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Management Guidelines to Promote a Table Tennis Club for Youth Athletes in Naning City, the People's Republic of China

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Abstract

Background and Aims: The main problem facing table tennis in Guangxi Province is the lack of a scientific and effective management system, which has led to talent loss, fragmented administration, low coaching quality, limited training innovation, and inadequate systems for athlete selection and development. The main objective of this research was to develop management guidelines to promote table tennis clubs for youth athletes in Nanning city, the People's Republic of China.

Methodology: This research employed a mixed-method research design integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. To investigate the current situation and problems related to the management of youth table tennis athletes in table tennis clubs in Nanning City, the researcher distributed 225 questionnaires (IOC = 0.88) to table tennis directors, table tennis coaches, and employees. In addition, five experts were interviewed to provide consultation on the draft of the management guideline for promoting table tennis clubs for youth athletes in Nanning City. Subsequently, a focus group discussion with nine experts was conducted to further refine the proposed guideline. Finally, the Connoisseurship method involving seven experts was used to confirm the management guideline for promoting table tennis clubs for youth athletes in Nanning City. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the questionnaire data, while content analysis was employed to analyze the interview data, focus group data, and Connoisseurship data.

Results: 1. The overall analysis of the eight management components revealed that youth table tennis clubs in Nanning City demonstrated generally strong management practices. Most components were rated at a high level, including Planning ($\bar{X}$= 4.02, SD = 0.67), Organizing ($\bar{X}$= 4.01, SD = 0.68), Leading ($\bar{X}$ = 4.05, SD = 0.66), Controlling ($\bar{X}$= 3.93, SD = 0.70), Product ($\bar{X}$= 4.05, SD = 0.64), and Place ($\bar{X}$= 4.03, SD = 0.67). In contrast, two components, Price ($\bar{X}$= 3.61, SD = 0.77) and Promotion ($\bar{X}$= 3.65, SD = 0.78), were rated at a moderate level, identifying them as comparatively weaker areas within the management framework. 2. The development of management guidelines for youth table tennis clubs in Nanning City integrates two major frameworks, POLC and 4Ps, which together form a comprehensive and balanced system for strengthening both internal management and

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external service quality. In total, these frameworks encompass 8 major components and 80 sub-guidelines, with each framework contributing 4 components and 40 sub-guidelines.

Conclusion: The seven experts indicate that the management guideline is highly appropriate, feasible, and well aligned with the real operational needs of youth table tennis clubs in Nanning City. Experts consistently emphasized that the integration of the POLC and 4Ps frameworks creates a comprehensive and balanced structure that strengthens internal management while enhancing external service quality.

Keywords: Management Guideline to Promote; Table Tennis Club; Youth Athletes; Nanning City

Introduction

In China, table tennis has already gone beyond the scope of a sport, and it is an important source of national honor and sports pride for the Chinese people. China's table tennis club, to promote the sports reform, broke the traditional promotion mode, promoted step by step increase in social clubs to choose excellent sports talents (Lv Tong, 2022). The cultivation of table tennis reserve talents is related to the rise and fall of the table tennis project. Since its establishment in 1955, the Chinese Table Tennis Association has undertaken the important task of cultivating table tennis reserve talents for the country. In 2016, the State Sports General Administration issued the "Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Cultivation of Youth Reserve Talents in Table Tennis and Badminton Projects", pointing out that youth clubs are becoming an important force in the cultivation of competitive reserve talents in table tennis and badminton projects, and it is necessary to support social and corporate investment in the cultivation of reserve talents in table tennis and badminton projects, so that capable enterprises can assume the responsibility of cultivating reserve talents (Chinese Table Tennis Association, 2016).

At present, the management of youth table tennis clubs in China still faces challenging problems, such as the development level of clubs still in its infancy, and people's awareness of fitness needs to be improved (Li, 2016); Most of the various sports clubs in China, except for those affiliated with sports associations, are dominated by private enterprises, and their operating status varies. They are generally in the stage of economic development. The clubs are independent of each other, lack the necessary communication and exchanges, and lack competitiveness (Yu & Chen, 2014); Kotler and Keller (2016) noted that small organizations often face competitive disadvantages compared with larger enterprises due to limited resources, market influence, and management capacity. Therefore, expanding organizational scale and adopting integrated operational strategies can help improve competitiveness and market positioning.

Over the past two decades, the Guangxi table tennis team has not secured a position in the Chinese national team, indicating a clear decline in the overall competitiveness of the

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region's table tennis development. The development of sports systems is often influenced by multiple structural and managerial factors, and the decline of table tennis in Guangxi is similarly the result of several interconnected issues. Previous studies have pointed out that the main reasons include a long-term lack of scientific and systematic management, serious loss of talented athletes, and the disappearance of the previously effective "one-stop" training and management mechanism (Wang, 2009). In addition, the personnel system has remained relatively conservative, lacking a competitive mechanism, which has prevented the full utilization of human resources. Organizational problems such as internal disunity and the weak functioning of the Guangxi Table Tennis Association have also hindered coordinated development. Furthermore, insufficient attention from senior administrative authorities and ineffective policy measures have limited the implementation of strategic reforms in the sport sector (Liu & Zhang, 2016).

From a human resource perspective, the age structure of the Guangxi table tennis coaching team is considered unreasonable, the educational background of coaches is relatively low, and their research capacity in sports science is limited. These issues have resulted in insufficient technical innovation, outdated training methods, and a relatively single technical playing style among athletes. In addition, the spirit of perseverance and competitive resilience among athletes has been reported to decline compared with earlier generations. Moreover, the management system of table tennis development in Guangxi remains incomplete, particularly in terms of the identification, selection, and systematic training of reserve talents (Wang, 2009; Chen, 2018).

As the capital city of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and the administrative, economic, and sports center of the region, Nanning plays a critical role in the development of competitive sports, including table tennis. The overall development level of table tennis in Guangxi is therefore closely linked to the organizational structure, management efficiency, and talent development system within Nanning. Most regional sports policies, training centers, and youth sports programs are coordinated or implemented through institutions located in Nanning. Consequently, problems that exist at the provincial or regional level, such as inadequate management mechanisms, insufficient coach development, and weak talent identification systems, are often reflected in the development of table tennis clubs and youth training systems in Nanning as well (Chen, 2018; Li & Huang, 2021). Therefore, examining the management and promotion of youth table tennis clubs in Nanning is not only relevant for improving the local sports development system but also provides an important pathway for revitalizing the overall development of table tennis in Guangxi Province.

From the above problems, the researcher therefore has an idea to create a management guideline to promote table tennis clubs for youth athletes in Naning city, the People's Republic of China, under the integration of the 4P management theory and the POLC

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management theory in order to obtain a reliable management guideline. The created guideline will be examined by experts using a detailed research process.

Objectives

1. To develop the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning city, the People's Republic of China.

2. To confirm the management guidelines to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning City, the People's Republic of China.

Literature Review

1. The current situation of table tennis club management

"Club" means a group or place where people with the same interests engage in social communication, cultural entertainment, and other activities. Relevant foreign research mainly consists of the following aspects: Van den Heuvel mentioned the concept of "rich club" in his research on brain science, and Smilkov mentioned the concepts of "rich club" and "page-club" when studying the citation network of high-energy physics. In "Club Diplomacy in the Arctic", Danita Catherine Burke conducted a case study using the Arctic Council as an example, arguing that clubs have an internal hierarchy that can inform their decision-making process and response to status challenges. When clubs try to deal with topics that are beyond the sovereignty of club members and the scope of club membership, club members may lack the status and legitimacy to deal with the topic unilaterally.

The Xinhua Dictionary explains clubs as groups and places for social communication, cultural entertainment, and other activities. Through searching the database resources on the website of the Shanghai Institute of Physical Education Library, it is found that the current domestic research on clubs can be divided into two aspects: (1) In terms of economics, it includes Shen and Ma (2002) study on the characteristics and causes of "club convergence" in China's economic growth; Cai and Du (2000) study on the club convergence and conditional convergence phenomenon in China's regional economic growth. (2) In terms of sports clubs, it includes professional sports clubs, social leisure sports clubs, university sports clubs, and teaching models.

1.1 Table tennis club management

Foreign scholars' research on table tennis mainly focuses on sports physiology and mechanical learning, while research on techniques, tactics, and teaching is mainly conducted by Chinese scholars overseas. For male athletes, the risk of injury from jumping steps is lower than from side-by-side steps and striding; horizontal backward and leftward forces are prone to cartilage and meniscus injuries in table tennis players; excessive knee extension torque is

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prone to patellar tendinopathy and patellar softening in table tennis players (Xiao Dandan, 2020).

In terms of research on the training of table tennis reserve talents, in-depth research has been conducted on multiple topics, especially the performance evaluation system of reserve talent training units in my country, the contradiction between learning and training and countermeasures, echelon construction and training paths, and sustainable development, and remarkable results have been achieved (Zhou & Zhang, 2018).

Li et al. (2019) studied the training of table tennis reserve talents by Japan's "generation-breaking project". The study believes that the "generation-breaking project" has achieved remarkable results, further improving the system of Japan's table tennis management institutions, continuously expanding funding sources, and continuously producing outstanding talents. The table tennis industry has begun to develop in an all-round way, and has begun to form a trend of comprehensive confrontation with China in the international table tennis arena.

Research on the historical development of table tennis: Li & Xiao (2012) have researched the historical origin of the name of table tennis, its dissemination characteristics and motivations, the cross-cultural dissemination of table tennis, the introduction and development of table tennis in modern China, and the budding and dissemination of table tennis.

Dai & Zheng (2019) constructed a hierarchical element structure model and an indicator evaluation system for the core competitiveness of the Chinese Table Tennis Club Super League. It is believed that it is necessary to deepen the reform of the association's entity and the construction of alliances to make up for the "shortcomings" such as an imperfect management system and mechanism, an unclear property rights structure, weak market operation, lagging cultural construction, and weak environmental adaptability. Systematic planning, phased implementation, key building, and collaborative cultivation of its core competitiveness will promote significant and continuous improvement in its internal governance, market operation, image building, brand cultivation, and cultural strength.

2. Table tennis training for youth athletes

2.1 Research status of table tennis training for young athletes

Adolescence is a critical stage for the formation of table tennis skills and the development of physical fitness. The training effect at this stage directly affects the finalization of the athlete's technical style, the length of sports life, and the development of competitive potential. Table tennis has high requirements for reaction speed, movement coordination, tactical thinking, etc., and the physiological and psychological characteristics of adolescents determine that their training needs to be both scientific and targeted. In recent years, domestic academic circles have conducted multi-dimensional research on youth table tennis training,

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covering training method innovation, physical fitness improvement, technical optimization, and training model exploration, and have produced rich research results.

Through the review of existing literature, the current research on youth table tennis training presents the characteristics of "fine basic training, scientific training methods, and diversified training models". The research focus not only includes the application effects of various special training methods, but also involves the adaptability of the growth laws of young athletes and the training system, which provides important theoretical support for grassroots training practice.

2.2 Research on training methods for young table tennis players

2.2.1 Physical fitness training

Physical fitness is the basis for young table tennis players to improve their special abilities. Relevant research focuses on the effects of functional training, strength training, and agility training on special performance, and most of the training methods are verified through controlled experiments.

Weng Shanlin (2024) selected 40 young table tennis players aged 12-14 in Jilin Province and randomly divided them into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group adopted a functional training program (including Swiss ball balance exercises, hanging rope resistance training, etc.), training 3 times a week, 40 minutes each time, and the control group adopted traditional physical training. After 12 weeks, the test showed that the core stability test scores of the athletes in the experimental group (such as the length of time standing on one leg with eyes closed) increased by 28%, the special endurance (30-second double-swing rope skipping times) increased by 15%, and the continuous hitting error rate in multi-ball training decreased by 12%.

2.2.2 Special technology and cognitive training

In the field of special technology training, researchers focus on optimizing training methods in combination with the physiological and psychological characteristics of adolescents, and emphasize the importance of feedback mechanisms and personalized guidance. Liang (2016) proposed a technical and tactical feature feedback training method, selecting 28 athletes aged 13-15 from a sports school in Shanghai. The test after 16 weeks showed that the rationality of the experimental group's technical and tactical application (the proportion of shots that met the tactical intention) increased by 20%, and the active error rate in the game decreased by 15%. The advantage of this method is that it converts abstract technical requirements into concrete data, which is in line with the cognitive characteristics of adolescents with dominant concrete thinking.

With the innovation of training concepts, cognitive and psychological training has gradually moved from the edge to the core. Li (2023) introduced metacognitive training into the training of 15-17-year-old athletes in a club in Liaoning, and designed a three-stage training

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method of "goal card-process record sheet-reflection diary": before the game, the athletes were asked to fill in "3 technical points to be improved in this training", and the execution status was recorded every 10 minutes during the training, and the gains and losses were summarized after the game. An 18-week experiment showed that adolescents who participated in metacognitive training had an 18% increase in decision-making speed in complex game situations (such as when the score was tied), and a 22% increase in the rationality of tactical choices (the proportion of adjusting strategies according to the opponent's weaknesses).

2.2.3 Training model and training practice

In terms of the training model for young athletes, Hu Manman (2016) conducted a follow-up study on the international training camp in the background of the "third entrepreneurship" of Chinese table tennis. The training camp invites 60 athletes aged 14-16 from 12 countries to participate every year, adopting the model of "40% joint training + 30% mixed confrontation + 30% cultural exchange".

The research on the current status of regional training shows the characteristics of uneven development. Chen (2012) surveyed 10 youth table tennis training units in Zhengzhou City, showing that 60% of the units still mainly used "multi-ball repeated training", with more than 500 balls in each training session, while physical training accounted for less than 15%; 75% of the coaches said that "there is a lack of differentiated programs for athletes of different ages", and athletes under 12 years old still use a training intensity similar to that of adults.

3. Principle of Management

3.1 The 4Ps Management Principle (Marketing Mix: 4Ps)

The 4P concept, also known as the Marketing Mix, was proposed by Jerome McCarthy in 1960. It consists of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, and has become a fundamental tool for analyzing and formulating management strategies to create competitive advantages and effectively meet consumer needs (McCarthy, 1960; Kotler & Keller, 2016). The four elements can be described as follows:

3.1.1. Product: Product refers to what an organization offers to consumers, whether goods, services, or even ideas, that meet the needs and wants of the target market. Product management must consider aspects such as quality, innovation, design, packaging, and after-sales service (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

3.1.2. Price: Price is the value assigned to a product in the eyes of consumers and is a key factor influencing purchasing decisions. Pricing strategies should take into account costs, competition, market elasticity, and customer purchasing power. Setting an appropriate price helps balance organizational profitability with consumer satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

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3.1.3. Place: Place refers to the process and channels through which organizations deliver products or services to consumers. Selecting effective distribution channels—such as retail, wholesale, or online platforms enhances accessibility and market coverage, thereby improving efficiency (Borden, 1984).

3.1.4. Promotion: Promotion involves activities aimed at creating awareness and stimulating interest in products or services. This includes advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and digital marketing. Well-structured communication strategies aligned with the target market help build a strong brand image and encourage purchasing behavior (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

3.2 POLC Management Theory

3.2.1 Historical Background

Henri Fayol first articulated five management functions: Planning, Organizing, Commanding, Coordinating, and Controlling in 1916 (Fayol, 1949). Koontz and O'Donnell later streamlined these into four core functions: Planning, Organizing, Leading, and Controlling, now widely known as the POLC model (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1976).

3.2.2 Definition and Components

Planning

Establishing short- and long-term goals, analyzing the environment (e.g., via SWOT), and formulating strategies. In sports contexts, this relies on performance data, competitive trends, and periodization principles (Robbins & Coulter, 2018).

Organizing

Designing the organizational structure, defining roles and responsibilities, and allocating resources. In a sports club, this might involve delineating the duties of head coaches, assistant coaches, fitness trainers, and support staff (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1976).

Leading

Motivating personnel, fostering organizational culture, and communicating a clear vision. Leadership theories (e.g., Situational Leadership or motivational models by Maslow and Herzberg) can be integrated to enhance team performance (Robbins & Coulter, 2018).

Controlling

Monitoring progress, comparing actual performance against standards, and implementing corrective actions. Common tools include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Balanced Scorecards to track training outcomes and competitive results (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1976).

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Conceptual Framework

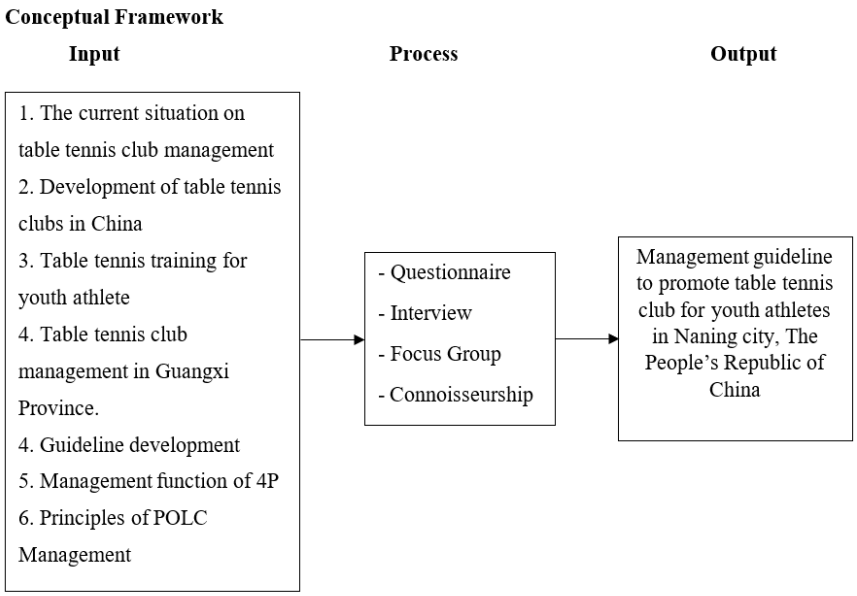


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Population

To survey problems related to the current situation and the management guidelines to promote table tennis clubs for youth athletes in Naning City, the researcher will use 338 questionnaires for the top 10 table tennis clubs, as table below:

Table Tennis club	Club director	Coach	Employees
1. Lingli Club	2	18	17
2. Nanning Youth Training Club	3	17	13
3. Chaozhong Club	2	15	15
4. Lechuang Table Tennis Club	3	17	16
5. Xingyao Club	3	17	15
6. Chuangyi Table Tennis Club	2	16	15
7. Nanning Boyue Table Tennis Club	2	17	15
8. Chengming Table Tennis Club	2	16	15
9. Zhongbo Table Tennis Club	2	17	15
10. Feicui Club	2	15	14
Total	**23**	**165**	**150**

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The researcher's club director population would use all population units to survey problems related to the current situation and the management guidelines to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning city.

Sample

According to Crazy Morgan's schedule, the researcher would use a total sample size of 225 participants (116 coaches and 109 employees) for a questionnaire survey to survey problems related to the current situation and problem of the management guidelines to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning city. By calculating according to the proportion of the population to the sample, as table below:

Table Tennis club	Coach (Pop)	Coach (Sam)	Employees (Pop)	Employees (Sam)
1. Lingli Club	18	12	17	12
2. Nanning Youth Training Club	17	12	13	9
3. Chaozhong Club	15	11	15	11
4. Lechuang Table Tennis Club	17	12	16	12
5. Xingyao Club	17	12	15	11
6. Chuangyi Table Tennis Club	16	11	15	11
7. Nanning Boyue Table Tennis Club	17	12	15	11
8. Chengming Table Tennis Club	16	11	15	11
9. Zhongbo Table Tennis Club	17	12	15	11
10. Feicui Club	15	11	14	10
Total	**165**	**116**	**150**	**109**

*Pop mean Population, Sam means Sample

Research participants

Using the purposive sampling method as follows:

1. 5 experts were used to interview experts to consult about the draft of the management guideline to promote table tennis clubs for youth athletes in Naning city from the database on the current situation, including 2 table tennis club directors, 2 table tennis coaches, and 1 table tennis athlete. All the stakeholders will have more than 10 years of experience.

2. The focus group method will involve a total of 9 experts to discuss and find appropriate solutions for drafting the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning city, including 3 table tennis club directors, 2 table tennis coaches, 2 table tennis athletes, and 2 organization marketing employees. All the stakeholders will have more than 10 years of experience.

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3. Connoisseurship method using 7 experts to verify the management guidelines to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning city, including: 2 table tennis club directors, 2 table tennis coaches, 2 table tennis athletes, and 1 organization marketing employee. All the stakeholders will have more than 10 years of experience.

Research Instrument

1. Questionnaire for collecting the data

The questionnaire used to survey problems related to the current situation and problems of the management for youth athletes in Naning city would be designed by combining the POLC (Planning, Organizing, Leading, Controlling) management principle and the 4P (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) management principle. The questionnaire would consist of 2 parts: Part 1: Information on the status of the respondents. Part 2: The problems related to the current situation and the problem of management for youth athletes in Naning city. This part was a 5-point scale question.

Invited 3 experts to determine the quality of the questionnaire (IOC), including: 1 table tennis club director, 1 table tennis coach, and 1 expert in language testing. All the experts will have more than 5 years of experience.

2. Interview form to collect data from 5 experts.

The interview form was used to consult on the draft of the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning city. The interview form was an open-ended question that was based on the POLC Management principle and the 4P Management principle.

3. Focus group to collect data from 9 experts.

In the focus group method, the researcher will present the draft of the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning city, which has been created based on the data from the questionnaire survey and the expert interviews. The focus group will be held online with 9 experts to provide additional comments on the researcher's developed guideline to gain more information to improve the guideline to make it more valuable.

4. Evaluation form for 7 experts on the connoisseurship method.

The researcher would use the final draft of the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning city as an instrument to request advice and evaluation results from 7 experts using the connoisseurship method, for the experts' written evaluation content.

Data Collection

1. A questionnaire was used to survey problems related to current situation and problem of the management for youth athletes in Naning city management from top 10 of table tennis club of table tennis clubs in Nanning City. The questionnaire will be sent to 248 members of

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the table tennis clubs, including the club director, table tennis coaches, and employees who work at the table tennis clubs in Nanning City, by online method using the questionnaire star application, and the deadline for answering the questionnaire is 1 week before the results of the questionnaire are analyzed.

2. Interview 5 experts to consult on how to draft the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Nanning City. The researcher will conduct interviews in two ways: for experts whom the researcher can visit, the interviews will be conducted on-site; for experts with whom the researcher cannot conduct on-site interviews, the researcher will use online channels.

3. The Focus group method with 9 experts to discuss and find appropriate solutions. This step will be carried out by the researcher through online channels. The content has been improved or edited in the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning City.

4. Connoisseurship by 7 experts to verify the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Naning City. This step will be carried out by the researcher through online channels.

Data Analysis

1. Evaluate the content validity of the questionnaire and interview form through the utilization of the Program Validity Analysis method, employing the Index of Items of Objective Congruence (IOC ≥ 0.6).

2. Use computer analysis software to collect and organize the data obtained from the questionnaire. ($\bar{x}$, SD.)

3. Content analysis for the interview method and focus group method.

4. Content analysis for the Connoisseurship method.

Results

Summary of the questionnaire survey: the overall analysis of the eight management components revealed that youth table tennis clubs in Nanning City demonstrated generally strong management practices. Most components were rated at a high level, including Planning ($\bar{x}$ = 4.02, SD = 0.67), Organizing ($\bar{x}$ = 4.01, SD = 0.68), Leading ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05, SD = 0.66), Controlling ($\bar{x}$ = 3.93, SD = 0.70), Product ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05, SD = 0.64), and Place ($\bar{x}$ = 4.03, SD = 0.67). These results indicate that clubs possess strong foundational systems in strategic planning, organizational structure, leadership practices, monitoring mechanisms, training program quality, and facility management. Notably, components such as Leading and Product exhibited particularly high levels, suggesting that the clubs emphasize athlete development through well-structured programs and supportive leadership environments.

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In contrast, two components, Price ($\bar{x}$ = 3.61, SD = 0.77) and Promotion ($\bar{x}$ = 3.65, SD = 0.78), were rated at a moderate level, identifying them as comparatively weaker areas within the management framework. Issues related to pricing fairness, financial support, and promotional effectiveness appear to require further development to enhance accessibility and attract more youth athletes. Additionally, the higher standard deviations in these areas indicate greater variability across clubs, suggesting inconsistent practices in financial management and marketing strategies.

Overall, while the management of youth table tennis clubs in Nanning is largely effective, targeted improvements in pricing policies and promotional activities would further strengthen the system and support sustainable athlete development.

The result of the final draft of the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Nanning city, the People's Republic of China, by a researcher.

In this step, the researcher would draft the final management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Nanning city, the People's Republic of China, based on the results of the focus group method under the POLC management principles and the 4Ps management principles. The final draft of the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Nanning city, the People's Republic of China, could be summarized as follows:

Table 1 draft of the management guideline to promote table tennis clubs for youth athletes in Nanning city, the People's Republic of China, under POLC management principles.

No.	Guidelines
Planning	
1	Align club planning with Nanning's regional and national sports development policies.
2	Establish a long-term athlete development pathway from beginner to elite levels.
3	Conduct annual needs assessments covering technical, physical, and psychological needs.
4	Set measurable performance indicators for each athlete age group.
5	Plan resource allocation based on projected youth enrollment and facility capacity.
6	Include injury prevention and medical protocols in annual planning.
7	Develop yearly competition calendars with progressive difficulty levels.
8	Integrate sports science support (fitness testing, nutrition, psychology) into planning.
9	Collaborate with schools and community sports organizations in planning activities.
10	Conduct annual reviews to revise and improve planning documents.

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No.	Guidelines
Organizing	
1	Define clear responsibilities for directors, coaches, assistants, and support staff.
2	Establish minimum qualification requirements for all coaching staff.
3	Create an efficient grouping system based on skill level, age, and training load.
4	Use centralized athlete management software to maintain performance records.
5	Improve communication systems between coaches, parents, and administrators.
6	Develop partnerships with schools for talent recruitment.
7	Ensure standardized equipment maintenance procedures across the club.
8	Implement club-wide safety and emergency response protocols.
9	Organize regular interdisciplinary team meetings (coaches, nutritionists, medical staff).
10	Strengthen coordination mechanisms among all stakeholders.
Leading	
1	Promote leadership development programs for managers and coaches.
2	Establish recognition and reward systems for youth athlete achievement.
3	Encourage a collaborative coaching culture through shared learning sessions.
4	Maintain transparent and inclusive decision-making processes.
5	Integrate psychological training into regular practice to improve confidence and mindset.
6	Promote athlete-centered coaching methods.
7	Provide regular professional development opportunities for all coaching staff.
8	Implement conflict-resolution guidelines for athletes, parents, and staff.
9	Encourage coaches to adopt technological tools (video analysis, digital feedback).
10	Foster a positive and motivating learning environment.
Controlling	
1	Conduct regular athlete performance assessments with standardized criteria.
2	Monitor training load and physical readiness using digital tools.
3	Implement systematic injury tracking and health monitoring.
4	Conduct periodic safety inspections of equipment and facilities.
5	Use evaluation data to revise training plans promptly.
6	Establish a monthly performance review meeting for coaches and managers.
7	Improve parent communication by sharing progress reports consistently.
8	Develop clear quality standards for training sessions.
9	Introduce external evaluations by outside experts annually.
10	Create corrective action plans for areas showing low-performance indicators.

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Table 1 shows that the POLC framework consists of four major management components, supported by 40 sub-guidelines designed to strengthen the internal operations of youth table tennis clubs in Nanning City. This framework emphasizes systematic planning, efficient organizational structure, strong leadership, and effective control mechanisms. The Planning component focuses on aligning club objectives with regional sports policies, setting measurable athlete development goals, and integrating sports science and risk management into annual plans. Organizing ensures that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, communication channels are efficient, and resources, both human and material, are appropriately managed. The Leading component prioritizes athlete-centered coaching, motivation, transparent decision-making, professional development, and psychological readiness. Lastly, the Controlling component emphasizes consistent performance monitoring, safety inspections, digital tracking systems, feedback loops, and corrective actions. Collectively, the POLC framework provides a robust foundation for internal management, ensuring that clubs operate systematically and support sustainable athlete development.

Table 2 draft of the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Nanning city, the People's Republic of China, under 4Ps management principles.

No.	Guidelines
Product	
1	Develop standardized training curricula for each age and skill category.
2	Provide progressive training programs covering technical, tactical, and physical skills.
3	Offer structured competition pathways within and outside the club.
4	Introduce specialized programs for high-potential youth athletes.
5	Integrate sports science support (strength, conditioning, mental skills).
6	Expand video analysis and digital feedback tools for skill correction.
7	Provide recovery and rehabilitation support services.
8	Offer differentiated training options: recreational, competitive, and elite.
9	Create parent education workshops to support athlete development.
10	Maintain consistent quality standards across all training programs.
Price	
1	Establish transparent and publicly available fee structures.
2	Benchmark pricing with comparable clubs in Nanning and nearby cities.
3	Offer flexible payment plans to increase accessibility.
4	Provide scholarships or fee reductions for talented or low-income athletes.
5	Ensure fairness by eliminating unnecessary hidden costs.
6	Introduce tiered pricing packages based on training intensity.

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No.	Guidelines
7	Offer promotional discounts or family packages periodically.
8	Review pricing annually for fairness and affordability.
9	Provide financial support for competition participation and travel.
10	Maintain cost efficiency without compromising service quality.
Place	
1	Maintain facility standards for safety, cleanliness, and performance.
2	Increase training table availability based on enrollment growth.
3	Improve ventilation, lighting, and temperature control systems.
4	Designate warm-up and recovery areas with proper equipment.
5	Conduct regular facility inspections with documented results.
6	Ensure accessibility for youth athletes and parents.
7	Provide structured parent waiting areas.
8	Control noise and crowd disturbances to optimize training focus.
9	Upgrade digital infrastructure (scoreboards, monitoring tools).
10	Expand facility space according to future development plans.
Promotion	
1	Strengthen online presence through social media and official websites.
2	Promote athlete achievements regularly to enhance the club's image.
3	Organize community outreach programs and open-house events.
4	Develop partnerships with schools for talent identification.
5	Produce high-quality digital marketing materials.
6	Use targeted campaigns to reach parents, youth, and players.
7	Create referral programs through parent ambassadors.
8	Provide regular newsletters and updates to parents.
9	Use live-streaming and video content to promote competitions.
10	Highlight financial assistance programs to attract new athletes.

Table 2 shows that the 4Ps marketing framework comprises four major components, supported by 40 sub-guidelines, focusing on external service delivery and enhancing the club's attractiveness and accessibility. The Product component highlights the importance of structured training curricula, progressive skill development programs, competition pathways, and support services such as rehabilitation and psychological skills training. The Price component addresses the need for transparent and fair pricing systems, flexible payment options, financial support for talented athletes, and regular price evaluations to maintain affordability. The Place component strengthens the physical environment of the club by emphasizing facility safety, upgraded equipment, suitable training spaces, and enhanced

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accessibility for athletes and parents. Finally, the Promotion component enhances communication and outreach through digital platforms, community engagement activities, partnership programs with schools, high-quality marketing materials, and regular updates on athlete achievements. Together, the 4Ps framework ensures that youth table tennis clubs not only provide high-quality training but also maintain competitiveness and visibility in the local sports community.

The result of confirming the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Nanning city, the People's Republic of China.

In this step, the researcher would use the final draft of the management guideline to promote the table tennis club for youth athletes in Nanning City, the People's Republic of China, as an instrument to request advice and evaluation results from 7 experts, including: 2 table tennis club directors, 2 table tennis coaches, 2 table tennis athletes, and 1 organization marketing employee, using the Connoisseurship method. All the stakeholders have more than 10 years of experience.

In summary, the collective evaluation from the seven experts indicates that the final draft of the management guideline is highly appropriate, feasible, and well aligned with the real operational needs of youth table tennis clubs in Nanning City. Experts consistently emphasized that the integration of the POLC and 4Ps frameworks creates a comprehensive and balanced structure that strengthens internal management while enhancing external service quality. The guidelines were praised for their practicality, clarity, and adaptability across various club contexts, particularly in areas related to training progression, facility standards, athlete monitoring, safety, and stakeholder communication. Both coaches and athletes supported the guideline's strong athlete-centered approach, noting the benefits of psychological preparation, structured development pathways, and injury prevention. Meanwhile, the marketing perspective confirmed that the guideline effectively addresses modern promotional strategies and fair pricing models.

Discussion

The relatively high scores in Product and Place in Nanning suggest that, at least in this regional context, youth clubs have made progress in providing structured training services and reasonably adequate facilities, aligning with policy-driven growth and the increased role of clubs as carriers of youth training and mass fitness. However, items related to risk management, medical support, and communication with parents were only at moderate levels, which echoes the problems of imperfect systems, weak resource integration, and low safety standardization reported in studies on amateur clubs in other cities (Lan Tong**,** 2008**;** He, 2019; Zhao, 2016).

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The moderate scores in Price and Promotion are highly consistent with the literature. Zhang et al. (2016) and Cao et al. (2017) pointed out that many table tennis clubs struggle to attract consumers, obtain sponsorship, and build strong brand awareness due to weak marketing and insufficient publicity. Similarly, Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasized that effective marketing management requires organizations to adopt systematic management practices and clear branding strategies to enhance visibility and strengthen relationships with communities and stakeholders. In the present study, respondents also perceived several limitations in youth table tennis clubs, particularly regarding fair pricing policies, financial support for talented or low-income athletes, and the effectiveness of promotional activities in attracting new youth participants. These findings suggest that although the training content and facility conditions of youth clubs in Nanning are generally satisfactory, their market-oriented operational functions still need further improvement. The development of the management guideline under the POLC framework (Planning, Organizing, Leading, Controlling) and the 4Ps framework (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) directly responds to the problems identified both in the survey and in previous research. Grounded in classic management theory (Fayol, 1949; Koontz & O'Donnell, 1976; Robbins & Coulter, 2018) and marketing theory (McCarthy, 1960; Kotler & Keller, 2016), the guideline translates abstract principles into concrete, context-specific recommendations for youth table tennis clubs in Nanning.

From the perspective of guideline development theory, the process of constructing the management guideline is consistent with the key steps identified in the literature: defining the scope and purpose, synthesizing evidence, involving stakeholders, and preparing for implementation (Brouwers et al., 2010; Institute of Medicine, 2011; World Health Organization, 2014). By integrating survey data, literature review, POLC, and 4Ps theory, and multi-stage expert input, the guideline meets basic criteria for clarity, evidence linkages, and contextual relevance. It thus represents not just a descriptive framework, but an evidence-informed and theoretically grounded tool for improving the management and development of youth table tennis clubs in Nanning.

Recommendation

Application of the research

1. Youth table tennis clubs in Nanning should adopt the proposed POLC + 4Ps management guideline as a practical framework for improving internal management and external service quality.

2. Club directors and coaches should use the guidelines to revise annual plans, organizational structures, and training systems, especially in areas of athlete monitoring, safety, and communication with parents.

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3. Local sports authorities and education departments can use the guidelines as a reference tool for evaluating and supporting youth table tennis clubs, particularly when selecting partners for school club cooperation.

4. Training institutions and sports colleges should integrate the key elements of the guideline into coach education programs, strengthening competencies in planning, scientific training, and marketing.

For further research

1. Future studies should evaluate the effectiveness of the management guideline by implementing it in selected clubs and tracking changes in athlete development, participation, and club performance over time.

2. Comparative research could examine how the guideline performs in different regions or sports to test its transferability beyond Nanning and table tennis.

3. Further work should explore digitalization models for youth clubs, such as integrating big data, online training platforms, and smart facility management into the existing guidelines.

4. Researchers may conduct in-depth qualitative studies (e.g., interviews with parents, athletes, and coaches) to better understand user experiences and refine the guidelines to be even more athlete-centered.

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