

Exploring the sustainable future of social sports organizations: A comparative study of governance models in China, Japan, and South Korea

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Abstract: Comparative analysis of the development history of sports social organizations in China, Japan and South Korea from multiple perspectives, in order to provide reference suggestions for solving the existing problems of the development of sports social organizations in China as well as for the sustainable development in the future. This paper explores the optimization path of sports social organizations in China by using the literature method and comparative analysis method. The study finds that the current development of sports social organizations in Japan and South Korea is characterized by independence and autonomy, a relatively rich number and variety of organizations, mutual separation of powers and responsibilities between government agencies and social organizations, and autonomous operation and efficient governance of sports social organizations. The development of sports social organizations in China has reached a new level since the founding of New China, and the Party's attention to and support for their development has been increasing, but China still has deficiencies in the number of organizations, organizational capacity, and policy system. The study concludes that Japan and South Korea have three development conditions for sports social organizations: a socially oriented governance system, a more complete policy and regulation system, and a standardized and efficient financial support system. The study concludes that the prosperity of sports social organizations is crucial in building a strong sports nation at the present time. Combining the successful experiences of Japan and South Korea and integrating into China's national conditions, we strive to build a governance system that combines government and society, construct a diversified financial support system, and improve the policy support system for sports organizations to promote the progress of sports social organizations in China, and open the way for the autonomy and independence of sports social organizations in China, and put the improvement of the governance system of sports social organizations on the agenda.

Keywords: China, Japan and Korea; sports social organizations; development experience; lessons learned

1. Introduction

Based on the literature and official documents currently available, the term "social sports organization" is generally mentioned in passing in official documents without detailed explanation. In research papers, there is also a lack of thorough discussion and differentiation of this concept and similar concepts. Current academic research on the concept of social sports organizations is relatively concentrated, but no unified concept has yet been established. The definition of social sports organizations primarily involves elements such as their types, attributes, goals, and characteristics. Wang et al. (2015) define social sports organizations as "non-profit

sports organizations voluntarily formed by people based on their own preferences”, such as various sports associations and non-profit sports clubs (Wang et al., 2015)., in his research on grassroots social sports organizations, emphasizes the characteristics of social sports organizations, defining them as “non-governmental, non-profit, organized, voluntary, and regional organizations engaged in public sports activities for the people” (Zheng et al., 2017). Yang et al. (2019) believe that social sports organizations not only have registered forms but also include unregistered forms, defining them as “legally registered or non-legally recognized non-profit groups independent of the government, aimed at achieving public interests” (Yang et al., 2019). Han Hui describes social sports organizations as groups with both power and responsibility, defining them as “non-profit social groups outside of the government that enjoy sports rights and bear sports responsibilities” (Han et al., 2017).

Therefore, before starting the article, it is necessary to define the concept of social sports organizations. The higher-level concept of social sports organizations is “social organizations”, which in social sciences has broad and narrow definitions. In the broad definition, social organizations refer to all group organizations in society, including families, schools, governments, etc. In the narrow definition, it refers to social groups that are independent of the government and gather together to achieve specific purposes. In Western societies, social organizations are also known by various names such as non-profit organizations, third-sector organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which essentially represent similar concepts.

Reflecting on the history of China’s sports development, social sports organizations have played a crucial role since the early days of the People’s Republic of China. During this period, the country abolished many feudal organizations and deregistered social groups that did not meet the needs of the times (Li et al., 1996; O’Brien et al., 1995). In 1953, the “Interim Measures for the Registration of Social Organizations” and its implementation rules were issued to manage and regulate the registration of social groups, laying the groundwork for the development of early social sports organizations. From 1978 to 2013, social sports organizations in China experienced phases of revival, standardization, stabilization, and structuralization. These organizations have increasingly contributed to promoting national fitness, popularizing sports culture, and enhancing public sports services. However, as China enters a new development stage, social sports organizations face new challenges such as funding shortages, unclear governance responsibilities, and incomplete supervision and evaluation mechanisms. The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China outlined the reform path for social sports organizations, and “the 19th National Congress report introduced the ‘Five-sphere Integrated’ concept” to correct the article usage and ensure consistency, assigning new missions to these organizations (Huang, 2020).” Compared with developed countries, social sports organizations in China are currently underdeveloped due to their late start and subsequent stagnation” for clarity and correctness. Issues such as “organizational involution,” lack of targeted regulations, and “unbalanced growth” in regions and organization types remain significant challenges (Han and Zheng, 2019).

This study aims to address the constraints on the development of social sports organizations in China by comparing the development paths and experiences of these

organizations in neighboring Japan and South Korea. It explores the future development paths for the sustainable growth of China's social sports organizations, taking into account government orientations, governance system construction, and future trends in nurturing these organizations. Firstly, this study starts from the development history of social sports organizations in China, Japan and South Korea, analyzes the development foundation and social conditions of social sports organizations in different countries, and reveals the development constraints at the macro level in terms of the relationship between government and society and the means of management; secondly, it analyzes the successful experiences of Japan and South Korea in the development history, and proposes strategies to effectively promote the sustainable development of China's social sports organizations in combination with China's actual situation. Finally, it provides a theoretical basis for exploring a model suitable for the sustainable development of social sports organizations in China.

2. Development and current status of social sports organizations in China, Japan, and South Korea

2.1. Development status of social sports organizations in China

In the early days of the People's Republic of China, the country adopted a policy of "combining popularization and improvement, with an emphasis on popularization" to expand sports participation and increase the role of sports in people's lives. The "Common Program" adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 1949 advocated for national sports (Literature Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 1992). Zhu De pointed out at the National Sports Workers' Congress that "Our sports movement must serve the people and serve the interests of national defense and people's health (Zhu, 1950). Develop sports and strengthen people's physical fitness" was also an important guiding thought for the early development of sports in China proposed by Mao Zedong, which all of which demonstrate that the new government cared about and attached importance to the people's sports and physical fitness. However, due to issues such as resource shortages, low productivity, and backward technology in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, a national system was adopted for the development of sports, where the state uniformly planned and arranged the investment and distribution of sports resources and unified the organization and implementation of mass sports activities. Precisely because China fully implemented the national system in the early stage, devoting more resources and energy to the development of competitive sports in order to raise the level of competitive sports in a short period of time, this resulted in very little investment in mass sports and a lagging pace (Literature Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 1992). Similarly, the management affairs of mass sports organizations were also entirely handled by government sports administrative departments, and mass sports organizations were managed through administrative means, severely lacking civilian participation in sports. From 1981, China began reforming its sports management system, enhancing the roles of sports federations

and associations. By 1992, Deng Xiaoping's southern tour speech emphasized deepening reforms and accelerating development, leading to a shift towards "small government, big society" and "socially-run sports" (Li, 2002). The 1993 "Opinions on Deepening Sports Reform" marked a transition from administrative management to association-based management of sports projects (Zhao et al., 2021). In 1994, the State Physical Culture and Sports Commission merged and established six sports event management centers. In 2005, the number of these centers was adjusted to 23 (Liu, 2008). According to the "Social Service Statistics Bulletin 2017" published by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2018 and the data released by the big data of the China Social Organizations Network, the number of sports social organizations increased from 23,000 in 2012 to 48,000 in 2017. The number doubled in five years, with an increase rate of 104% (Liu et al., 2014). With the development and reform of sports over the past few years, China's sports social organizations have gradually made breakthroughs in terms of quantity and development speed, and sports social organizations have become an important force in the governance system of the new era, and the legal policy environment applicable to the development of sports social organizations has also become more perfect, etc. (Pei, 2019). However, at present, sports social organizations in China are still facing problems such as unbalanced classification of organizations (e.g., the number of sports social groups is still higher than that of sports private non-enterprise units), failure to implement the relevant policies on cultivation and supervision, weak purchasing power of the government, relative lack of human resources, and insufficient funds for development. Therefore, in this context, it has become imperative to promote China's sports social groups in sustainable development (Pei, 2019).

2.2. Development status of sports social organizations in South Korea

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) is the highest government agency for domestic sports management, and its sports bureau carries out macro-management of domestic competitive sports and mass sports (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020). Meanwhile the Korea Mass Sports Association (KMSA), as a legal entity, accepted the macro-administration of the Korean Sports Association (KSA), which in turn is managed by the Sports Bureau of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT). The KSAA operates in a top-down, hierarchical management model. In addition to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Korea National Sports Promotion Foundation, the Korea Sports Association, and the National Sports Association are also responsible for managing and promoting the development of popular sports in Korea, of which the National Sports Association of Korea is a non-profit corporate entity, that is the direct promotional organization for popular sports in South Korea.

Before the 1980s, South Korea's sports policy was "government-led" and centered around the slogan "Physical strength is the strength of the nation," and the revitalization of sports was seen as the driving force of national unity and the foundation of national development. Beginning in the 1980s, "life sports" became active in South Korea, with the inauguration of professional soccer in 1981 and professional baseball in 1982. The successful hosting of the 1986 Asian Games and

the 1988 Olympic Games also provided a platform for life sports in the country. In 1988, after the success of the Seoul Olympics, South Korea began to shift the focus of development to mass sports (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020). The government carried out measures like ensuring the development of social sports by strengthening the construction of facilities, improving the system of social sports instructors, and actively guiding the public's participation in sports activities. At the same time, after the Seoul Olympics, the South Korean government completely withdrew from the sports market, allowing for its free development (Yan, 2010). The Ministry of Culture and Tourism was renamed, and sports management was subsequently handled solely by a Sports Bureau within it (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020).

In sports continuing to fade and the atmosphere of the civil society getting stronger (Yuan et al., 2011). In competitive sports, South Korea actively advocate the sports club system so that the government only work for macro-coordination. The development of sports in South Korea has received support from relevant government departments at the policy and legal levels. With the increase of domestic funds for the development of sports and the construction of various types of stadiums and facilities, Korean sports have been able to develop more and more vigorously.

In South Korea, an administrative department for sports has been established at the central government level to carry out related functions and policies, and local self-governing bodies are operating sports social organizations for the purpose of sports activities and health maintenance for local residents. In addition, in order to seek professionalism and efficiency in sports, there are also subordinate organizations that serve the public interest purpose of sports administration. In 1990, the Korean Government established the Comprehensive Plan for the Revitalization of National Lifestyle Sports (also known as the Tiger Plan) (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2011). While pursuing the continuous development of professional sports, the National Lifestyle Sports Association (1991) was established to specialize in lifelong sports, laying the foundation for the balanced development of lifelong sports. The Comprehensive Plan for the Revitalization of National Lifestyle Sports, Korea's first comprehensive plan for the promotion of lifelong sports, established a basic framework for the governance of sports policy at the national level. It included the central government, local governments, and civil society organizations, laying the foundation for a lifelong sports policy that involves the participation of all people. The program also emphasized the improvement of the training system for lifelong sports coaches, the development and promotion of lifelong sports programs, and the establishment of the Physical Fitness Standard Index. During this period, the Healthy Lifestyle Gymnastics program was developed and promoted throughout Korea. Additionally, Korea conducted the National Leisure Activity Participation Survey for the first time in December 1988 (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2011), the Lifestyle Sports Participation Survey every three years since 1989, every two years since 2006 and every one year since 2015. It provided basic information for the formulation of policies for the revitalization of national sports as well as for the development of social sports in the country. In 1993, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Sports and Youth were merged and reorganized into the Ministry of Culture and Sports (March, 1993) in

South Korea. The government showed a strong will to pursue the balanced growth of life sports and professional sports, pursuing the enhancement of national physical strength and the development of leisure life sports. The policy change reinforced the public's expectation for the development of private sports organizations (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020).

South Korea's First Five-Year Plan for the Revitalization of National Sports (1993–1997), from the viewpoint of revitalizing life sports, raised the participation rate in national sports activities to more than 50 per cent of the level of developed countries (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, 2011). In the Five-Year Plan for the Revitalization of National Sports (1998–2003), the main focuses included the expansion of national participation in sports activities, the training of sports instructors, and the expansion of comprehensive sports facilities. In support of sports for daily life, emphasis is placed on the promotion of national health, the provision of a variety of opportunities for sports for daily life, the expansion of opportunities for leisure activities and other health benefits, and the creation of a favorable atmosphere for sports for daily life. The Five-Year Plan for the Revitalization of National Sports (2003–2008) sets out the goals for the next five years, the first of which is to improve the nation's health and quality of life through the revitalization of daily life sports. At the same time, policies, systems, and regulations for private self-regulatory organizations, such as lifestyle sports groups, were formulated. In 2005, the National Sports Promotion Law was amended to establish the Korean Sports Association for the Disabled. The new government power in 2008, would increase the proportion of culture, arts, sports, and tourism in the nation's daily life. Improving conditions for participation in sports activities, improving the physical education environment, and expanding the number of living sports groups have also been proposed in the Cultural Vision, which is the goal of the sports policy. The basic direction of the sports policy of the Park Geun-hye administration (2013–2017) was to “create a new era of happiness and hope for the nation through participation in sports”, and to realize a healthy life through active sports (Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism, 2020). The Sports Outlook 2018 has abandoned the existing distinction between lifestyle sports and elite sports, and from the perspective of the nation, “accessible sports (increasing contact with lifestyle sports)”, “sports with a strong foundation”, and “expanding the base of sports” are the main goals of the Sports Policy. In May 2017, the Moon Jae-in administration proposed the expansion of sports participation opportunities, the establishment of a sports ecosystem in a fair and equitable manner, the enhancement of sports welfare, and the improvement of the treatment of sports instructors. The purpose of these initiatives was to realize a sports welfare state in which all nationals are able to enjoy sports. The promotion strategy is to “play sports together”, that is to play sports together with people in the community and those who have been alienated. The most representative strategy is the establishment of a sports club ecosystem.

2.3. Development status of social sports organizations in Japan

Japan has numerous social sports organizations, including the Japan Sports Association (JASA) and the Japan Olympic Committee (JOC). The JASA,

established in 1911, focuses on promoting lifelong sports and enhancing international competitiveness (Zhao, 2019). Post-World War II, the association was restructured to become a civilian sports organization, hosting the National Sports Festival to boost public morale.

The Japan Athletic Association (JASA), formerly known as the Dai Nippon Athletic Association (DNA), was founded in 1911 (Meiji 44) to participate in the Fifth Swedish Olympic Games, and its first president was Jigoro KANA (Zhao, 2019). JASA was admitted to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1912. From its inception, the DANSA's core mission was to "cultivate the spirit of sportsmanship, popularize and revitalize lifelong sports, and enhance international competitiveness", with the aim of improving the physical fitness of the people and the national sports competitiveness. In 1925, it was reorganized into a comprehensive organization of sports competitions, including land sports, water sports, and skiing (Liu and Pang, 2020) After the end of the Second World War, it was reorganized again in 1946 as a private sports organization, and held its first national sports meeting in the Keihanjin area to calm the fears of the people who had been living in turmoil in the post-war period. Today it has grown into the largest comprehensive sports event in Japan. In the same year, the Board of Directors of the Dai Nippon Sports Association formally established the Japan Olympic Committee (JOC) as an internal organization of the Dai Nippon Sports Association, whose main tasks are to be in charge of domestic and international sports and competitions, to select and send athletes to participate in a variety of international sports events, and to strengthen the ties between the national Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee, as well as the Olympic Committees of foreign countries, and so on.

In 1948, the Dai Nippon Athletic Association was officially renamed the Japan Athletic Association (JAA). After winning the right to host the 18th Summer Olympics in 1959, the JAA established the Japan Athletic Junior League (JJL) in 1962, borrowing from the Sports Junior League (SJL) practiced in Germany, which was a promotional measure for the country's young people and children's sports (Liu and Pang, 2020). The success of the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 gave another boost to the development of the JAA, as well as a demonstration of the successful experience of managing a sports organization. With the successful hosting of the Tokyo Olympics in Japan, the national interest in sports continued to rise. Taking this opportunity, the Japan Sports Association began to actively carry out various activities to revitalize national sports in the country, encouraging the public to participate. As a result, the sports industry in Japan flourished, with a great deal of impetus being given to sports diplomacy, the training of sports personnel, the promotion of lifelong sports for the nation, and scientific research in sports medicine. In the following year, the association developed a method of training coaches based on sports medicine and sports science with the financial support of the government (Feng, 2011), and established the Coaches' Training Committee to further promote the development of local sports. In 1989 (the first year of Heisei), the Japan Olympic Committee became independent from the Japan Sports Association organization, (Guo, 2015) and was no longer limited by national positions. It began to undertake sports affairs such as preparing for the Olympic Games, sending national delegations

to participate in events, and cultivating competitive sports athletes. The committees are run by members of the sports community and talented organizers.

Athletic organizations, sports associations, and international athletic federations are affiliated with the Japan Sports Association and JOC, and receive financial support such as sports promotion fees from the Japan Sports Association and JOC. Among them, the International Athletic Federation is mainly responsible for popularizing public sports, improving and strengthening the level of competitive sports, and participating in various international athletic competitions.

In Japan, there are also various regional sports organizations. The urban District Education Committee is mainly responsible for the management and rectification of sports and various sports facilities in the district together with sports associations and local sports organizations. Regional sports clubs and sports non-profit organizations (NPO) provide non-profit activities and sports public welfare services for the society such as sports revitalization (Sun, 2009). Japan has set up various kinds of social sports organizations with different scales and different purposes throughout the country, from sports groups that popularize individual sports events to regional comprehensive sports clubs and welfare sports undertakings that provide social public services.

In the Japanese sports governance system, the government is in a dominant position, but its function is only located in the macro management, and does not directly intervene in sports affairs. Many sports social organizations have long become the main body of social governance, among which, the Japanese sports associations for the development of the domestic sports industry plays a significant role. For example, the Japan Sports Association began to build sports instructor training system since 1965, so far, the association has become Japan's largest and most influential sports instructor training and qualification institutions. By 2015, the organization registered in all levels of various types of sports instructors reached 457,193 people (Kōken Insatsu Co, 2016). The reason why the Japan Sports Association plays such an efficient and active role and has such an important position in the country is due to its sound internal management mechanism and good policy foundation. Within the Japanese sports associations, their decision-making, consulting and executive bodies are separated from each other (Japan Sports Association, 2018), which on the one hand avoids a high degree of centralization of power, and on the other hand makes decision-making more efficient and scientific. As a result, Japanese sports associations and many other sports social organizations have been able to operate in a standardized and efficient manner.

3. Insights from Japan and South Korea for sustainable development of social sports organizations

3.1. Improvement of policies and regulations

Both Japan and South Korea have constructed top-level frameworks and corresponding management systems for the participation of sports social organizations in sports development at the national level, which have greatly enhanced the operational capacity of sports social organizations and built a social

platform for their good development. Two major sports laws, the Sports Promotion Law and the Sports Basic Law, both emphasize the joint management of sports at the government level and the social level. In Japan, these two laws also point out that the relationship between the grassroots and the government is equal, that government departments should assist in the development of sports social organizations, and that social forces can participate in the formulation and implementation of sports policies (Nan et al., 2019). In Korea, the First Five-Year Plan for the Revitalization of National Sports (1993–1997), from the perspective of revitalizing life sports, the participation rate of national sports activities was increased to more than 50% of the level of developed countries (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020). After the success of the Seoul Olympics, various mass sports policies have been introduced, and South Korea has adopted the approach of “government macro-regulation with joint participation in the management of social associations” to promote the participation of all people in sports (Kim, 2005). In the Five-Year Plan for the Revitalization of National Sports (2003–2007), policies, systems and regulations for private self-regulatory organizations, such as life sports organizations, have been formulated (Choi, 2008).

3.2. Society-based governance system

Japan’s sports social organizations started early, and in the early days, they learned the experience of Western countries and applied it to the development of sports in their own country, thus achieving better results. Since the Tokyo Olympics, sports associations have further expanded their functions and gradually taken an important role in domestic sports affairs, with the management of their organizations and related affairs handled by the associations themselves, and with a standardized and efficient internal system. Japanese sports social organizations emphasize local community needs by closely collaborating with local communities to provide customized sports services. This community-oriented service model makes sports activities more aligned with residents’ needs, thereby increasing participation and satisfaction (Yamada, 2017). This decision of the Japanese government to act only as a macro-management role has given all Japanese sports social organizations considerable room to play, and they are the main body of sports social governance. The government and social sports organizations in Japan have established an efficient cooperation mechanism. The government supports the development of social sports organizations through financial assistance, policy guarantees, and project funding, while also jointly advancing the implementation of sports policies with these organizations (Tanaka, 2019). Additionally, Japanese social sports organizations maintain good collaborative relationships with various departments, including education, health, and culture. Through cross-departmental coordination, they enhance resource integration and the effectiveness of policy implementation. Japanese social sports organizations also focus on public participation and democratic decision-making. They encourage community residents, volunteers, and stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process. By establishing advisory committees and holding regular hearings, they enhance organizational transparency and democracy (Inoue, 2020).

Similarly, South Korea in the end of the Seoul Olympics, but also most of the energy shifted to the social sports above, and the South Korean government has begun to withdraw completely from the sports market, in the macro-level guidance and regulation, which gives the community a greater space for governance. At the same time, South Korean government has strengthened the resources and policy support for social organizations, so that South Korea has a large number of well-functioning sports grass-roots organizations (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020). The government closely collaborates with social sports organizations on various sports projects, promoting the implementation of community sports activities and public welfare programs. This collaboration mechanism enables social sports organizations to fully utilize government resources and platforms, enhancing their service capacity and coverage (Kim, 2018). Nowadays, “democratic management” in South Korea in has also realized the autonomous operation of sports organizations.

3.3. Efficient and standardized financial support system

Japan and South Korea have set up government assistance systems for the development of their sports social organizations, and have formed a more complete operation system. In Japan, social sports and competitive sports are governed by sports social organizations, and the government plays a macro role in providing financial assistance. The Japanese government provides a systematic financial support structure for social sports organizations by establishing specialized sports funds and funding programs, ensuring a stable source of funding for these organizations. This systematic funding system includes not only direct subsidies from the central government but also grants from local governments and relevant departments (Yamada, 2019). This structured support mechanism ensures long-term financial stability for sports organizations and provides a safeguard for their continued development (Okada, 2020). The Basic Law for Sports stipulates that the national and local governments must make efforts to provide sports organizations with the necessary assistance in terms of funds and facilities (Tanaka, 2018). For example, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has set up a system of preparatory grants for sports facilities and equipment at public schools, which mainly subsidizes school gymnasiums, athletic facilities, swimming pools, and so on (Suzuki, 2021). Additionally, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) has invested in grants for urban civil service business expenses, which are also a major source of financial security for sports facilities in Japan. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism mainly provides preparation subsidies for sports and leisure activity sites, parks, etc. (Kaisai, 2006). Additionally, funding channels for social sports organizations in Japan are highly diversified, including national government grants, local government subsidies, corporate sponsorships, and public donations. This multi-tiered funding approach allows sports organizations to obtain funds from various sources, enhancing both financial stability and flexibility. For example, the government provides special funds for key projects, while corporate and public sponsorships support specific activities and events. This diversification in funding

methods helps improve the financial security and efficiency of fund utilization for these organizations (Sato, 2019). Finally, the Japanese government encourages social sports organizations to actively apply for and use government funds through policy guidance and incentive mechanisms, such as tax benefits and performance rewards. Tax benefit policies reduce the financial burden on organizations, while performance rewards motivate them to improve service quality and activity effectiveness. These policies not only enhance the efficiency of fund utilization but also promote the organizations' operational capability and sustainable development (Yamada, 2021).

The South Korean government provides policy support and financial assistance to sports social organizations through relevant laws such as the "Social Organizations Act". South Korean sports social organizations benefit from a comprehensive financial support system, which includes direct government funding, project subsidies, and tax reductions. The government has established various funding programs, such as the Community Sports Development Fund and Athlete Training Subsidies, to support different types of sports social organizations. This comprehensive financial support system not only provides a stable source of funding but also meets the diverse needs of different organizations through various forms of assistance. Such a system ensures financial stability for the organizations and promotes the widespread development of social sports (Kim, 2018). Additionally, the Korea National Sports Promotion Foundation was established in 1989 to promote national sports, and part of the funds are used for the development of mass sports, such as support for national sports associations, the training of sports social instructors, and the construction of mass sports venues and facilities (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2010). In the case of non-profit programs such as the training of sports instructors, funds are basically provided on the basis of a 50/50 split between government appropriations and the expenses of the Korea Sports Foundation. The South Korean government has invested heavily and steadily in the construction and protection of public sports facilities, and has also ensured the development needs of sports social organizations. Similar to Japan, the South Korean government employs a public-private partnership funding model. The funding model for South Korean sports social organizations includes public-private cooperation, where the government and businesses jointly invest in sports projects. Through this cooperation model, the government can attract corporate funds and resources, while businesses gain brand exposure and social recognition through sponsorship. This public-private partnership funding model enhances the organizations' funding channels, diversifies funding sources, and fosters interaction and collaboration between businesses and communities (Park, 2020).

4. Directions for the sustainable development of sports social organizations in China

4.1. Improvement of the policy guarantee system

National policy is the top-level guarantee for the development of sports social organizations. As China strives to build a strong sports nation, the standardization and independence of sports social organizations are crucial for the country's success

in sports, while supporting policies are the fertile ground that can cultivate the transformation of China's sports social organizations into more standardized, independent and modernized ones. Over a long period of development, China has made significant efforts to address issues of sports social organizations, such as the lack of separation of government and society, ambiguous powers and responsibilities, and misaligned management. China has also provided policy support at many levels affecting the development of sports social organizations. The supportive policies established by Japan and South Korea for their sports social organizations offer valuable references for the modernization of sports governance in China. The two countries have taken into full consideration the importance of cooperation between the government and the society in the formulation of policies, and achieved a reasonable distribution of power between the government and the society.

Throughout the evolution of China's sports policy, the continuous updating of the policy concept makes the role of China's sports social organizations in the development of sports more and more distinct, the distribution of power makes the government and society management boundaries more and more clear. Meanwhile, With the continuous enrichment of policy tools, the role of sports social organizations has changed from "managed" to "cooperator", and has been gradually endowed with the role of "builder" (Wang and Lu, 2020), and the policy system suitable for the modernization of sports social organizations has been constantly improved. At present, China's sports social organization policy system is still facing some difficulties, the government's publicity, incentive activities and preferential policies for sports social organizations are not much, and the policy subsidies and tax incentives are less, which also leads to the limited development of some sports public services. Therefore, in the future, China should further expand the inclusiveness and openness of its policy framework, pay attention to absorbing the policy participation of diversified sports governance subjects in the decision-making process (Gao and Wang, 2020), and build a more complete policy guarantee system for sports social organizations.

4.2. Building a government-society governance system

The development trend of sports globalization is that the government and society should work together to manage sports. On one hand, this collaboration reduces the financial burden on government agencies through diversified inputs from all sectors of society; on the other hand, it awakens the vitality of market entities and adds impetus to active participation from sports social organizations and civil institutions, thus enabling provides sports with more flexible management tools and compensating for some of the failures of the government.

The establishment of a governance system that integrates government and society is also of considerable significance to China's current sports development. At present, China is in the construction period of a strong sports country, China's sports associations and sports social organizations are still facing the reform process of "decoupling" and "materialization". In order to completely change the situation, we must strive to cultivate the capacity of social organizations. At the same time of accelerating the transformation of government functions, it is also necessary to

strengthen the ability of sports social organizations to undertake sports affairs, such as cultivating professional personnel, strengthening industry guidance, and strengthening internal management of organizations. Starting from the top-level design, we should first promote the decentralization of some government powers to social organizations by the end of policies and regulations, learn from the excellent experience of Japan and South Korea, give play to government service functions and change to the role of “just not doing”. In recent years, under the deployment of the central government, the transformation of government sports functions has also become an important content of China’s sports reform (Nan et al., 2019). This process includes gradually implementing the structural reform of sports associations and social organizations to build a sports governance system that conforms to China’s national conditions.

4.3. Forming a diversified financial support system

Material resources are an important condition for the efficient operation and sustainable development of sports organizations. At present, most sports associations and social organizations in China rely heavily on financial allocations from the government or investments from their central companies, and their own capacity is insufficient to ensure their development. However, in Japan and South Korea, sports social organizations rely on government support and various social financing channels to obtain funds to sustain their development with their rich activities and diversified functions. The long-term reliance on our financial inputs has caused huge expenditure pressure on government agencies and does not guarantee the effective operation of all sports social organizations. Therefore, China should pay attention to the expansion of the functions of the sports social organizations themselves and the broadening of their funding channels.

Compared with Japan and South Korea, the development of grassroots sports clubs and sports social organizations in China has a weak material foundation and insufficient internal motivation. Therefore, building a diversified financial support system is the key to addressing this issue. First of all, we should actively learn all the successful experiences and beneficial management modes of sports social organizations and clubs in other countries, and explore new development routes in combination with China’s national conditions. Secondly, we should make full use of community, enterprise, and campus sports resources, and mobilize the society to realize the sharing of sports resources and the overall complementary advantages. Thirdly, the government should pay more attention to the development of sports social organizations by providing tax incentives, financial support, and effectively utilizing the financial support system for grassroots sports clubs and organizations. Fourthly, the government should give full play to the main position of the market in the allocation of resources, encouraging organizations to follow market principles to offer more products that meet public needs and truly serve the public to achieve self-sustainability; Finally, the government should give sports social organizations greater management space and functional expansion space, by undertaking more sports affairs, more flexible organization of sports activities and so on to obtain multiple investment.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the similarities and differences of the governance models of sports social organizations in China, Japan and South Korea. This study comprehensively introduced the development process and current situation of sports social organizations in these countries. Compared with South Korea and Japan in East Asia, the two countries practice and explore the road of cooperative governance between sports social organizations and the government through different ways, starting from three aspects: the improvement of policies and regulations, changes in organizational governance models, and the construction of financial support systems. It provided suggestions and guidance for promoting the sustainable development of sports social organizations in China.

Authors should discuss the results and how they can be interpreted from the perspective of previous studies and of the working hypotheses. The findings and their implications should be discussed in the broadest context possible. Future research directions may also be highlighted. Additionally, this study can help other researchers understand the development history and governance model advantages and disadvantages of social sports organizations in China, and provide insights for the sustainable development of social sports organizations in various countries.

Although this study consulted sports white papers and related documents from China, Japan, and South Korea, the analysis of social sports organizations in Japan and South Korea is relatively superficial due to the primary focus on the Chinese perspective. Therefore, in future research, we hope to engage in more in-depth discussions with scholars from these countries for a more thorough analysis.

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