

## **The Developmental Processes of Chinese Sports Management**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper made a review of the formation of sports management and its development in China. And also we described its disciplinary nature and the current situation of its system structures. Owing to a lot of problems caused by hysteretic methodology, indefinite disciplinary nature and imperfect system structures, we should pay more attention to the practical forefront of sports management in order to turn administrative sports management to public sports management.*

**Keywords:** sports management; disciplinary nature; disciplinary system

There are a lot of remarkable sports achievements in China since 1978. Such as the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, which has already become a landmark in the history of Chinese sports cause. So you may wonder what is the future of Chinese sports management. Actually, there is no answer to that question right now. But we do know that we have a serious urgent task, and we should summarize Chinese sports experience as soon as possible and build our own sports management theories, which would have great realistic meanings and profound historic significance to our country.

### **1 Achievements of Chinese Sports Management**

The modern sports management is a new discipline, which can be traced back to 1930s. The book “Sports Administration” which was written by Jin Zhao-Jun, was probable the first monograph on sports management in China, issued by Shanghai Diligence Publishing Company in 1935. In 1955, Ju Xing-Shou from Northeast Normal University and Li Yu-San from Central-South Sport University wrote the teaching material “Sports Administration” together. During the 1980s, Ma Yu and Zhang Xu from Tianjin Sport University and Liang Ru-Cheng from Liaoning Provincial Education Committee wrote similar teaching materials. However, due to the historical reasons, the development of “Sports Administration” was postponed. On the bright side, with the extraordinary development of Chinese sports cause, more and more researchers began to use general management theories and methods to study sports phenomena. Many sport universities and normal universities put “Sports Management” into their instructional plans one after another and wrote interrelated teaching materials. What is more, some of them even established the sports management departments in their own universities. All these phenomena marked that sports management had grown vigorously in China.

In 1985, the Former National Sports Commission established the Chinese Sports Developmental Strategy Commission to organize the theorists and practical experts to study the historical stage of Chinese sports developmental strategy. In 1987, under the Chinese Sports Science Committee, we established Sports Sociology Association, which was divided into several academic groups named sports management, sports economics and so on. In recent years, Sport Management Association has been very active, holding annual meetings every two years to discuss the practical and theoretical issues of sports management. Meanwhile, it has published plenty of relational theses and teaching materials.

#### **1.1 The Nature of Sports Management**

What is the nature of sports management? How to define its disciplinary position? Since 1980s, a lot of time and effort has been invested into the research. Professor Sun Han-Chao (1983, 1985) considered that “Sports management is a scientific knowledge which is studied about the nature and regulations of sports management.

To be specific, it's about how to organize, plan, command, supervise and adjust all kinds of sports cause and activities effectively and efficiently." "Sports management is a comprehensive science, while others think it is interdisciplinary science." All these research has extraordinary fundamental value to the beginners. In 1985, Professor Sun Han-Chao and Professor Tang Qi-Yu expounded their views together on how to master the nature of sports management. "First of all, sports management is a branch of science management, which means it can use magnificent management theories and methods directly. Its research objects are sports management activities, which are the steady core distinguished from the other subjects. However, its boundary is indistinct as it has a lot of crosses among management and sports." "Given to sports management's steady core and indistinct boundary, we can say that sports management is interdisciplinary science." "Secondly, sports management is soft science." In 2003, Professor Zhang Rui-Lin published the paper "The Study on Disciplinary System of Sports Management", which made a further exploration of Chinese sports management. He believed that sports management belonged to the soft science. But this does not mean sports management should use soft qualitative methods only. Soft scientific problems also need quantitative methods.

The research on sports management is not only about laws of "Soft System", which studies on how to coordinate people's relationship to stimulate collective power and create a harmonious atmosphere during the sports activities, but also about laws of "Hard System", which studies on how to allocate funds and property wisely so as to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency. As to the management of soft sports system, its effectiveness is satisfactory, mainly by qualitative methods. And to the management of hard sports system, such as venue management, equipment management, funds management and so on, its effectiveness is optimum, mainly by logical quantitative methods, which are precise, rigorous and standardized. In 2003, Shao Gui-Hua, etc. wrote an article named "The Consideration of Sports Management's Nature", proposed a new three-dimensional cognitive system of sports management, based on cognitive sports theories and integrated with cognitive management. Undoubtedly, all these studies have positive significance to the construction of sports management's theoretical system. Of course, the theoretical system is not complete, and we still have a long way to go, so we are just about to keep moving forward.

## **1.2 The Disciplinary System of Sports Management**

"As an emerging subject, the scientific system of sports management must have indistinct boundaries. That is why we should consummate the sports management theories and form its own disciplinary system as soon as possible, not only for the development of modern sports but also for the restructuring of Chinese sports management system. Chinese scholars attached great importance to studying the disciplinary system of sports management, who have done lots of positive explorations on its construction. In 1996, Professor Qin Chun-Lin proposed that the disciplinary system of sports management should consist three parts, which were introduction of sports management, sports sector management and sports operating management. The introduction of sports management mainly refers to the magnificent sports management theories, solving problems like principles, nature, methods and so on. Sports sector management is a meso-level management theory referred to different sports areas. Sports operating management is a micro-level management theory, including managerial issues of varieties of sports organizations and specific low-level sports areas. In 2003, Professor Sun Han-Chao proposed the international architectonic frame of sports management with strong Chinese characteristics, including six chapters, which were introduction, basal theory, three elements of international sports management, other international sports event management, types of national sports management system and the developmental trend of international sports management.

In the same year, Professor Zhang Rui-Lin proposed the disciplinary structure of sports management, including: sports administration, sports information management, sports industry management, competitive sports management and school sports management. According to his paper, the disciplinary structure of sports management was composed of three-dimensional structures, which were function axis, content axis and level axis. And this three-dimensional space built up by these three axes was the integral sports management. In 2003, Professor Chen Lin-Xiang proposed five strategic changes in the disciplinary system of sports management. First of all, pay more attention to market economic management than planned economic management. Second, according to the classification of sports activities, we should change managerial objects to profit organizations and nonprofit organizations. Third, pay more attention to the system management instead of people management. Fourth, pay more attention to management than sports itself. Fifth, focus on the establishment of disciplinary system on international sports management rather than Chinese sports management.

Also in 2003, during the discussion whether sports management was scientific theory or applying theory, Professor Shao Gui-Hua etc. believed there were some composition beyond the purely scientific research. Therefore, sports management was not only pure practical theory. From ethics angle, Professor Zhang Jian-Jun (2003) considered that the key point influenced sports management was ethical concept and moral standards. And he summarized five ethical factors affected managers, which were leaders' personal morality, supervisors' behaviors, policies, social atmosphere and colleagues' behaviors. As can be seen from the above, majority of studying results identified these three parts, which were basic theories, applying theories and international sports management, as a complete disciplinary theory of sports management, which also reflected the developmental characteristics of this emerging discipline. As we know, a mature discipline always has a sound scientific system. With the practical development of sports management, the completing of its disciplinary system is an inevitable trend.

### **1.3 The Teaching Materials of Sports Management**

Zhu Jia-Xin looked back the construction of sports managerial teaching materials and wrote the article named "The Review and Prospects of Sports Management", and he divided the development of its teaching materials into four stages, which were embryonic stage, appealing for reconstruction stage, formation and development stage and continuous improvement stage. But we believed that three development stages would be more reasonable. During the first embryonic stage, there was "Sports Administration" written by Jin Zhao-Jun in 1930s. Until 1950s, we brought "Sports Theories" from Soviet Union, thus the sports administration courses were disappeared and during the next thirty years there were no courses related to sports administration or management. The second reconstruction stage began in 1980s. During that period, more and more researchers appealed for the reconstruction of Chinese sports management. For example, "Establish Chinese Own Sports Management as Quickly as Possible" written by Sun Han-Chao (1983); "The establishment and Development of Chinese Sports Management" by Sun Han-Chao (1985) and many other papers or articles written by scholars like Deng He, Teng Jian, Liu Hong-Bin etc.

After the mid-80s, the reconstruction of sports management accelerated. In 1984, the first teaching material "Sports Management" written by Wuhan Sport University and other four universities was published. And the next year, the first Sports Management Department was established in Wuhan Sports University, which meant the initial establishment of sports management's disciplinary system in China. In June 1985, Beijing Sport University published the teaching material "Physical Training Management". In 1995, the Former National Sports Commission formally added sports management into the important disciplines. According to the Eighth Five Years' Plan on the construction of teaching materials, the National Sports Commission published the book "The Study about Sports Management". According to the new development of sports cause and the Ninth Five Years' Plan on the construction of teaching materials, they rewrote and published the book "Sports Management". And the construction of teaching materials on sports management entered its new rapid development period. The third stage called development stage. Into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, researchers were looking for innovative teaching materials. In 2004, we rewrote the teaching book "Practical Sports Management", which had many aspects of reform and innovation.

First of all, with some innovation in content, there was at least one latest case in each chapter. Second, the management function highlighted "Decision" "Leadership", specially the newly added functions like "Innovation Management" "Responsibility Management" "Competition Theories" "Sports Organization Culture" and so on, which marked the construction of teaching materials had already into a new development stage. Third, we should master the practical sports development, especially the developmental trend of international sports management. Fourth, the new book strengthened the analyses on the factors and environment of East-West sports management. However, this teaching material system had no breakthrough, which continued the "Dual Structure", based on basic theories and sports operating management. Since the early 1980s, the basic frame of sports management's teaching materials is composed of two big parts, basic theories of sports management and sports operating management theories. Speak of the word count of "The Study about Sports Management", the basic theory party occupied 40.9% while sports operating management party occupied 59.1%.

"Sports management theories should neither copy the management theories nor mix the sports theories and management theories together promiscuously." "Writing sports management theories should take full account of the reality of sports and management and reflect the common characteristics of sports and management."

This showed that the construction of sports management's teaching material systems with organic combination of sports theories and management theories, instead of "Dual Structure", was still an arduous and enduring task.

#### **1.4 The Application Areas of Sports Management**

Sports management is a highly applied discipline, which studying a wide range of application areas. Kang Jian-Wei made an exhaustive generalized quantitative study on sports management and also made some research on sports developmental strategy, sports policy, sports management and sports team management, written in the paper named "The Review and Prospects about Chinese Sports Management". "Quantitative research has already started in China, like using operations research and linear programming theories to solve the team array of table tennis or badminton and to solve the management of sports venues and athletes' nutrition providing. Another example was using electronic counting system to solve the problems among competitive sports organizations and to build an indicator system and beneficial functions of sports training management." However, in general speaking, the present research is still on the micro-sectional level, lack of macro-comprehensive studies. Moreover, the sports management quantitative investigative results, which would provide scientific objective basis for macro-sports strategies, are not mature right now.

The research of sports industry management is one of the most active studies, which also has the most studying results. Since the late 1980s, we started to study sports industry management. While in the 1990s, especially after the year 1992, when the "Zhong Shan Meeting" was hold, the research has made significant progress. In 1997, Zhang Fa-Qiang made further research on sports industry. He divided sports industry into three different parts, the main sports industry, related industry that providing sports services and other sports sectors' business activities promoting the development of sports cause. In 1999, Xie Qiong-Huan, basing on the exhaustive figures, summarized and analyzed the current situations and problems of Chinese sports industry and advanced interrelated policy recommendation. Cai Jun etc. (1999) explored the theoretical issues of sports industry in the book "Sports Economics". Li Guo-Hou (1999), Bao Ming-Xiao (1999, 2002), Lu Yuan-Zhen (2000, 2001) and many other researchers have made systematic analyses about the current situations, the trend and the future of Chinese sports industry. In 2001, Li Ming discussed the types and developmental period and operating system of Chinese sports industry. And after all that, he built the theoretical system of Chinese sports industry initially. From administrative point of view, Zhang Lin (2002) and Geng Li-Zhong (2002) made some research which highlighted the characteristics of Chinese sports industry. Zhang Lin made a systematic study on professional sports club in the book "The Operational System of Professional Sports Club", which stimulated the studies on the management of professional sports club.

Competitive sports are one of the fastest growing areas in all types of sports in China. How to use limited resources to produce the best possible results is the focal point of competitive sports management. And its studies have focused on sports competition management, human resources management of players and coaches, athletes' indemnification management. Sports competition management mainly relates to sports competitive systems, sports competitive organizations and sports competitive effectiveness evaluations and so on. Sports training management, mainly using sociology, psychology, education, anthropology and behavioral science and other related scientific theories and methods, shows the laws of sports training and competitive effects. Based on individuals' and groups' behavior, we have made some theoretical research on sports teams' ideology and culture education. With the implementation of "Sports Law" and "National Fitness Program" in 1995, the awareness of participating in sports is increasing. Therefore, the social sports management has become a hot studying spot. From the current studying results, we have focused on the two following aspects. The first is social sports management theories, such as social sports' macro-management, social sports' policies and regulations, social sports' investment management and social sports' classification management and so on.

The second is reformation and development of Chinese social sports, such as the organization and management of mass sports clubs or private sports associations and so on. Wang Kai-Zhen etc. (2004) proposed that the social economic transformation and organizational transformation, which triggered the conversion of competition systems, the changes of government functions, the downfall of "Unit System", the establishment of "Community System", had stimulated the reconstruction of the Chinese urban social sports management. Zuo Xin-Rong etc. (2004) considered the basic points of social sports strategy were dispersing the crowded and formatting many small inner-cohesive groups. Huang Wei-Ming (2002) made a statement about the characteristics of social sports, managerial principles and the developmental trend of Chinese social sports in the new century.

As for the school sports management, we started research from two opposite levels, which were microcosm and macrocosm. In recent years, the macro-studies have focused on the system of school sports management, rules and regulations, evaluation systems and so on. Such as Ye Guo-Qiang's (1990) studies emphasized on the system theories, functional theories, coordination theories and efficacy theories of school sports management. And the micro-studies have mainly focused on physical education process management, management of P.E. teachers, after-school sports training management, venue management and equipment management and so on. Overall, speaking of the four types of sports management, which are competitive sports management, sports industry management, social sports management and school sports management, there are different degrees of transformation of managerial theories. During the changing period of Chinese economic transformation and social transformation, we have been confronted with some profound changes on sports management. However, the interrelated research can not keep up with the social development, especially the development of Chinese sports cause, which is the weak link of current sports management studies.

## **2      *The Main Issues of Chinese Sports Management***

Zhu Jia-Xin made exhaustive analyses about current sports problems in the paper "The Review and Prospect of Sports Management". And according to his article, there were four main problems. First of all, the center of its overall research was a little low and we still stayed at this elementary level. Second, there were less significant research or classic studies, which were mainly number-oriented. Third, the theoretic research was far behind the practical needs. Fourth, the micro-research of sports management was a little weak. This paper basically showed us accurate analyses about current problems of Chinese sports management. Why there are so many problems? We think there are three reasons for this. First of all, the methodology used on sports management is far behind, which is the core factor why a discipline is not mature. Making progress on its research is so difficult just because of its far-behind and less innovative methodology. Second, the disciplinary nature of sports management is indefinite, and its disciplinary system is imperfect. Many researchers consider that the sports management is comprehensive interdisciplinary soft marginal science. But why is so? Actually, there are some statements about it; unfortunately most of them are not exhaustive and at a superficial level. Because of its indefinite disciplinary nature, the disciplinary system of sports management is inevitably imperfect, resulting in its teaching materials remain in the state "Dual Structure" which is separated by sports theories and management theories.

Third, the practice of sports management must not be divorced from the theories. The theoretical researchers rarely have the opportunity to participate in real sports management practice, on the other hand, the sports managers who have abundant experience seldom abstract the precious practice and experience to theoretical conclusions. Therefore, lack of momentum, the sports management is still in the awkward stagnation. "Management is a dynamic development process, and its ideology is in a continuous period of innovation, which is updated from initial administration to behavior management, from modern management to recent enterprise management." So is sports management, which can not be satisfied with the combination of management and sports. We should analyze and summer the experience and practice during the sports competitions, establishing our own sports management theories with Chinese characteristics, which would help us to promote the development of Chinese sports cause. And also we can make theoretical preparation for Chinese transformation to a super sports country.

## **3      *The Developmental Trend of Chinese Sports Management***

North American scholars of sports management believe that there are two main areas on the future research of sports management. First of all, the focuses of sports management extend to some other specific areas, such as amateur sports, sports and health centers, sports retail stores, sports consulting, professional sports and so on. Secondly, from a theoretical point of view, it is very important to establish a substantial theoretical foundation for sports management. So the further studies about managerial skills and sports theories during the sports management process can still be carrying on. In the future, the development of Chinese sports management is facing a serious tendency which is called "One Core, One Transformation". Firstly, we should summarize the advanced studies in order to master the "One Core" experience on sports management, which will implant sustainable momentum to the development of Chinese sports management. Sports management is a very practical subject, which has tremendous development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have been preparing for seven years since 2001, the year we successfully got the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games. Things turn out that we have held an excellent high-level Olympic Games in Beijing, which was the milestone on sports development in China.

The success of the Beijing Olympic Games marks that Chinese sports management has entered a new historical stage, which is the crystallization of sports management practice. This would be a serious project that to sum up the practical experience of significant sports events to a theoretical level, such as Beijing Olympic Games, the Tenth National Games, Guangzhou Asian Games and other large-scale sports competitions. And we firmly believe it is going to further improve the theoretical system of Chinese sports management. Secondly, with the developmental sports public services, sports management inevitably transformed from administrative sports management to public sports management, which provided precious theoretical support for the development and innovation of Chinese sports management. Therefore, how to organize public sports recourses effectively and taking full advantage of them and improving its service level, has already become the future research direction and focal points of Chinese sports management.

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