

# ***Research on Development Status and Economic Impact of Sports Training Industry under the Background of College Admission Policy***

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**Abstract.** This study examines China's sports training industry against the backdrop of educational reforms, including physical education entrance examination reform and the integration of sports and education. Using a combination of literature review, field research, and case analysis, the study covers 12 sports training institutions across Guangdong, Hunan, and Zhejiang provinces, with interviews involving institution leaders, coaches, and parents. Key findings reveal that while online-merge-offline transformation is prevalent in first- and second-tier cities, traditional offline models still dominate county-level markets, indicating a supply-demand mismatch. The study systematically analyzes how educational policies drive industry development, assesses current conditions, identifies challenges, and explores multidimensional economic impacts. It proposes stratified, high-quality development strategies from policy, industry, institutional, and societal perspectives. Findings show that college admission policies influence the industry through a cascading mechanism, with different policy types yielding distinct driving effects. Although the industry is expanding rapidly, challenges persist, including structural imbalances, lagging standardization, policy-market misalignment, and insufficient sustainable development capacity. The study suggests that coordinated efforts are needed to promote high-quality development, including improving regulatory systems, optimizing resource allocation, enhancing institutional competitiveness, and building collaborative service systems. The research enriches theoretical frameworks on sports-education integration and sports industry economics, offering practical references for policymakers and industry practitioners.

**Keywords:** College admission policy, sports training industry, integration of sports and education, economic impact, industrial upgrading

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Research background and significance**

In recent years, the reform of China's education system has continued to deepen, the scores of physical education entrance examinations have increased, and the process evaluation pilot has been steadily promoted across multiple regions. The policy of integration of sports and education has

been steadily promoted, the system of individual sports recruitment has been continuously optimized, and the weight of sports literacy in the evaluation of entering a higher school has been significantly improved, which has become the core driving force to incite the demand for youth sports training. As an important segment emerging from the deep integration of the sports industry and educational services, sports training industry plays a key role in the supply of youth sports services. According to Yang and Liu, the sports training industry plays a central role in delivering youth sports services and supporting national fitness objectives [1]. The quality of its development significantly impacts teenagers' physical fitness, sports industry upgrading, and educational modernization.

In this context, in recent years, the number and market scale of sports training institutions in China have continued to expand rapidly, and the industry has entered a stage of rapid growth. The market scale continues to expand, operational models continue to evolve innovatively, and the integration of sports and education is deeply promoted. As noted by Lin and Liu, structural imbalances and insufficient standardization are prominent challenges accompanying the industry's rapid growth [2]. However, the rapid expansion of the industry also exposes problems such as low standardization and prominent tendency to take exams. It can only be summarized in the introduction that there is an imbalance in the market demand structure. There are still practical problems in the industry, such as excessive test-taking and increased burden. Based on this, the research systematically studies the development status and economic impact of sports training industry based on the background of deepening the policy of entering a higher school, excavates the development pain points of the industry and puts forward targeted countermeasures, which can not only enrich the relevant theories of sports education integration and sports industry economy, but also provide practical reference for policy makers and industry practitioners, with both theoretical and practical value.

## 1.2. Research status

The research on sports training industry in foreign countries started earlier, focusing on the integration mechanism of sports training and youth sports development. The related research has formed a systematic explanation framework in the aspects of supply and demand structure, operation mode and quality evaluation of the training market, and has formed a relatively perfect institutionalized practice in teacher certification, curriculum standardization and industry supervision, which provides an important reference for industrial standardization and professional development [3].

With the deepening of higher education entrance policies and industry development, scholarly attention has progressively increased. The existing research results mostly focus on the influence of the reform of the senior high school entrance examination on the youth sports training demands, the development path of the sports training industry under the background of the integration of sports and education, and the standardized governance of the sports training industry, and have achieved a series of phased results. However, from the existing research, there are still obvious shortcomings: first, the research on the driving mechanism of the policy of entering a higher school to the sports training industry is not systematic, and the transmission path and differentiation effect of different policies have not been clarified; Second, the research on the economic impact of sports training industry is scattered, and a multi-dimensional systematic analysis framework has not been formed; Third, there is a lack of differentiated research on the sports training market in different regions and stages of development, and a complete research system of "policy-driven, industrial development-

economic impact-countermeasure optimization" has not yet been established, and related research still needs to be further deepened and improved.

### 1.3. Research ideas

The research takes the deepening of entrance policy as the research background, takes the sports training industry as the research object, and follows the logical thinking of "policy analysis-current situation analysis-problem excavation-countermeasures" to carry out research. First, this study systematically analyzes core higher education entrance policies that significantly influence the sports training industry, and analyzes its driving mechanism and differentiation effect on the industry; Secondly, it systematically combs the development status of sports training industry under the background of further education policy, and summarizes the core characteristics of industrial development; Dig deep into the deep-seated problems and constraints in the process of industrial development again; Finally, combined with the current situation and existing problems of the industry, the research puts forward high-quality development countermeasures and suggestions from four levels: policy, industry, institution and society, so as to promote the sustainable development of sports training industry.

## 2. The driving mechanism of the entrance policy to the sports training industry

### 2.1. The core entrance policy system framework

At present, China has formed a trinity policy framework of "inclusiveness+specialization+systematicness". In terms of the reform of the senior high school entrance examination for physical education, the national score has been continuously improved, and the process evaluation has been fully implemented. For example, the total score of the senior high school entrance examination for physical education in Hohhot reached 80, and the dual mechanism of "process evaluation+special assessment" directly linked the performance of physical education with further studies. In terms of integration of physical education and education, the Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Physical Education and Education to Promote the Healthy Development of Teenagers in 2020 promoted the two-way opening of school physical education and social training resources, encouraged social forces to enter the campus, and opened up channels for sports specialty students to enter higher schools. In terms of sports singles, in 2025, the number of applicants nationwide exceeded 152,000, up 18.3% year-on-year, and the market scale reached 2.76 billion yuan, up 42.1% compared with the enrollment scale of colleges and universities in 2020. The enrollment reform of high-level athletes requires that the cultural achievements should not be lower than the second line, forcing the dual-track training of "skills+culture". In terms of comprehensive quality evaluation, "physical and mental health" as the core dimension covers physical fitness test, sports skills, exercise duration and other indicators, and the evaluation results directly affect the admission of key high schools. For example, In Shanghai's system, a "qualified" rating in comprehensive quality evaluation contributes 50 points toward admission decisions. The above policies form synergy through the adjustment of evaluation criteria, the opening of school resources and the supplementary supply of social training, and jointly expand the industrial demand and supply space.

## 2.2. Policy transmission mechanism analysis

The policy of further education follows the conduction path of "policy guidance → concept change → demand release → market expansion → industrial upgrading → ecological improvement". In the policy guidance section, there were 47 national and provincial sports entrance policy documents from 2016 to 2024, and the scores of senior high school entrance examination generally increased by 20-30 points. Regarding conceptual shifts, the percentage of parents recognizing sports performance as influential for higher education opportunities rose from 41% (2019) to 79% (2024). Li and Wang document that entrance policy changes have significantly increased both training participation rates and household expenditure on youth sports training [4]. In terms of market expansion, the number of national sports training institutions increased from 32,000 to 58,000, the market scale exceeded 120 billion yuan, and new formats such as on-site training rose rapidly. In the process of industrial upgrading, the proportion of R&D investment in head institutions increased from 2.1% to 4.5%, and the coverage rate of intelligent teaching system reached 63%. In the aspect of ecological improvement, the number of school-enterprise cooperation projects has increased by 35% annually, and 12 cities have established a school-training resource sharing mechanism.

## 2.3. The differential driving effect of different policies

The reform of physical education senior high school entrance examination incites the mass exam-oriented training market, expands the demand for short-term grading by improving the marginal influence of further studies, covers all junior high school students, focuses on the test items with the period of 3-6 months before the exam, and becomes the core driving force for scale expansion. Bai and Shi emphasize that the sports single-recruit policy drives the specialization and premium pricing of professional training services [5]. Leading institutions have achieved high enrollment rates through a dual-track model integrating athletic proficiency and academic achievement. The policy of integration of sports and education breaks down the resource barrier, and promotes the opening of venues, the sharing of teachers and the opening of competitions. Jiaozuo integrates venue resources through collaborative governance involving government guidance and social coordination", which effectively promotes the integration of learning and training. The comprehensive quality evaluation policy transforms the demand through the enrollment rules. Taking Maoming as an example, Admission to prestigious high schools requires a comprehensive quality evaluation rating of Grade C or higher, and the dimension of "physical and mental health" covers sports performance and daily performance, forming a transmission chain of "grade requirements → sports quantification → family training needs".

## 3. The development status of sports training industry under the background of further education policy

### 3.1. The exceeding of the 100-billion market scale and the formation of a dual-core growth pattern

According to the "Announcement on the Total Scale and Added Value of National Sports Industry in 2024" jointly issued by the National Bureau of Statistics and the State Sports General Administration, China's sports education and training sector achieved a total output value of 299.8 billion yuan in 2024, with an added value of 239.8 billion yuan in 2024, with the added value reaching 239.8 billion yuan, accounting for 15.0% of the added value of sports service industry,

indicating that sports training industry has become the core segment of sports service industry. From the time series, the added value of sports training industry increased from 23.06 billion yuan in 2016 to 239.8 billion yuan in 2024, with a compound annual growth rate of 34%, showing a rapid growth trend. Wang and Li identify a dual-core growth structure in China's sports training industry, driven separately by exam-oriented and professional training demands [6]. In 2025, the number of applicants for sports single strokes in China exceeded 152,000, an increase of 18.3% year-on-year, and the market scale reached 2.76 billion yuan.

### **3.2. Significant regional development differences and the emergence of sinking markets as a new growth engine**

China's sports training industry presents a regional pattern of "maturity of first-and second-tier cities and rapid growth of third-and fourth-tier and county markets". The competition in first-and second-tier cities is fierce, the number of institutions tends to be saturated, and the concentration of head brands increases; Third-and fourth-tier cities and county markets are becoming a new blue ocean for industrial expansion. The rapid development of sinking markets stems from multiple contributing factors of the sinking market benefits from multiple factors: the change of parents' concept, the improvement of sports facilities and the increase of talent supply jointly promote the rapid growth of the market. He and Zhang provide empirical evidence that sinking markets are becoming a new growth engine, citing cases where local programs achieved rapid enrollment expansion [7]. These cases show that the sinking market is becoming an important power source for industrial scale expansion.

### **3.3. Transformation to the OMO operating model and deep digital empowerment**

The sports training industry is accelerating the transformation to Online-Merge-Offline (OMO) integration, and digital technology is deeply integrated into the whole process of teaching and operation. At the level of customer acquisition, online channel has become an important traffic portal. Oriental Morning Star leverages Douyin (TikTok China) live broadcasts to achieve extensive brand visibility, and successfully runs through the closed loop of "online customer acquisition-online conversion-offline delivery". On the teaching level, intelligent equipment is widely used, and Leading institutions have implemented motor function evaluation systems to enable personalized instruction; Smart wearable devices, AI motion capture and other technologies monitor sports data in real time to assist precise guidance. At the management level, the digital system has significantly improved the operational efficiency. For example, The introduction of a dedicated application for swimming training reduced administrative booking workload by 99%, and sales reports and attendance data have become the basis for decision-making.

### **3.4. Deepened integration of physical education and general education and continuous linkage of in-school and out-of-school training systems**

The integration of sports and education has become the mainstream trend of industrial development, and the cooperation between schools and enterprises has continued to deepen, gradually building a youth sports training system based on school sports, supplemented by social training and promoted by professional training. At the level of training system, Thirty-nine primary and secondary schools in Huaiyin District, Jinan, Shandong Province established formal partnerships with 29 sports clubs to explore the system of "listing bases" and "white list". At the level of connection inside and outside

the school, all localities explore three channels: the records of training growth files are jointly recognized by institutions and schools and then stored in the comprehensive quality evaluation files; Physical measurement data are uploaded as a supplement to process evaluation after being tested by unified standards; The sports grade certificate is included in the evaluation system of entering a higher school after being certified. These practices show that the integration of physical education and education is moving from policy advocacy to institutionalized practice.

#### **4. The existing problems in the development of sports training industry**

##### **4.1. Prominent structural imbalance**

At present, the sports training market presents obvious structural imbalance characteristics. First, the demand structure relies too much on the need for further studies. 62% of parents enroll their children primarily to improve senior high school entrance examination scores of the senior high school entrance examination", while only 28% are concerned about "cultivating sports interest", so Curricula remain heavily exam-oriented, with simulation test courses comprising over 70% of offerings. Second, high-quality resources are highly concentrated in first-and second-tier cities, the coverage rate of head office stores exceeds 80%, and the supply of high-quality courses in the county market is seriously insufficient. Third, the training content is not synchronized with the update of regional physical assessment indicators, and the curriculum update lags behind for 3-6 months after policy adjustment, which leads to the disconnection between training and assessment. Fourth, the training results lack standardized records and certification paths, and the off-campus training data has not been effectively connected with the school's comprehensive quality evaluation system, which affects parents' enthusiasm for continuous participation.

##### **4.2. Lagging industry standardization and standards development**

The sports training industry is still in the stage of extensive development, and the degree of standardization needs to be improved urgently. In contrast to European countries where standardized coach certification is well established, China currently lacks a unified professional qualification system for youth sports coaches [8]. Unlicensed coaches constitute over 40% of instructors in county-level markets, with some institutions employing undergraduate students as interim instructors. The construction of curriculum standardization is lagging behind, and there is a lack of unified motor skill level standard and teaching outline, so it is difficult for parents to judge the quality of curriculum. The qualifications of institutions are uneven, and the phenomenon of "small scattered" is common. Some institutions have no qualifications for running schools, no fixed venues and no safety plans. Per the Ministry of Education's special rectification notice, unlicensed institutions exhibit multiple compliance deficiencies, such as exaggerated publicity, exam-oriented courses, illegal fees and so on, and it is urgent to rectify the market order.

##### **4.3. Inefficient policy–market convergence mechanisms**

Jiang and Liu highlight that the lack of integration between training outcomes and entrance certification mechanisms weakens the policy-market linkage [9]. Other scholars have also held similar views [10]. So the entrance value of off-campus training is difficult to reflect. The financial support policy is obviously absent. At present, the support mainly focuses on the opening of public venues and the construction of national fitness facilities, and no special subsidies for social sports training institutions have been set up. Significant regional disparities persist in policy

implementation efficacy. The integration policy of sports and education in the eastern region has landed quickly, while the promotion in some parts of the central and western regions has been slow. The implementation of the same policy in different provinces is significantly different, resulting in an unbalanced industrial development environment.

#### **4.4. Insufficient capacity for sustainable development**

The overall profitability of the industry is weak, and sustainable development is facing challenges. The profit model is single, and more than 90% of the organization's revenue depends on offline class fees, so the overall anti-risk ability is weak. Operating costs continue to rise, with venue rents accounting for 30%-50% of revenue in first-and second-tier cities, and labor costs of high-quality coaches rising by 15%-20% annually, squeezing profit margins. The mismatch between supply and demand in the sinking market, Direct replication of mature urban models in county markets frequently results in poor adaptation to local conditions, and the lack of localization operation ability leads to a large number of institutional losses. Homogenization competition is serious. The physical training of senior high school entrance examination accounts for about 70% of the market, and the projects are concentrated in a few test items such as running, long jump and ball games. The price war is frequent, and the average profit rate of the industry has dropped from 18% in 2020 to 12% in 2024.

### **5. The countermeasures and suggestions for the high-quality development of sports training industry**

#### **5.1. Improving the regulatory system and convergence mechanism at the policy level**

Relevant authorities are recommended to strengthen the alignment between training outcomes and higher education certification pathways, and should promote the gradual inclusion of training files, physical test data and sports grade certificates into the comprehensive quality evaluation system. Authorities should introduce national industry standards and supervision system, formulate institutional access, teacher certification, curriculum quality norms, and establish a dynamic annual review and credit rating mechanism for qualifications. The Ministry of Education and the General Administration of Sport jointly carried out special rectification and should establish an institutional information disclosure platform. Authorities should implement differentiated regional support, establish a mechanism of "famous teachers going to teach" for the short board of teachers in the sinking market, and improve county supply through curriculum sharing, venue opening and sinking events. The government should improve financial incentives, set up special support funds for sports training, and give curriculum research and development, teacher training subsidies and venue rent relief to qualified institutions; Authorities should incorporate sports training into the catalogue of government-purchased services, and encourage schools to purchase after-school services from quality institutions.

#### **5.2. Optimizing resource allocation and ecological construction at the industrial level**

Relevant stakeholders should build a platform for sharing industrial resources. The government or industry associations will take the lead in establishing a platform to centrally publish the directory of compliance institutions, teacher qualifications, information on public venues and events, and provide school-enterprise cooperation and quality evaluation services to reduce information asymmetry. Authorities should promote the upgrading of industrial structure. Authorities should

guide institutions to transform into diversified courses, get rid of single exam-oriented and enrich product supply. Institutions should deepen the integration of physical education and business innovation, develop compound services such as health management and research experience, support institutions and schools to jointly build clubs and hold competitions, and form normal cooperation. Industry stakeholders should strengthen industry self-discipline. Authorities should promote the establishment of national and local sports training industry associations, establish credit evaluation and blacklist mechanisms, participate in the formulation of service standards and training quality evaluation, provide dispute mediation and compliance training, and promote the development of industry norms.

### **5.3. Institutional level to enhance core competitiveness**

Institutions should improve the level of professional operation. Institutions should improve the internal teacher training system, establish a graded promotion system for coaches, and regularly carry out teaching skills training and assessment. Institutions should introduce intelligent physical measurement equipment, artificial intelligence (AI) teaching systems, and big data management platforms to realize teaching data and intelligent management. Institutions should build a diversified profit model. Institutions should get rid of the single dependence on offline class fees, explore multiple income channels such as online course subscription, sports equipment sales, event organization, winter and summer camps, and enhance the ability to resist risks. Institutions should deepen the transformation of OMO model. Institutions should develop online course resource database to realize the closed loop of "online preview+offline training+online feedback"; Institutions should explore the operation strategy of "light assets+localization" in the sinking market, and expand rapidly by joining and cooperating in running schools. Institutions should strengthen differentiated competition. Institutions should focus on sub-areas to develop characteristic courses, such as adolescent posture correction, sports rehabilitation training, special competitive promotion, etc., to form brand recognition.

### **5.4. Building a collaborative service system at the social level**

All parties should strengthen propaganda and guidance, and establish a scientific concept of physical education. Relevant parties should popularize sports literacy idea through media, community and schools, and guide parents to focus on children's physical and mental health and interest in sports from "score-only theory". All stakeholders should build a "five-in-one" collaborative service system: overall supervision by the government, opening up resources in schools, providing professional services by institutions, organizing activities in communities, and cultivating family habits, and ensuring the concerted efforts of all parties through joint meetings and information sharing platforms. Authorities should encourage social forces to participate, support public welfare foundations and corporate social responsibility projects to promote the sinking of high-quality resources in the county. Authorities should build a social supervision platform, unblock the channels of complaints and reports, form a pluralistic co-governance pattern combining government supervision with public opinion supervision, and promote the transformation of the industry from scale expansion to quality upgrading.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. The main conclusions of the study

Based on the deepening of the entrance policy, this paper systematically analyzes the driving mechanism, development status, existing problems and economic impact of the sports training industry, and puts forward high-quality development countermeasures coordinated by the four parties. The main conclusions are as follows: First, the entrance policy drives industrial development through the transmission path of "policy guidance → concept change → demand release → market expansion → industrial upgrading → ecological improvement"; Policies such as the senior high school entrance examination, the integration of physical education and physical education, and the single move of physical education incite the public to take the exam, professional training and ecological improvement respectively, showing a differentiated driving effect. Second, the rapid expansion of industrial scale driven by policies has formed the characteristics of dual-core growth, the rise of sinking market, the transformation of OMO and the deepening of the integration of sports and education, but it also exposes problems such as structural imbalance, lagging standardization, poor convergence between policies and markets and insufficient endogenous motivation. Third, the industry has a multi-dimensional positive impact on economic and social development, driving the upgrading of sports industry and consumption transformation, creating a large number of jobs and promoting the ecological reconstruction of sports economy. Fourth, the high-quality development of industry needs the concerted efforts of policies, industries, institutions and society to realize the transformation from scale expansion to quality upgrading.

### 6.2. Prediction of industry development trend

In the future, China's sports training industry will enter a new stage of high-quality development with standardization, specialization, intelligence and integration. First, standardization and standardization have become the background of industry development, and standards such as industry access, teacher certification and curriculum system have been gradually improved, and the market order has been effectively rectified. Second, specialization and intelligence have become the core direction of industrial upgrading, and digital technology has deeply empowered the whole process of teaching and operation. Third, integration and diversification have become the mainstream form, the integration of sports and education has continued to deepen, and new formats and new scenes have emerged. Fourth, sinking and balance have become important features, high-quality resources have been accelerated to the county market layout, and regional development differences have gradually narrowed.

### 6.3. Future research direction expansion

There are still some limitations in this study, which can be deepened and expanded from the following aspects in the future: (1) to carry out empirical research on regional differentiation and explore the development characteristics and paths of different regions; Deepen the research on the integration mechanism of sports and education, and build an efficient and collaborative talent training system; Carry out research on industrial digital transformation and summarize the path and experience of institutional transformation; Construct an evaluation system for industrial sustainable development and quantitatively evaluate the quality of development; Carry out international

comparative research to provide reference for the high-quality development of China's sports training industry.

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