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Research on the Development Path of Leisure Sports Industry in Urban Suburbs under the Background of "Integration of Sports, Medicine, and Wellness": A Case Study of YangYi, WenZhou

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the in-depth implementation of the 'Healthy China 2030' strategy and the integration of sports, healthcare, and wellness becoming an industry trend, urban fringe areas—with their unique ecological advantages and strategic location—have emerged as key platforms for the integrated development of the recreational sports industry and wellness services. Taking Yangyi Subdistrict in Wenzhou as the subject of this study, this paper employs literature review, field research and interviews, combined with relevant policy documents from Wenzhou City and Ouhai District, to objectively analyse the current status, strengths, existing issues and developmental shortcomings of the integration of Yangyi's recreational sports industry with sports, healthcare, rehabilitation and elderly care. Ultimately, based on local conditions, the paper proposes a systematic development pathway centred on "resource integration - business model innovation - institutional safeguards", aiming to provide a theoretical framework and practical reference for similar regions.

Keywords

Integration of Sports, Medicine, and Wellness; Urban Suburbs; Leisure Sports Industry; Development Path; Yangyi, Wenzhou

1. Introduction

With the deepening of China's urbanization process and the rising health awareness of residents, urban peri-urban areas, with their superior ecological background and geographical advantages, are becoming a hot spot for undertaking the spillover of urban health and leisure demand and developing emerging healthcare and wellness industries. The traditional leisure sports industry can no longer meet the market demand for integrated health services covering "prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and wellness", thus the integration of sports, medicine, healthcare and

wellness has become an inevitable direction of industrial upgrading.

As a national pilot city for running sports through social forces and a builder of the National Sports and Health City, Wenzhou has carried out forward-looking exploration in promoting the integration of sports with medicine, healthcare and wellness, and issued a series of supporting policies. Yangyi Subdistrict is located in the central and western part of Lucheng District, boasting scarce ecological and sports resources such as Xijiao Provincial Forest Park, Yangyi Reservoir and a golf course. It planned to build a Featured Fashion Sports Town as early as 2016. However, its development has not been smooth sailing, and the implementation of the plan was once hindered by factors such as changes in development entities. At present, under the new opportunity of Wenzhou being selected as the national pilot city for "promoting sports consumption and event economy", it is of important theoretical value and practical urgency to re-examine and systematically plan the development path of Yangyi's leisure sports industry under the background of sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness integration. Based on this, this paper takes Yangyi Subdistrict of Wenzhou as a case to explore the development path of the leisure sports industry in urban peri-urban areas under the background of sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness integration, which has important practical significance.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Literature Review Method

As one of the core supporting methods of this paper, it is mainly used to sort out relevant theoretical basis, policy basis and research status, so as to lay a theoretical framework for the research. The specific implementation process is as follows:First, determine the scope of literature retrieval and keywords. The core keywords are "sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness integration", "leisure sports industry", "urban peri-urban areas", "sports-medicine integration", "integration of leisure sports and healthcare and wellness", and the extended keywords include "leisure sports in urban peri-urban areas", "practical cases of sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness integration", "leisure sports industry in Wenzhou", etc.Second, select authoritative retrieval platforms. Relevant journal papers, dissertations and conference papers published from 2018 to 2025 were retrieved through Chinese core databases such as CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), Wanfang Database and VIP Database. Meanwhile, policy documents and development reports issued on the official websites of the General Administration of Sport of China, Zhejiang Provincial Sports Bureau and Wenzhou Municipal Sports Bureau were retrieved to ensure the timeliness of the literature and policies.Third, screen and sort out the literature. The retrieved literature was classified and screened, and those irrelevant to the research theme and of low quality were eliminated. Finally, 86 core literatures and 12 relevant policy documents were selected, including 4 latest policy documents from

2025 to 2026.Fourth, analyze and apply the literature. The screened literature was deeply studied to sort out the core theories, research hotspots and existing research gaps of the integration of sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness and urban peri-urban leisure sports industry. Combined with the retrieved policy documents, the policy orientation and practice direction of the research were clarified, which provided theoretical support and policy basis for the analysis of current situation, problem analysis and path design of the paper.

2.2. Interview Method

As the core empirical research method of this paper, it is used to obtain first-hand data on the integrated development of the leisure sports industry and sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness model in Yangyi Subdistrict, Wenzhou, to ensure that the research fits the reality. The survey was conducted from October 2025 to January 2026 in three stages:The first stage is the survey preparation stage, in which the survey purpose, scope and content were clarified, a detailed survey plan was formulated, a survey record form was designed, the division of labor of the investigators was clarified, and communication was conducted in advance with the relevant persons in charge of Yangyi Subdistrict Office, Community Health Service Center and leisure sports enterprises to determine the survey time and process.The second stage is the field investigation stage, which covers the whole area of Yangyi Subdistrict, focusing on three types of venues: First, professional leisure sports venues (Oriental Yangyi Golf Course, Yangyi Subdistrict Sports Center), with detailed records of venue operation mode, project setting, development of sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness services, facility allocation and staffing. Second, community fitness spots (34 in total). 15 community fitness spots were randomly selected to investigate the maintenance of facilities, the development of fitness programs, the participation of residents and the availability of fitness instructors. Third, outdoor leisure sports venues (15 in total), focusing on the fitness trails in Xijiao Forest Park and the waterfront fitness belt of Yangyi Reservoir, to record the supporting facilities of the venues, the setting of health tips and tourist flow.The third stage is the survey summary stage, in which the data, photos and records obtained from the field investigation were classified and sorted out, the problems and highlights found in the survey process were sorted out, and a field investigation report was formed combined with subsequent interviews and data, which provided empirical support for the analysis of current situation and problems.

2.3. Field Investigation Method

As a supplement to the field investigation method and data analysis method, it is used to obtain more targeted and detailed information, and understand the demands and opinions of all parties on the integrated development of sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness and leisure sports. The semi-structured

interview method was adopted in the interview, and the interview outline was designed in advance with targeted questions set around the research theme. The interviewees were divided into four categories to ensure the comprehensiveness of the interview coverage. The specific interview details are as follows:First, relevant government officials (2 staff members each from the cultural tourism, sports, health departments of Yangyi Subdistrict Office), focusing on the development planning of Yangyi's leisure sports industry, the implementation of relevant policies for sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness integration, capital investment, existing difficulties and future plans.Second, operators of leisure sports enterprises (8 persons in total, including the persons in charge of Oriental Yangyi Golf Course, local sports training companies and healthcare and wellness service enterprises), focusing on the enterprise operation mode, development of sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness services, talent reserve, market demand and development dilemmas.Third, professional and technical personnel (6 persons in total, including medical staff of Community Health Service Center and staff of Wenzhou Sports Medicine Hospital's Yangyi service point), focusing on the difficulties in the development of sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness services, residents' health needs, and the gap of professional talents.Fourth, local residents (30 residents of different age groups and occupations were randomly selected, including the elderly, teenagers and office workers), focusing on residents' leisure sports participation habits, demand for sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness services, satisfaction with existing leisure sports facilities and services, as well as comments and suggestions.

After the interview, the interview recordings were transcribed, the core viewpoints and key information were extracted, and the demands of all parties and existing problems were sorted out by category, which provided targeted support for problem analysis and path design.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1. Unique Resource Endowment and Spatial Advantages of Yangyi

Yangyi has inherent natural advantages for the development of peri-urban sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness industry. Two-thirds of its jurisdiction area is low hills and gentle slopes, with Xijiao Provincial Forest Park and Yangyi Reservoir, forming an ecological base of "urban green lung" and "gorge and flat lake", which provides an excellent venue for forest healthcare and outdoor sports.

Meanwhile, Yangyi is located in the peri-urban area of Wenzhou downtown, only 10 kilometers away from the downtown with convenient transportation, which can quickly undertake the demand of downtown residents for leisure fitness and healthcare vacation. In 2025, the per capita annual sports consumption expenditure of Wenzhou residents reached 3,676.4 yuan, providing sufficient consumption support for Yangyi's leisure sports industry. At the same time, it is close to Wenzhou

Railway Station and Wenzhou Airport, which is convenient for attracting tourists from surrounding cities. Especially with the opportunity of Wenzhou being selected as the national pilot city for sports consumption and event economy, the tourist source channels have been further expanded, providing sufficient tourist source support for the development of the leisure sports industry. As an urban peri-urban area, it avoids the crowding and noise of the downtown while having the convenient supporting facilities of the city, making it the first choice for citizens' short-distance leisure and healthcare trips.

3.2. Existing Sports Industry Foundation and Brand Accumulation

Yangyi has accumulated a certain foundation in the sports field: it has Oriental Yangyi Golf Course, the only one in southern Zhejiang and northern Fujian, which is a symbol of high-end leisure sports; the football brand of Yangyi No.2 Primary School has delivered talents for the country, laying a foundation for youth sports training. In addition, although the early planned Featured Fashion Sports Town has experienced ups and downs, it has introduced concepts such as hiking, mountain biking and water sports, reserving space for industrial upgrading.

Yangyi's leisure sports projects can be roughly divided into three categories:First, outdoor leisure category, including brisk walking, mountaineering, cycling, fishing, etc., which are carried out relying on ecological resources such as Xijiao Forest Park and Yangyi Reservoir, and are the most popular leisure sports projects for citizens.Second, characteristic sports category, with golf as the core. Oriental Yangyi Golf Course is an international standard 18-hole 72-par course with a total fairway length of 7057 yards, equipped with multi-functional clubhouses, driving ranges and other facilities. In 2025, new golf healthcare experience projects were added, and 5-7 various golf events are held annually, such as BMW Cup and VOLVO Cup, attracting golf lovers from surrounding cities.Third, public fitness category, including square dance, badminton, table tennis, simple fitness, etc., which are mainly carried out in community fitness spots and subdistrict sports centers. In 2025, 2 special projects including Tai Chi for the elderly and outdoor outreach for teenagers were added to meet the fitness needs of different groups.

3.3. Strong Support from Wenzhou's Macro Policy Environment

At the municipal level, Wenzhou has taken "sports-medicine integration" and "sports-tourism integration" as the key points of sports industry work, and clearly proposed to build a "province-leading production, education and research base of sports medicine". In the Implementation Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption, the municipal government encourages the development of emerging formats such as sports health, and supports social forces to participate in the construction and operation of sports

venues in various modes. In particular, the Opinions on Encouraging Social Forces to Invest in the Construction and Operation of Sports Venues has removed policy obstacles for the construction of sports facilities by using idle space, space under bridges, etc.

In terms of healthcare and wellness, Wenzhou is striving to promote the interaction of formats such as "healthcare + sports", and has laid out a number of high-end healthcare and wellness projects including Qidu International Healthcare and Wellness Center, providing a model for industrial integration of the sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness model. In 2025, Wenzhou was selected as a national pilot city for sports consumption, which has injected new momentum into the event economy and "sports +" integrated consumption.

3.4. Practical Dilemmas in the Development of Yangyi's Leisure Sports Industry

3.4.1. Insufficient Depth of Sports-Medicine-Healthcare-Wellness Integration and Imperfect Service System

"Sports", "medicine", "healthcare" and "wellness" are under the administration of different administrative departments, resulting in barriers in planning, standards, data sharing and other aspects. At present, although Wenzhou is advocating integration, the key support systems such as cross-departmental collaborative working mechanism and interdisciplinary talent team, as mentioned in the proposal of Committee Member Cao Gaozhong, are still in the initial stage of construction. The main manifestations are as follows:

First, Yangyi lacks local professional enterprises or institutions that can integrate and operate the "sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness" complex, and has not formed a full-coverage, full-process sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness service system for all population groups.Second, the combination of leisure sports projects and healthcare and wellness services is not close. Most projects are still dominated by traditional leisure fitness, lacking personalized sports and healthcare projects for chronic disease rehabilitation, elderly healthcare, youth physical fitness improvement, etc., and fail to fully reflect the core concept of Exercise is Medicine.Third, there is a serious shortage of professional talents. The interdisciplinary talents of "sports-medicine integration" who master both sports science and rehabilitation medicine are in severe shortage, which restricts the improvement of service quality. Most of the community fitness guidance is undertaken by volunteers with insufficient professional level, so it is difficult to provide scientific exercise prescription, rehabilitation guidance and other services. The connection with the professional resources of Wenzhou Sports Medicine Hospital is not close enough. According to the 2025 survey, only 12% of residents can obtain professional sports rehabilitation guidance.

3.4.2. Imperfect Supporting Facilities and Service Quality to Be Improved

Although the number of leisure sports venues in Yangyi has been increasing gradually, there are still obvious shortcomings in supporting facilities, which is far behind the supporting level of Wenling Gold Coast Trail Running Race and Panzhihua Donghua Mountain Sports Park:

First, the supporting facilities of outdoor leisure sports venues are insufficient. For example, although leisure stations and first-aid equipment have been added to the fitness trails in Xijiao Forest Park, there is still a lack of toilets and lighting facilities. The waterfront fitness belt of Yangyi Reservoir lacks lighting facilities, which affects citizens' night exercise.Second, there is a shortage of healthcare and wellness supporting facilities, and a lack of professional facilities such as rehabilitation physiotherapy centers and health monitoring centers, which cannot meet the healthcare needs of residents, and is significantly behind the facility configuration of Longxia Community Sports and Health Center.Third, the service quality is not high. The operation and management of leisure sports venues are not standardized, some community fitness spots lack special maintenance, and the equipment is seriously aging. At the same time, there is a lack of professional service personnel, so it is difficult to provide high-quality fitness guidance, consulting and other services.

By the end of 2025, the per capita sports venue area of Yangyi Subdistrict was 3.15 square meters, still lower than the city's average level of 3.32 square meters, and there is still a gap in venue supply.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

4.1. Path of Resource Integration and Spatial Optimization

- The "one core" refers to the Linli Comprehensive Sports, Healthcare and Wellness Service Core. Taking Linli Area as the core, in response to residents' demands, priority is given to using the space under bridges, idle buildings, etc., to intensively build a number of public fitness venues such as basketball, badminton and tennis courts. Meanwhile, introduce the mode of combining "People's Gym" with community health service stations, to build a community "sports-medicine integration" demonstration site integrating basic fitness, physical fitness monitoring, health consultation and chronic disease exercise intervention.
- The "two belts" refer to the Oujiang Waterfront Sports and Leisure Belt and the Xijiao Forest Healthcare and Wellness Belt. Relying on the waterfront landscape belt formed by the Oujiang Seawall Project, build smart running tracks and cycling lanes, set up health indicator monitoring points, and develop waterfront leisure sports. In-depth development of Xijiao Forest Park will be carried out, on the premise of ecological protection, to plan forest hiking and mountain biking routes with different intensity levels. Drawing on the experience of Zeya Maan

Rock Base, supporting forest healthcare and wellness stations will be built, and healthcare projects such as forest meditation and climate therapy will be introduced.

- The "three areas" refer to the High-end Leisure Sports Area (Golf Area), Water Sports and Rest Area (Reservoir Area), and Mountain Outreach and Research & Study Area (Deep Forest Park Area), to realize differentiated development. The Golf Area focuses on business leisure and high-end customized rehabilitation training; the Reservoir Area develops water sports such as fishing and kayaking, and builds meditation homestays and Zen centers along the lake; the Mountain Area develops products such as youth outdoor research and study, team outreach and extreme sports.

4.2. Path of Format Innovation and Product Upgrading

Combined with the health needs of different groups, create diversified and personalized sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness leisure sports projects:

For the elderly, carry out low-intensity leisure sports projects such as Tai Chi, square dance and sitting fitness, combined with home-based bedridden rehabilitation services, to realize the integration of elderly care and healthcare. Design "sports + rehabilitation and healing" products: For people with sports injuries, post-operative rehabilitation and chronic diseases, introduce professional sports rehabilitation therapists and physiotherapists, and carry out characteristic rehabilitation courses such as water rehabilitation training, mountain hiking rehabilitation and traditional Chinese medicine Daoyin therapy by using the natural environment and professional equipment.

In conjunction with community health service centers and Wenzhou Sports Medicine Hospital, formulate personalized exercise prescriptions, carry out mild leisure sports projects such as brisk walking and Tai Chi to assist chronic disease rehabilitation. For teenagers, carry out sports projects such as football, badminton and outdoor outreach, combined with physical fitness improvement guidance, to promote the healthy growth of teenagers. For office workers, carry out leisure sports projects such as yoga, cycling and meditation to relieve work pressure and realize physical and mental healthcare.

Meanwhile, relying on the ecological resources of Xijiao Forest Park, drawing on the "one section, one product" mode of Panzhihua Donghua Mountain Sports Park, create characteristic projects of "ecological fitness + healthcare and wellness vacation", and launch high-end healthcare and leisure packages combined with golf to increase industrial added value.

4.3. Path of Implementation Guarantee and Mechanism Innovation

Strengthen the support of policies, entities and talents. It is recommended that the Lucheng District Government take the lead to establish a Joint Meeting System for

the Development of Yangyi Sports-Medicine-Healthcare-Wellness Industry with the participation of multiple departments including sports, health, civil affairs, cultural tourism, natural resources, to coordinate planning, approval and supervision, and break down administrative barriers.

Stimulate the vitality of social forces in running sports, fully implement various preferential policies of Wenzhou for social forces to run sports, and attract experienced municipal state-owned enterprises or professional private enterprises such as Modern Elderly Care Industry Development Company and Greentown Healthcare to invest in and operate the sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness complex through PPP, long-term lease, cooperative construction and other modes. The government focuses on building a platform and providing policies and basic supporting facilities.

Build an interdisciplinary talent system for "sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness", for example, cooperate with local universities and hospitals in Wenzhou to establish a talent cross-training and practice base. Provide sports medicine knowledge training for existing social sports instructors, and scientific fitness guidance training for grassroots medical staff. At the same time, formulate special policies to introduce high-end talents in the fields of sports medicine, rehabilitation therapy, health management, etc..

Explore diversified investment and financing and consumption incentives, and actively strive for provincial and municipal sports industry and healthcare industry guiding funds. Explore the feasibility of including eligible "sports-medicine integration" health service items (such as exercise prescription implementation and rehabilitation training) into the payment scope of medical insurance personal accounts or long-term care insurance. Distribute sports consumption coupons to citizens, and focus on subsidizing sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness services to cultivate the market.

4.4. Strengthen Publicity and Promotion to Expand Brand Influence

Build a comprehensive online and offline publicity and promotion system. Use new media platforms such as WeChat Official Account, WeChat Video Account, Douyin and Xiaohongshu, combined with Yangyi's ecological and sports characteristics, to create an exclusive publicity IP, design a characteristic LOGO and publicity slogan, and improve brand recognition.

Hold regular characteristic leisure sports events, such as Yangyi Forest Healthcare and Wellness Fitness Festival and Golf Elite Tournament, to form a brand event IP. Excavate typical cases of the integration of leisure sports and sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness in Yangyi for publicity and promotion, to improve brand reputation. Meanwhile, carry out linked publicity combined with large-scale events such as Wenzhou Marathon to expand the influence of Yangyi's leisure sports brand.

In summary, the development of "sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness" integrated leisure sports industry in Yangyi Subdistrict of Wenzhou is a strategic choice for it to give full play to the ecological advantages of peri-urban areas, undertake urban health demand, and realize green industrial transformation. The key to its success lies in: integrating mountain, water, forest and lake resources through systematic planning, opening up the service chain of sports, medicine, healthcare and wellness through format innovation, and activating social capital and talent elements through mechanism reform. The practice of Yangyi can not only provide a peri-urban model for Wenzhou to build a National Sports and Health City and Happy Wenzhou, but also its experience in using low hills and gentle slopes and space under bridges to develop integrated industries can provide important reference for the green development of similar urban peri-urban areas across the country. In the future, with the deepening of the integration mechanism and the maturity of the market, Yangyi is expected to evolve from the blueprint of Featured Fashion Sports Town to a well-known peri-urban sports-medicine-healthcare-wellness destination in the Yangtze River Delta, and truly realize the vision of "Sports Make Life Better".

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