (General Administration of Sport of China, 2015, 2021). These advancements illustrate how government policies have optimized the distribution of sports facilities, facilitating increased access for regional populations and promoting greater participation in sports.

The hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics notably elevated the standards for stadium construction and significantly advanced the development of sports venues across the nation. The post-Olympics strategy of repurposing these venues has allowed them to continue serving the public and fulfilling national fitness goals. For example, the "Official Report of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games" indicates that 31 competition venues, 56 training venues, and six related facilities were converted for public use, catering to sports or recreational needs in their respective communities (BOCOG, 2010). Furthermore, the 2022 Winter Olympics spurred the construction and renovation of numerous winter sports venues, which have since provided a robust foundation for the development and popularization of winter sports. This approach not only met the immediate requirements of hosting the Games but also left an enduring legacy that supports widespread sports participation across China.

4.4 Analysis of the National Fitness Survey Report

4.4.1 Analysis of the number of people regularly participating in physical exercise

The differences in the proportion of people who regularly exercise across the country are examined in this section. The General Administration of Sport of China (2007) defines regular physical exercise as engaging in physical activities at least three times a week, lasting at least thirty minutes each time, and achieving a moderate or higher level of intensity.

Table 2 Comparative Overview of the Population in China Regularly Participating in Physical Exercise

	1996	2001	2007	2014	2020
Participation Rate	31.4%	33.9%	38.5%		
			28.2%	33.9%	37.2%
Difference		2.5%	4.6%	5.7%	3.3%

In 1996, the proportion of people regularly engaging in physical activities was recorded at 31.4%. This period coincided with pivotal policy milestones, such as the introduction of the *Outline of the National Fitness Program for the Whole People* in June 1995 and the enactment of the *Sports Law of the People's Republic of China* in August of the same year. These initiatives marked a transformative phase in the administration and legal framework for sports, laying a foundation for promoting nationwide fitness.

By 2001, the rate of regular sports participation rose to 33.9%, reflecting a 2.5% increase compared to 1996. This growth was closely associated with China's economic progress and improved living standards resulting from the reform and opening-up policies. Furthermore, Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games fueled

widespread interest in fitness activities, catalyzing a fitness boom nationwide (Research Group on Mass Sports in China, 1998).

The 2007 survey revealed a sports participation rate of 28.2%. However, due to differences in sampling methods, direct comparisons with earlier data may be misleading. Adjusting the 2007 dataset to align with the 2001 sample methodology yielded an adjusted rate of 38.5% (Jiang et al., 2009), representing a 4.6% improvement over 2001. This notable increase underscores the impact of the 2009 "Regulations on National Fitness" and the preparatory efforts for the 2008 Olympic Games, which collectively enhanced infrastructure and societal engagement in sports.

The 2014 report indicated a 33.9% participation rate, a 5.7% increase from the 28.2% reported in 2007. This rise demonstrates the effectiveness of post-Olympic fitness policies. Moreover, in 2013, China announced its intention to bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics, further emphasizing winter sports and extending public fitness initiatives.

By 2020, the national sports participation rate had climbed to 37.2%, marking a 3.3% increase from 2014 (General Administration of Sport of China, 2020). This growth highlights the sustained impact of the national fitness policy, supported by continuous improvements in sports infrastructure and urbanization. The adoption of policies such as the *Driving 300 Million People to Participate in Winter Sports Implementation Outline (2018–2022)* and the successful candidacy for the 2022 Winter Olympics further increased participation, particularly in winter sports, and drew in new athletes across the country.

In conclusion, these figures demonstrate that during the previous few decades, China's sports participation rates have increased. The 2008 Beijing Olympics not only inspired national enthusiasm for sport during the event but also significantly increased national fitness participation through long-term policy promotion. The legacy of Olympic sports participation is reflected in the sporting habits of the nation, as more and more people

began to engage in regular physical activity after 2008. The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics increased the popularity of winter sports and made them a significant component of the country's physical activity. The success of these two Olympics not only boosted the sports participation rate but also led to the popularization of national fitness culture, forming a virtuous cycle of sports participation.

4.4.2 Proportion of people regularly participating in physical activity, by demographic characteristics

4.4.2.1 Analysis of regional differences

Table 3 Comparative of Regular Physical Exercise Participation Among Urban and Rural Residents

	2007	2014	2020
Urban Residents	13.1%	19.5%	40.1%
Rural Residents	4.1%	10.4%	32.7%
Difference	9%	9.1%	7.4%

Data from 2007 show that 13.1 % of urban residents met the standard for regularly participating in physical activity, while only 4.1 % of rural residents did so, a difference of 9 %. During this period, preparations for the 2008 Beijing Olympics were nearing completion, and the government began to invest more in urban sports facilities, driven by the Olympics. Urban residents had much higher participation rates than rural residents due to the greater availability of sports facilities and exercise opportunities (e.g., parks, gyms, community sports activities, etc.). However, there is a notable disparity between urban and rural areas because of the relative lag in infrastructure, with urban areas benefitting more than rural areas.

According to data from 2014, the percentage of people living in urban regions increased to 19.5%, while the percentage of people living in rural areas increased to 10.4%. The difference between the two areas was 9.1%. This gap is essentially the same as it was in 2007, but it is important to note that the rate of rural residents participating in sports has increased quickly, demonstrating the success of the government's policy of promoting national fitness, particularly in rural areas where public sports facilities are being gradually improved and rural sports activities are being gradually promoted.

The 2020 statistics reveal a notable rise in sports participation rates among urban and rural populations. Urban residents' participation increased to 40.1%, while rural participation surged to 32.7%, significantly narrowing the disparity between these groups to just 7.4%. Comparatively, urban sports participation experienced a growth of 20.6% from 2014 levels, while rural areas saw an even more pronounced increase of 22.3%, highlighting a faster growth trajectory among rural residents. This trend underscores a growing awareness of fitness and the importance of sports, particularly in rural regions. This improvement has been driven by long-term governmental efforts, exemplified by initiatives like the *Healthy China 2030 Plan* and significant policy advancements associated with China's successful bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics. These strategies have fostered enhanced sports infrastructure and strengthened national fitness policies, further bridging the gap between urban and rural areas and advancing a more balanced development of China's sports sector.

From 2007 to 2020, the evolution in sports participation rates reflects both the effectiveness of national policies and broader socio-economic advancements. Milestones in policy development include the *Opinions on the Implementation of Rural People's Sports and Fitness Project (2006)* and the *11th Five-Year Plan for Sports (2007)*, which focused on expanding access to sports services in rural areas. Later, in 2017, the *General Administration of Sport of China* introduced additional guidance to enhance rural sports participation and encourage sports as a family-oriented activity.

These policies, supported by consistent implementation, have significantly expanded sports access in rural and urban regions alike, marking a critical step in fostering inclusivity and equity in national fitness initiatives.

4.4.2.2 Analysis of age differences

Table 4 Percentage of People Regularly Participating in Exercise by Age Group

Age/Year	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	80+
2007	6.2%	6.1%	8.0%	10.8%	11.7%	8.5%	
2014	13.7%	12.4%	14.9%	18%	18.2%	10.8%	
2020	30%	28.4%	31.7%	31.6%	29.5%	70-79 23.5%	14.7%

In 2007, the proportion of people in each age group who regularly participated in physical exercise increased gradually with age, with the participation rates for the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups at 6.2% and 6.1%, which were relatively low, probably because young people were in the early stages of their professional careers, with greater work pressures and a faster pace of life, resulting in insufficient time and motivation for them to participate in physical exercise. As age increases, the participation rates of the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups are 8.0% and 10.8%, showing that the middle-aged group is gradually becoming more concerned about health, especially when health problems start to emerge, and more people choose to keep fit through physical activity. With the highest participation rate of 11.7% among all age groups, the 60–69 age group is the most physically active due to their high priority on health and their freedom of time after retirement. However, at the age of 70+, the participation rate drops slightly to 8.5%, which may be related to physical limitations.

In 2014, due to the increase in overall participation rates, the figures for all age groups increased and the gap between age groups narrowed. the participation rates for the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups increased to 13.7% and 12.4%, indicating a significant

increase in health concerns among the younger age groups, and that social campaigns and health awareness may be contributing to their increased participation in physical activity. The participation rate of the middle-aged group also increased significantly, rising to 14.9% and 18% for the age groups of 40-49 and 50-59, reflecting a further increase in people's commitment to health management at this stage of life. The participation rate of the age group of 60-69 reached 18.2%, almost the same as that of the group of 50-59, showing that the older age group still maintains a higher level of motivation to exercise. The 70+ age group's participation rate also increased to 10.8%, which is marginally lower than the other age groups but represents a notable increase in the older age group's sports participation rate when compared to 2007. This suggests that senior citizens increased social support and health awareness have encouraged them to participate in sports.

In 2020, the sports participation rates of all age groups will further increase significantly, especially among the young and middle-aged groups. the participation rate of the 20-29 age group jumps to 30%, showing that this group's enthusiasm for sports activities has increased significantly, which may be closely related to the vigorous promotion of government policies, socio-cultural changes, and the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. The 30-39 and 40-49 age groups' involvement rates rose to 28.4% and 31.7%, respectively, suggesting that this group has been active throughout their lives and understands the value of physical activity in preserving health and postponing aging. The participation rate of the 50-59 age group reached 31.6%, which is almost the same as that of the 40-49 age group, showing that middle-aged people are participating in physical activity extensively in coping with health risks. The 60-69 age group's participation rate of 29.5% is slightly lower than that of the middle-aged group but remains high. Although the participation rates of the 70-79 and 80+ age groups were 23.5% and 14.7%, which were lower than those of the younger age groups, the year's data had a new group of 80 and

above, which still showed the rising health concern and enthusiasm for physical activity among the senior population.

Overall, from 2007 to 2020, the sports participation rates of all age groups showed significant increases, indicating that the whole society is increasingly recognizing the importance of healthy lifestyles. Particularly, the younger age groups have seen the most increase, while middle-aged and older age groups' high levels of sports engagement demonstrate how important health management becomes as we age.

4.4.3 Access to Physical Activity Guidance

With the progression of China's national fitness initiative, access to guidance on physical activity has experienced a transformative shift. Previously reliant on a limited pool of professional instructors, the focus has now broadened to include a variety of diverse resources for providing fitness guidance. This evolution not only signifies an expansion in the number and capabilities of social sports instructors but also underscores the critical role played by advanced information technology tools in promoting physical activity and sports awareness. Notably, following the enactment and subsequent implementation of the *Regulations on National Fitness* in 2009, there has been a substantial growth in both the quantity and reach of social sports instructors across the nation. This expansion has significantly enhanced the availability of professional sports instruction, benefited a broader population and promoting a culture of health and fitness.

In 1996, the survey showed that of the 381 physical activity points, only 58 were equipped with social sports instructors, accounting for a mere 15.20%. This figure shows that the coverage rate of social sports instructors was still low at that time, and people generally lacked professional guidance when engaging in physical exercises. Under such circumstances, most people could only rely on self-tracking or non-professional advice to exercise, which could lead to poor exercise results or sports

injuries. At this time, China is just beginning to emphasize national fitness, and the popularization of sports instruction resources is still in its infancy.

In 2000, the coverage rate of social sports instructors increased significantly. Among the 348 activity points surveyed, 151 were equipped with social sports instructors, accounting for 43.40%, an increase of 28.20% over 1996. This increase indicates that the country's efforts to promote national fitness have paid off, especially in strengthening the construction of sports instructors. This change means that more residents can get professional sports guidance, thereby improving the quality of exercise and reducing sports risks.

In 2007, 33.3% of those who participated in physical exercise had received guidance on exercise techniques. Specifically, the largest proportion received guidance from physical education teachers or coaches, accounting for 15.3%, followed by other related professionals at 5.4%, other individuals at 5.1%, and social sports instructors at 4.8%. Additionally, 52.0% of people acquired sports skills through self-study, and 30.7% gained these skills through school education. This data reflects that, with societal progress and improvements in the education system, the ways in which residents obtain sports guidance have gradually diversified. People are no longer solely reliant on professional instructors; more individuals are now turning to self-study or school education to acquire sports knowledge. During this period, self-study resources and school education played a significant role in popularizing sports skills among residents.

In 2014, the proportion of people receiving sports instruction had risen further to 48.0%. Among them, the proportion of people who received mutual guidance through colleagues and friends was the highest, at 32.3%, followed by professional coaches at 5.7% and social sports instructors at 5.3%, and the proportion of people who exercised regarding books, videos, and other materials at 5%. Among people aged 20 and over,

56.5% have mastered physical exercise skills through self-study, showing that the popularization of information technology has had a driving effect on national fitness.

By 2020, the means of obtaining guidance on physical activity have become more diversified, with 68.5% of the population obtaining guidance on physical activity through various channels. The most important channels include guidance from colleagues and friends to each other at 27.5%, watching sports and fitness guidance-related materials at 21.4%, and guidance from professionals such as social sports instructors and professional coaches at 19.6%. Compared with 2014, the proportion of those who obtained information through watching sports and fitness guidance-related materials rose sharply by 16.3%, which not only reflects the success of the policy in promoting the system of social sports instructors but also the important role of informatization means in sports promotion. Residents today have more options and convenience when it comes to learning fitness knowledge and skills thanks to the growth and popularity of information technology.

The popularization of sports guidance resources and the development of informatization have been greatly aided by government policies between 1996 and 2020 because of China's socioeconomic development and the extensive promotion of national fitness policies. This is particularly true under the auspices of the "Healthy China 2030 Plan," which has caused the methods by which people receive guidance on physical activity to shift from being dominated by professional instructors to coexisting with a variety of guidance methods. How residents obtain guidance on physical activity has undergone a shift from being dominated by professional instructors to the coexistence of diversified guidance methods. This change reflects the growth of the social sports instructor team, also the important role of information technology in sports education and promotion.

4.4.4 Factors Affecting Physical Activity

Comparing the results of the two surveys in 1996 and 2000, the reasons affecting people's physical activity in China are the same. The top three subjective reasons affecting residents' sports activities are lack of interest in sports, unnecessary, and being too weak to exercise, of which lack of interest in sports accounts for the highest percentage, 25.85% in 1996 and 30.2% in 2001. The top three objective reasons were lack of time, lack of energy, and lack of sports facilities. With lack of time accounting for the highest proportion of objective factors, 59.4% in 1996 and 53.9% in 2001, a decline in comparison. It is particularly noteworthy that the reasons for ranking second and third in 2001 have changed. The proportion of no sports facilities in 2000 increased by 11% compared with 1996, rising from the third place in 1996 to the second place. This shows that residents' requirements for sports facilities are also increasing. They are no longer satisfied with simple sports venues. More people hope to exercise in an environment with complete facilities.

The percentage of persons who do not engage in physical activity because they lack the time is still the greatest when comparing data from 2007 and 2014, yet it has dropped from 33.8% to 30.6%. The biggest barrier preventing people from engaging in physical activity is a lack of time, which dropped from 41.2% to 35.5%, followed by a lack of field facilities, which went from 16.6% to 13%.

Factors affecting physical activity are varied and have changed over time. In 1996, lack of interest in sport and lack of time were the main barriers, and as socio-economic development progressed, especially into the 21st century, the lack of venues and facilities has become a new bottleneck. In 2007 and 2014, although lack of time is still the main reason, with the gradual improvement of facilities, the impact of insufficient venues impact has declined. This reflects that with the improvement of facilities, other factors (e.g., time management, promotion of fitness culture) have become important

factors affecting residents' sports participation. Future policies should continue to optimize the allocation of sports facilities, while further removing barriers to people's scheduling and interest development through education and publicity.

4.4.5 Analysis of Sports Consumption

As a growing component of people's consumption patterns, sports consumption shows the growth trend of the sports business and reflects the rise in personal fitness consciousness. Its expansion is inextricably linked to the vigorous support of national policy. Just 8.60% of locals exercised at commercial sports facilities in 1996; by 2000, that number had increased to 8.80%. The low level of popularity of sports consumption during this time suggests that it had not yet become a common way of life.

In 2007, sports consumption increased significantly. 27.7% of people who participated in physical exercise had sports consumption, and the per capita consumption for the year reached 593 RMB. Young people aged 20 to 29 have the highest consumption level, with per capita consumption reaching 793 RMB, showing their positive attitude towards sports consumption. Additionally, the 2008 Beijing Olympics preparations and the Olympic mania have contributed to the expansion of sports consumption to some degree. In addition to increasing consumer demand for sports-related products and services, the Olympic Games stoked everyone's desire to do sports. Numerous sports venues have been built, and amenities have been improved, giving locals additional opportunity to exercise and encouraging a rise in the consumption of associated sports.

By 2014, the popularity of sports consumption had further increased, with 39.9% of people having consumed sports, and the annual per capita consumption level reached 926 RMB, a significant increase compared with 2007. The consumption level of the 20-29 age group is still the highest, with per capita consumption reaching 1,162 RMB. At this stage, sports consumption items gradually diversified. In addition to purchasing sportswear and sports equipment, more people began to subscribe to sports newspapers,

pay for venue fees, and watch sports games. 2014 was also the early stage of China's bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympics. The government has increased publicity for winter sports, promoting the popularity of winter sports and increasing related consumption. During this period, the diversification of sports consumption was reflected in traditional sports and also extended to more winter sports and emerging sports.

By 2020, sports-related consumption had reached an unprecedented high, with annual per capita spending increasing to 1,330 RMB. Compared to 2014, the proportion of spending on practical sports goods, such as sportswear and equipment, decreased significantly from 79% to 53.7%. Conversely, expenditures on participatory sports activities, including venue fees and hiring private coaches, rose substantially from 6.9% to 20.6%. This transition reflects a societal trend where individuals, benefitting from improved living standards, are prioritizing professional services to enhance their physical fitness. Moreover, the overall structure of sports consumption is evolving, shifting from a focus on material goods to services. Of particular significance is the fact that the growth rate of spending on sports exceeds that of necessities and services, as well as expenditures on education, culture, and entertainment. This highlights the increasing prioritization of sports-related consumption in people's daily lives (Chinese Sports Newspaper, 2021). During the 13th Five-Year Plan period, the total expenditure on sports by Chinese residents surged from 1.0 trillion RMB in 2015 to 1.8 trillion RMB in 2020, representing a 43.7% increase in per capita sports consumption. This remarkable growth not only underscores the rising awareness and enthusiasm for fitness but also reflects the critical role of national policies in advancing the sports industry.

Sports consumption in China experienced a dramatic change between 1996 and 2020, moving from its early phases to a period of explosive expansion. Olympic hosting has been a major driver of this trend, especially the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, which both significantly contributed to this growth. Not only

are sports participation rates on the rise, but sports consumption habits are also changing because of the Olympics. As the economy has grown and public awareness of fitness has increased, an expanding number of individuals have integrated sports-related spending into their daily lives. This shift has made sports consumption an increasingly important component of household expenditures, with a noticeable transformation from material-based purchases, such as equipment, to service-oriented consumption, including activities like private coaching and venue usage. Following the 2008 Beijing Olympics, there was a significant rise in demand for sports-related goods and services nationwide. Similarly, the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics amplified the appeal of winter sports, catalyzing a consumption surge centered on ice and snow activities, thereby underscoring the Olympics' profound influence on public behavior. The far-reaching effects of these changing consumption habits, driven by the Olympics, have encouraged more people to allocate additional time and financial resources to sports activities. This growing commitment has fueled the steady expansion of the sports consumption market. Looking ahead, as disposable incomes continue to rise and fitness awareness spreads further, sports consumption is projected to sustain its growth, emerging as a key driver of the sports industry's development. The enduring influence of the Olympic Games is anticipated to remain a cornerstone in advancing the sustainable growth of China's sports sector.

5. Conclusion and Future Research Suggestions

5.1 Brief conclusion of the results

This study's primary goal was to investigate the current and possible effects on Chinese citizens' engagement in sports of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. The study also sought to validate its hypotheses. The study successfully met its objectives and provided evidence for its conclusions by carrying out a thorough analysis that included information on sports facilities, the economic contributions of the sports industry, the overall size of the national sports sector, and the results of the national fitness survey.

5.1.1 The result of the Scale of the National Sports Industry

According to this study, the total size and added value of China's sports business increased significantly between 2012 and 2022. The successful 2014 bid to host the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics served as a major impetus for this expansion and sped up the growth trajectory. In particular, the sports industry's overall size grew by around 3.5 times over a ten-year period, from 950 billion RMB in 2012 to 3.3 trillion RMB in 2022. The sports industry's added value also showed a remarkable expansion, increasing by more than 13 times from 98.3 billion RMB in 2006 to 1.3 trillion RMB in 2022. The hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, which demonstrated the value of national policies in promoting development, is primarily responsible for this notable expansion. China's sports industry expanded quickly and steadily because of these events, which greatly increased the infrastructure and engagement of the sector.

5.1.2 The result of data on Sports Venues

The number and size of sports venues in China increased significantly between 1995 and 2023, according to statistics from the National Sports Venue Census Report. The

effect of the two Olympic Games, which have significantly advanced venue development, has been substantially responsible for this growth. For example, the overall number of venues increased by more than 527%, from 732,100 in 1995 to 4,592,700 in 2023. In a similar vein, the area of sports arenas increased by 422%, from 780 million square meters to 4.071 billion square meters. From 0.65 square meters in 1995 to 2.89 square meters in 2023, the venue area per capita likewise increased. These changes highlight how far China has come in developing its national fitness infrastructure.

There are still difficulties despite these developments. The distribution of sporting facilities between urban and rural areas is still unbalanced. Sports facilities are generally easier to find in urban locations, although they are still few in rural places. Moving forward, China should prioritize addressing this disparity by promoting equitable development of sports facilities across both urban and rural areas. Moreover, adopting the advanced practices of developed nations in sports facility management and maintenance could enhance the efficiency of venue utilization and better meet the fitness needs of the population.

5.1.3 The result of National Fitness Survey Reports

By evaluating the findings from the National Fitness Survey Reports spanning 1996 to 2020, it becomes evident that China's sports participation rate has experienced a marked upward trajectory in recent decades. The dual influence of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics has played a pivotal role in fostering this increase. Notably, the Winter Olympics significantly boosted participation in winter sports, such as ice and snow activities, drawing a larger number of participants. Simultaneously, analyses across various demographic segments, such as age groups and access disparities between urban and rural regions, indicate that the implementation of comprehensive sports policies has successfully bridged the urban-rural divide. As a

result, the overall national participation rate has risen, particularly among teenagers and the elderly, with evident improvements in motivation.

Although advancements in sports infrastructure have partially encouraged participation, certain challenges persist. Among these, time constraints are identified as a significant obstacle preventing many Chinese residents from engaging in regular physical activities. With notable progress from 1996 to 2020, data reveals that a considerable proportion of individuals remain inactive due to time limitations. Furthermore, insufficient interest in sports and inadequate availability of sports venues are additional barriers affecting residents' engagement levels. These insights underscore that expanding facilities alone cannot address participation issues comprehensively. A multifaceted approach is required, one that incorporates strategies to enhance public interest in sports, foster a culture of physical activity, and improve time management. Future efforts in China should prioritize promoting enthusiasm for sports through community initiatives, broader public campaigns, and targeted policy support.

In parallel, China's sports consumption has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past two decades. In 1996, only a small fraction of residents utilized commercial sports venues; by 2020, this figure had grown substantially. Alongside this growth, the nature of sports consumption has shifted from material-based purchases to service-oriented spending. For instance, per capita sports consumption rose sharply to 1,330.4 RMB in 2020, reflecting heightened interest in fitness-related services. This trend is closely linked to major events like the Beijing Olympics and Winter Olympics, which acted as catalysts for increased demand. With these developments, China's sports consumption levels remain lower than those in more developed countries, suggesting significant room for growth. For example, European nations exhibit much higher per capita sports spending. To close this gap, efforts must focus on cultivating a stronger sports consumption culture, enhancing income levels, and expanding the availability of

high-quality sports services. Policy measures should aim to sustain this upward momentum and ensure the long-term prosperity of the sports industry.

While the policy initiatives promoting national fitness have yielded impressive results, they also highlight existing challenges in achieving equitable development. One key issue lies in regional disparities. For example, sports infrastructure in eastern coastal areas is well-developed, whereas central and western regions lag. Addressing these imbalances will require targeted investments and policy adjustments to reduce regional inequalities and facilitate equitable access to sports facilities. Moreover, there is an increasing need for diversification of fitness initiatives to cater to different population groups. Future policy directions should emphasize expanding the construction of inclusive sports venues, enhancing public services, and leveraging scientific and technological advancements to improve fitness opportunities nationwide. These steps will be crucial in sustaining the progress achieved thus far and promoting the healthy development of national fitness in the years to come.

5.2 Limitations and shortcomings of the study

This study has limitations even though it offers insightful information about how the Olympic Games affect Chinese national sports participation.

Data Temporal Coverage: The study incorporates data from 1995 to 2023, illustrating some of the consequences of the 2008 Beijing Olympics' legacy on sports participation. To completely capture the lingering effects of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, the dataset is inadequate. To accurately assess the lasting effects of the Winter Olympics, additional research and extended observation are required to develop a more comprehensive perspective.

Subjectivity of qualitative analysis: The qualitative aspect of this research is inherently shaped by the researcher's subjective interpretations. Although a systematic review

methodology was employed to enhance reliability, additional empirical studies are necessary to corroborate and expand upon these findings, ensuring a more objective evaluation.

Representativeness and lag of samples: The study heavily depends on statistics provided by the General Administration of Sport of China and the National Bureau of Statistics of China. Although these data are authoritative, they may have limitations in representativeness in certain specific groups, and census data are usually collected regularly, often only every few years. Therefore, these data may not reflect the current social conditions or trend changes in a timely manner, especially in rapidly changing fields. This lag may lead to a certain deviation between the research conclusions and the actual situation.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

Future studies should concentrate on the following areas to address the shortcomings of current studies and investigate the continuing and possible effects of the Olympic Games:

Sustained tracking and dynamic analysis: It is recommended that future research conducts tracking studies over a longer time span, especially on the evolving impact of the 2022 Winter Olympics. Through dynamic analysis, the sustainability of the Olympic legacy can be explored in depth, especially the subsequent use and maintenance of sports facilities.

Multi-dimensional data sources and comparative studies: With the development of the times, we can see that more and more data statistics on the sports industry are being collected, and the statistical frequency has also increased significantly. In the future, research should integrate more dimensional data sources, especially diversified samples, to improve the representativeness of research conclusions. In addition, cross-national

comparative studies are also an important direction in the future. By comparing the management experience of Olympic heritage in different countries, more valuable references can be provided for China's future sports policies.

An in-depth analysis of grassroots sports participation: While this study demonstrates an overall increase in sports participation rates across the country, it also notes significant increases in sports participation in rural and less developed areas. However, these areas often face challenges such as lack of resources, insufficient infrastructure, and relatively low education levels, resulting in sports participation rates that are significantly lower than in urban and economically developed areas. Future research should further analyze the specific barriers to sports participation in these areas and explore the multiple factors that affect grassroots sports participation, including economic conditions, social and cultural background, and policy implementation effects. Through in-depth analysis, future research can provide the basis for developing more precise and actionable policy recommendations to help these regions overcome barriers to sports participation.

Comprehensive research on policies and sports heritage management: Upcoming studies should also concentrate on investigating and assessing the efficacy and inventiveness of different policy instruments in sports heritage management. For example, research can explore how to achieve sustainable management of sports heritage through economic incentives such as tax incentives, financial subsidies, legislative guarantees such as relevant regulations on the maintenance and use of sports facilities, and public participation such as community-led sports projects and activities. In order to increase the efficacy and efficiency of sports heritage management, research should also concentrate on the development of new policy tools and investigate the use of novel models and technologies, such as digital management and smart sports stadium building.

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