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Research on Leisure Sports Consumption among the Chinese Masses: A Case Study of Yibin City, Sichuan Province, China

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Abstract: This study explores the impact of the new economy on residents' leisure sports consumption. Taking residents in the Xiajiangbei area of Yibin City in China as the research subjects, 190 residents were randomly selected for a questionnaire survey, and descriptive statistical analysis was used to process the data. The results show that: under the influence of the "new economy," residents' income levels have improved to some extent, but the leisure sports consumption level of those without a stable income remains significantly low. Additionally, a lack of consumption awareness and outdated perceptions are key factors restricting residents' engagement in leisure sports activities. The quantity, quality, and allocation of local sports facilities are objective conditions affecting residents' effective participation in leisure sports consumption. In conclusion, the leisure sports consumption level of residents in the Lingang area is not high. Enhancing residents' awareness of sports consumption,

further increasing income levels, and improving facility conditions are critical measures to promote their leisure sports consumption.

Keywords: new economy; leisure sports consumption; consumption concept

1. Introduction

With the continuous leap in national GDP and the effective improvement of people's income levels, an increasing number of individuals are beginning to emphasize the health-preserving functions of leisure sports. As a scientific, civilized, and healthy lifestyle, leisure sports have gained widespread popularity and general acceptance among the masses in cities across all levels of China. Studies have pointed out [1,2] that in the process of contemporary social development, the integration of sports into daily life and leisure-oriented activities has become the mainstream of social sports development, as well as a symbolic social characteristic of a sports-oriented society. "Leisure sports consumption refers to the direct consumption of sports activities, sports competitions, sports service products, material products, and spiritual products, as well as indirect consumption behaviors related to other activities, during people's leisure time [3,5,6,7,8]. Researchers have conducted substantial exploratory work regarding the constraining factors and promotion pathways of residents' sports consumption [9,10,11,12,13], while also elucidating the consumption demands and potential of residents in this domain [14,15,16,17,18]." In recent years, the establishment of the Lingang Economic Development Zone in Yibin City, Sichuan Province, China has effectively promoted regional GDP growth. Therefore, this paper investigates the current situation of residents' leisure sports consumption in Lingang under the influence of the new economy, explores specific factors affecting their leisure

sports consumption levels, and provides theoretical foundations and practical references for improvement.

2. Participants and Methods

2.1 Participants

Based on the sample size requirements, this article conducted a survey and research on 190 residents in the Lingang District through the method of distributing questionnaires and collecting them on the spot. The sample size involves residents of different genders, age groups and social classes, which falls within the scope of this study. Therefore, it is representative of the research.

2.2 Research Methods

2.2.1 Literature Review Method

The relevant literature on the relationship between urban development process and residents' leisure sports consumption was accessed through libraries and the Internet, and targeted literature was carefully screened out, providing a theoretical basis for the research of this paper.

2.2.2 Questionnaire Survey Method

Based on the research content and with reference to extensive literature, as well as the "Questionnaire on Leisure Sports Status of Residents" by Zhao and Liu [1], the "Questionnaire on Leisure Sports Consumption Status in Lingang District, Yibin City" was designed.

2.2.3 Mathematical Statistics Method

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze and process the obtained questionnaire data.

2.2.4 Interview Method

We visited relevant experts and managers from community departments to understand the current development status and existing problems of residents' leisure sports consumption in the Lingang Economic Zone, aiming to provide theoretical foundations and practical references for promoting residents' leisure sports consumption.

3. Research Results and Analysis

3.1 Investigation and Analysis of Residents' Basic Personal Information

Among the 167 valid survey respondents, 75 were male, accounting for 41.9%, and 92 were female, accounting for 55.1%. This study excluded individuals under 18 and over 65 years of age. Within the broad age range of 18 to 65, the 18–30 and 56–65 age groups accounted for the largest proportions, at 26.3% and 31.7%, respectively. The 46–55 age group also represented a significant portion at 24.6%. This indicates that adolescents and older adults are more actively engaged in leisure sports, showing a "bimodal" trend in participation. In contrast, the 31–45 age group participated less, accounting for only 16.2% of the total. As the backbone of social development, young and middle-aged adults play a crucial role in societal progress. However, they devote a significant amount of energy and time to their daily work, resulting in relatively lower participation in leisure sports activities. In terms of social strata, retirees show the highest level of engagement in leisure sports consumption, accounting for 19.8% of the total. They are followed by employees of government agencies, public institutions, and enterprises, as well as students, representing 17.4% and 16.2%, respectively. Meanwhile, migrant workers and self-employed individuals demonstrate lower participation rates, at 11.4% and 13.2%, respectively. This indicates that, under the influence of the new economy, participation in leisure sports activities varies significantly across different social strata.

3.2 Investigation and Analysis of Annual Income of Residents in the Lingang Area

Table 1 Annual Income Survey of Residents (%).

Annual income (Yuan)	Less than 10,000	10,000 to 20,000	20,000 to 40,000	40,000 to 60,000	60,000 to 100,000	More than 100,000	Total
Number of people	45	25	17	28	31	21	167
Percentage	26.9	15.0	10.2	16.8	18.6	12.5	100

As shown in Table 1, the proportion of respondents with an annual income of "below 10,000 yuan" is significantly higher than other categories. This can be attributed to the fact that the area is part of an

"urban-rural integration" zone, where the social strata include urban residents, relocated households from surrounding towns and villages, and students without income, all of which influence their consumption levels. The combined proportion of residents with an annual income below 60,000 yuan reaches 68.9%, while only 31.1% earn above 60,000 yuan. According to data, households with an annual income of "below 10,000 yuan" are classified as very poor, "30,000 to 80,000 yuan" as poor, and "80,000 to 150,000 yuan" as lower-middle class. This reflects the overall low annual income level among the surveyed residents in the area, which may be the fundamental reason affecting their leisure sports consumption.

3.3 Investigation and Analysis of Subjective Factors Influencing Residents' Leisure Sports Consumption

Table 2 Survey Form on Residents' Motives for Leisure Sports Consumption (Multiple Choices Available).

Consumption motivation	Lose weight	Leisure and Entertainment	Influenced by peers	Learn motor skills	Promote health	Enhance social interaction	Others
Person-times (293)	45	46	42	36	71	27	26
Percentage (%)	26.9	27.5	25.1	21.6	42.5	16.2	15.6

Consumption motivation serves as the prerequisite for consumer behavior. As shown in Table 2, residents' motivations for leisure sports consumption vary significantly. A considerable portion of residents demonstrate a well-defined sense of consumption motivation, engaging in leisure sports primarily to promote physical and mental health. However, motivations such as "recreation" and "peer influence" account for 27.5% and 25.1% respectively, indicating that a substantial proportion of residents still need to further develop their awareness regarding leisure sports consumption motivations. Enhancing this awareness is a crucial factor in raising the overall level of leisure sports consumption among residents.

3.3.1 Survey on Residents' Consumption Level of Leisure Sports

Table 3 Survey Form on Residents' Leisure Sports Consumption Expenditure in 2017 (%).

Consumer expenditure	Less than 500 yuan	500 to 1,000 yuan	1,000 to 2,000 yuan	More than 2,000 yuan	Total
Number of people	45	51	42	29	167
Percentage (%)	26.9	30.5	25.1	17.4	100

According to Table 3, the combined proportion of residents in Xiajiangbei with leisure sports consumption expenditures of "below 500 yuan" and "500–1,000 yuan" in 2017 was 57.4%. Meanwhile, the proportions for expenditure levels of "1,000–2,000 yuan" and "above 2,000 yuan" were 25.1% and 17.4%, respectively. Data indicates that an annual leisure sports consumption expenditure below 1,000 yuan is considered relatively low. This suggests that the overall leisure sports consumption expenditure of residents remains at a comparatively low level. Since expenditure and income are often proportional, this further demonstrates that residents' income levels have a direct impact on their consumption expenditure.

3.3.2 Investigation and Analysis of Residents' Consumption Structure for Leisure Sports

Table 4 Survey Form on the Consumption Structure of Residents' Leisure Sports (Multiple Choices Available).

Consumption structure	Watch sports events	Purchase sports lottery tickets	Attend sports training courses	Purchase sports clothing	Purchase sports goods	Participate in paid sports activities	Others
Person-times (407)	67	42	37	98	83	41	39
Percentage (%)	40.1	25.1	22.2	58.7	49.7	24.6	23.4

The structure of sports consumption refers to the proportion of different types of sports expenditures by individuals or households in their daily lives. It generally includes participatory sports consumption, goods-based sports consumption, and spectator-based sports consumption [4]. As shown in Table 4, under the stimulus of the new economy, differences exist in residents' leisure sports consumption structure: "paying for sports activities" accounts for only 24.6%, while "participating in sports training classes" is even lower, at 22.2%. This indicates that residents' engagement in leisure sports remains

relatively superficial, mostly limited to simple activities, and the awareness of "spending money for health" remains underdeveloped. Residents primarily spend more on "purchasing sports apparel and footwear," "buying sports equipment and apparatus," and "purchasing sports lottery tickets." This indicates that residents tend to prefer tangible sports-related consumption, which is often straightforward, direct, and easy to engage in. Additionally, "watching sports events" accounts for 40.1% of consumption. This type of expenditure usually involves paying for tickets or accessing content through online platforms and is closely linked to the viewers' personal interests and preferences.

3.3.3 Survey on Residents' Choices of Leisure Sports Activities

Table 5 Survey Form on Residents' Selection of Leisure Sports Activities (Multiple Choices Allowed).

Project	Walk	Mountain	Ride a	Square	Small	Large	Bowling	Golf	Swimming	Skating	Play	Martial	Others
		climbing	bicycle	dancing	balls	balls		ball			chess	arts	
Person-times (361)	41	27	35	54	37	27	9	3	38	19	35	21	15
Percentage (%)	24.6	16.2	21.0	32.3	22.2	16.2	5.4	1.8	22.8	11.4	21.0	12.6	9.0

As evidenced in Table 5, residents' current leisure sports consumption predominantly involves traditional, easily accessible, and relatively safe physical activities. In contrast, emerging sports such as golf and bowling, which require greater financial investment, attract significantly fewer participants. This distribution aligns with the influence of income levels and consumption motivations on residents' leisure sports expenditure. Therefore, while maintaining the effective provision of traditional leisure sports, the introduction of emerging sports activities is crucial. Expanding access to a more comprehensive and diverse range of leisure sports will play an important role in enhancing both resident interest and overall consumption levels in this domain.

3.4 Investigation on the Objective Influencing Factors of Residents' Leisure Sports Consumption

3.4.1 Construction situation of leisure and sports venues and facilities in the Lingang Area

Table 6 Investigation Form on the Facilities of Leisure Sports Venues.

Facilities	Square	Park	Athletics	Football field	Basketball court	Volleyball court	Table tennis	Badminton court	Tennis court	Gymnasium	Chess room	Skating rink	Sports Center	Golf course	Swimming pool	Others
Quantity	9	2	9	9	35	14	4	11	9	7	55	3	1	0	7	10

As shown in Table 6, the Lingang area possesses relatively adequate basic sports infrastructure that can generally meet residents' fundamental exercise needs. However, the available facilities primarily support traditional sports activities, with emerging sports being significantly underrepresented. This indicates that the current leisure sports facilities in the Xiajiangbei area tend to prioritize convenience and conventional offerings. Given that facility conditions serve as the material foundation for residents' engagement in leisure sports [19,20], it is recommended to appropriately introduce emerging sports programs while continuing to improve and construct basic infrastructure. Integrating traditional and emerging sports offerings will create a more diverse and enriched leisure sports environment for residents.

3.4.2 Analysis of Constraints on Residents' Leisure Sports Consumption

Table 7 Survey on the Factors Residents Consider to Restrict Their Consumption of Leisure Sports (Multiple Choices Available)

Constraints	No time	Not interested	Lack of perseverance	of	Work is too tiring	Pay	No one to guide	Lack of venue	Lack of organization	of	Lack of suitable projects	Others
Person-times (689)	85	56	66		79	98	72	68	35		71	59
Percentage (%)	50.9	33.5	39.5		47.3	58.7	43.1	40.7	21.0		42.5	35.3

As evidenced in Table 7, factors constraining residents' leisure sports consumption reveal dual influences from both subjective perceptions and objective conditions. On one hand, residents' subjective awareness significantly limits their consumption levels and impedes effective participation in leisure sports activities. On the other hand, external objective factors substantially impact consumption behavior, where insufficient supporting conditions directly hinder sports engagement. The interplay between subjective perceptions and objective constraints creates a self-reinforcing mechanism that maintains residents' effective participation in leisure sports at a relatively low level over time. This dual limitation not only suppresses individual engagement rates but also consequently depresses the overall leisure sports consumption level across the region.

4. Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive analysis, the following conclusions are drawn regarding leisure sports consumption in the study area: (1) Consumption Awareness and Motivation: Leisure sports consumption is significantly influenced by residents' awareness and motivation. Specifically, lower recognition of "leisure sports" correlates with weaker consumption motivation, while diminished interest in such activities corresponds to reduced participation and expenditure. (2) Socioeconomic Stratification and Income Levels: Disparities in income across different social strata directly affect the

level, structure, and patterns of leisure sports consumption. Higher income groups demonstrate greater expenditure in this domain. Conversely, occupational groups such as migrant workers, retirees, and individuals without stable incomes exhibit notably lower consumption levels. (3) Infrastructural Constraints: Inadequate sports facilities and outdated infrastructure critically restrict residents' leisure sports consumption. The lack of suitable venues for various activities undermines participation enthusiasm, thereby negatively impacting consumption. (4) Shortage of Professional Guidance: The scarcity of qualified professionals in leisure sports weakens effective guidance for potential consumers. This deficiency further limits both participation and consumption among residents in the Xiajiangbei area. These findings highlight the need for multifaceted interventions, including public awareness campaigns, targeted income enhancement strategies, infrastructure modernization, and professional capacity building, to foster a sustainable leisure sports consumption ecosystem.

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Author Contributions

YL: Writing original draft; Writing-review and editing; Conceptualization; Data curation; Methodology.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Consent to participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

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