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The Development of the Sustainable Management Model and its Implementation on the Operation of Amateur Youth Football Clubs in Guangzhou

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Abstract

Youth football in China is growing quickly, particularly in Guangzhou, a city that is well-developed both economically and athletically. This has brought attention to the need for an efficient management model to enhance the performance of amateur youth football clubs. In light of the growing public interest in youth sports, this research develops PLACE Model utilizing SWOT analysis, based on the GROW Model and 4M Management Theory. The objective is to address the current state of amateur youth football club operations in Guangzhou and to support the clubs' sustainable and effective growth. In order to achieve this, the study uses the R&D research method, which gathers and analyzes important data through surveys and interviews with managers, coaches, and consumers of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou, this study integrates the GROW model and 4M management theory with SWOT analysis and then creates and assesses the PLACE Model. The PLACE Model is a comprehensive with five factors follow by Parental support, Love of youth for football, Amenities and facilities, Coaches' comprehensive level, and Economic environment five factors and applies it to the operation of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou. Results of the research found that, the high feasibility of implementing the PLACE Model in Guangzhou's amateur youth football clubs, PLACE model trends to support in the field of management, and guides to policymakers and fosters sustainable development in operation of amateur youth football clubs.

Keywords: Amateur Youth Football Club, Operations, GROW Model, 4M Management Theory, SWOT Analysis

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Introduction

China's socialist market economy has significantly impacted the football industry through national strategies like the "National Fitness Plan" and government initiatives such as the "General plan of Chinese football reform and development." These efforts have led to notable growth in the football sector (Council, 2015, 2021). The "Opinions on Strengthening School Sports to Promote the All-round Development of Students' Physical and Mental Health " (Council, 2016), and the "Guangzhou Football Medium and Long-Term Development Plan (2019-2050) " has contributed significantly to the growth and development of the football industry in China (Bureau, 2020). However, challenges persist for amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou, including high operational costs, limited financial support, and a lack of professional management skills among club leaders. This study aims to address these challenges by assessing current operations, developing the GROW-SWOT model in conjunction with 4M Management Theory to create the PLACE Model, and evaluating its effectiveness in enhancing the operational efficiency and sustainability of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou.

This study seeks to address these challenges by achieving several objectives. Firstly, the study seeks to comprehensively the current operations of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou and pinpoint crucial issues that require enhancement. Secondly, this study focuses on the development of the GROW-SWOT model combines with 4M Management Theory by SWOT Analysis to establishes the PLACE Model, a comprehensive framework that combines the GROW model (Whitmore, 2009), 4M management theory (Bangmo, 2019), and SWOT analysis (Nyarku & Agyapong, 2011). The model aims to promote sustainable development of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou. Finally, this study will assess the feasibility and effectiveness of the PLACE Model in improving the operational models of these clubs, providing potential solutions to the ongoing challenges they face, and improving the operations of amateur youth football clubs.

Objectives

1. To study the current situation of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou;
2. To development of the "GROW-SWOT" Model with 4M Management Theory and its implementation on the operation of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou;
3. To evaluate the feasibility of the PLACE Model on the operation model of Guangzhou amateur youth football clubs.

Methodology

Research Content

This study examines the impact of the new model on the operations of three large clubs with 11-a-side football pitches among amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou.

Research Sample

Based on Krejcie & Morgan's 1970 sampling table (error 5%), a sample size of 226 was determined. The researcher drew a proportional sample of 185 consumers to administer the consumer questionnaire to the Guangzhou youth amateur football clubs. A total of 30 people were interviewed, including 15 managers, 10 coaches, and 5 consumers of the Guangzhou amateur youth football clubs.

Research methods

1. This study examines the operation mode of Guangzhou amateur youth football clubs using the GROW model, 4M management theory, and SWOT analysis, as well as the literature on the application of these models in sports.

2. Questionnaire survey, combining the four elements of "goal, reality, option, and will" of GROW model and the four elements of "management, money, man, and material" of 4M management theory, to set up a questionnaire and conduct a survey on the consumers of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou;

3. Interviews combine the four elements of the GROW model, namely goal, reality, option, and will, with the four elements of the 4M management theory, namely management, money, man, and material. The content of these interviews is tailored for the stakeholders of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou City, including managers, coaches, and consumers.

Results

1. Current Situation Results

From the questionnaire found that important factors followed the table 1.

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Table 1 Factor categorical results

Factors	No.	Topic	$\bar{X}$	Rank
External support	33	The extent of your support for your child's participation in amateur football club training.	4.37	1
	13	The club offers an excellent plan for youth players.	3.54	2
	3	The development objectives of the club align with your personal needs.	3.50	3
Internal Motivation	15	You or your child has chosen to join an amateur youth football club due to a passion for the sport.	4.30	1
	11	The club has effectively communicated and exchanged ideas with you.	3.54	2
Internal Development Conditions	9	The current amenities and facilities of the club are sufficient.	4.25	1
	28	The current club has better advantages compared to other amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou	3.79	2
	37	The club possesses excellent execution capabilities that ensure the completion of plans.	3.70	3
Advantages of the Club	12	Your satisfaction with the comprehensive level of coaching staff at the club.	4.03	1
	24	Your current club has a great reputation and reach.	3.97	2
	20	Your satisfaction with the quality of training and competition at the club	3.78	3
	27	The timing of activities arranged by the club is reasonable.	3.56	4
The conditions of economic development	39	The developed economic level of Guangzhou can promote the development of amateur youth football clubs.	3.98	1
	8	Guangzhou has a favorable environment for youth football.	3.92	2
	10	Guangzhou possesses a strong foundation and atmosphere for football, which can promote the development of youth football.	3.92	3
	38	The club provide rewards for active participation in activities or exhibiting good behavior.	3.62	4
	40	The club needs to implement measures to expand its revenues in the future.	3.54	5

The questionnaire was subjected to SWOT analysis in conjunction with the GROW Model and 4M Management Theory, and the data were ranked, filtered and rearranged into five dimensions based on the similarity of the types of data: external support, which refers to the support provided by the club and each other externally, with “The extent of your support for your child's participation in amateur football club training.” scored the highest ($\bar{X}$= 4.37), followed by “The club offers an excellent plan for youth players.” scoring ($\bar{X}$= 3.54), “The development objectives of the club align with your personal needs.” scored the lowest ($\bar{X}$= 3.50), and the second dimension is Internal Motivation, which refers to the club's intrinsic measures and the motivation of youths to participate in club activities The second dimension, Internal Motivation, refers to the club's internal measures and the motivation of the youth to participate in the club's activities, including “You or your child has chosen to join an amateur youth football club due to

a passion for the sport." ($\bar{X}$= 4.30), "The club has effectively communicated and exchanged ideas with you." ($\bar{X}$= 3.54). The third dimension is Internal Development Conditions, which refers to the club's internal hardware conditions, and the highest ranked dimension is "The current amenities and facilities of the club are sufficient." ($\bar{X}$= 4.25), followed by "The current club has better advantages compared to other clubs." ($\bar{X}$= 3.79). Finally, "The club possesses excellent execution capabilities that ensure the completion of plans." ($\bar{X}$= 3.70). The fourth dimension is Advantages of the Club, which refers to the software conditions of the club. "Your satisfaction with the comprehensive level of coaching staff at the club." scored the highest, ($\bar{X}$= 4.03), followed by "Your current club has a great reputation and reach." ($\bar{X}$= 3.97), followed by "Your satisfaction with the quality of training and competition at the club." ($\bar{X}$= 3.78), and finally "The timing of activities arranged by the club is reasonable." ($\bar{X}$= 3.56). The fifth dimension is the conditions of economic development, which refers to the economic conditions in Guangzhou that are favourable for the development of amateur youth football clubs. The highest score is "The developed economic level of Guangzhou can promote the development of amateur youth football clubs." ($\bar{X}$= 3.98). "Guangzhou has a favorable environment for youth football" and "Guangzhou possesses a strong foundation and atmosphere for football, which can promote the Guangzhou has a favorable environment for youth football." ($\bar{X}$= 3.92). Next is "The club provide rewards for active participation in activities or exhibiting good behavior." ($\bar{X}$= 3.62). Finally, "The club needs to implement measures to expand its revenues in the future. " ($\bar{X}$= 3.54).

Amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou thrive due to strong parental support and the enthusiasm of young players, driving club growth by focusing on improving physical well-being and social skills. While these clubs offer quality facilities, skilled coaches, and structured programs, they lack in terms of business expansion. Financial backing from Guangzhou's economic development enables clubs to provide incentives and maintain operational capacity. Parental support and youths' passion for football are key motivators, with high satisfaction for amenities, coaching standards, and management efficiency. However, there is still room for improvement within the clubs despite reasonable fees and promotional efforts.

2. Create a new model

The researcher conducted SWOT analysis of the questionnaire and selected the initial factors by screening and ranking the internal strengths factors and external opportunities factors in the GROW Model and 4M Management Theory. The initial factors were sorted and screened to

determine the final model by combining the GROW Model and 4M Management Theory with textual analysis of the interviews.

The researchers developed a PLACE Model for the operation of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou City, which includes five factors, namely P-Parental support; L-Love of youth for football; A-Amenities and facilities; C-Coaches' comprehensive level; and E-Economic environment. The model will be applied to the operation of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou.

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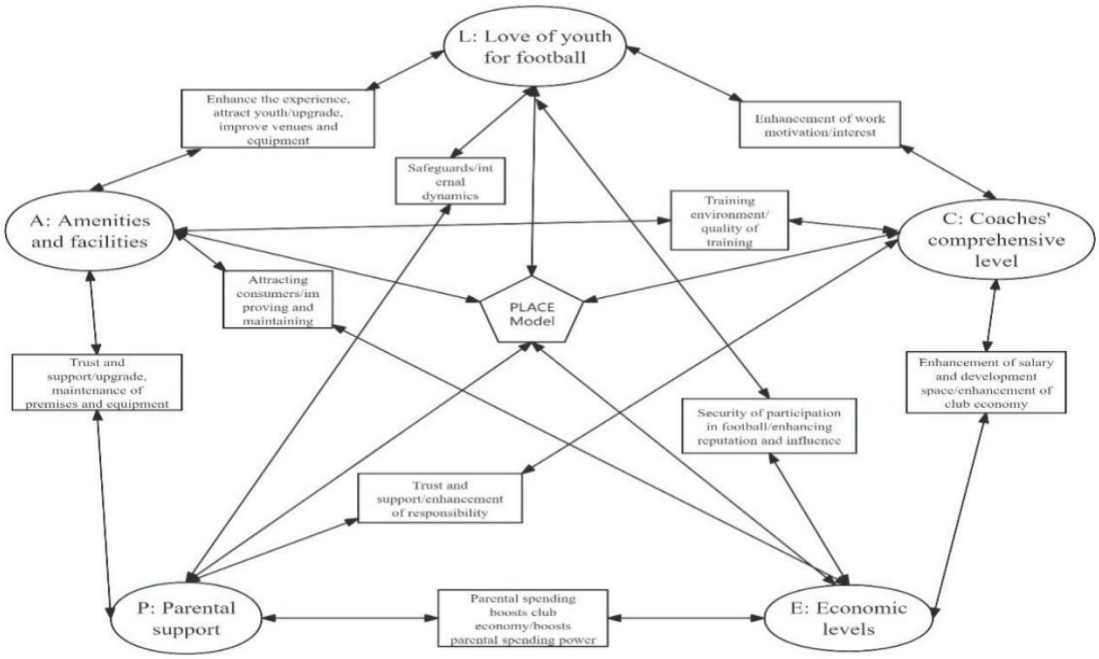


Figure 1 PLACE Model diagram

Discussions

1. Parental support: Parental support is crucial for amateur football clubs, as parents provide financial, emotional, and practical assistance to their children in their football endeavors, recognizing the significance of sports in youth development. Research by (Knight et al., 2016) identifies four main types of parental support for adolescents in sports: supporters, providers, assistant coaches, and administrators (Light et al., 2013). Parental involvement is key in initiating adolescents' participation in sports, with parents financing training, competitions, and equipment. Clubs engage parents through various activities like open days and parent-child football matches to enhance their understanding and involvement. Effective communication, especially with mothers, is vital for increasing enrollment and retention rates. High-quality services not only boost parent satisfaction but also attract more families, fostering stable club growth. Factors influencing parental support include children's interests, parents' sporting knowledge, work schedules, academic demands, injuries, and relocations. Emphasize the importance of parental support in children's sports training success, highlighting seven dimensions influencing parental support for youth participation: policy, community, family, motivation, school, media, and training quality (Zheng & Yang, 2022).

1. Love of youth for football

Youth's passion for football significantly impacts a club's success. To enhance club operations, creating a positive football environment and implementing engaging training programs are crucial to maintain children's interest. Dull traditional training methods can lead to waning enthusiasm among kids, prompting the need for clubs to provide stimulating and enjoyable training sessions. To retain talented players, clubs must ensure training remains engaging. Additionally, organizing football-related activities, such as attending professional matches, hosting talks by star players, and facilitating football exchanges, can further boost children's enthusiasm. According to research, personal interest stands out as the most crucial factor influencing youths' involvement in football (Ban, 2020).

2. Amenities and facilities

High-quality amenities and facilities play a crucial role in attracting parents and youth. They contribute to enhancing training outcomes and the professional reputation of sports clubs. Sports facilities encompass amenities, buildings, and equipment essential for sports activities, training, teaching, and fitness. Insufficient facilities like changing rooms and lighting hinder club progress in some amateur fields in Guangzhou. To address this, clubs must invest in modern training equipment, maintain facilities, and consider factors like accessibility and parking to boost enrollment. Renovating existing football stadiums and enhancing amenities can improve efficiency, as suggested by Hao, Guangzhou should also ensure the availability of necessary personnel and funds for the upkeep and replacement of football equipment in schools and youth training centers to ensure safety and promote youth football (Hao, 2022).

3. Coaches' comprehensive level

The quality and effectiveness of training in youth amateur football clubs depend significantly on the comprehensive level of coaches. Top-tier coaches must possess not only professional football knowledge and skills but also effective communication and education skills to engage children's interest and potential. Research by (Li, 2021) indicates that the current number of coaches is adequate, with a high coaching level; hence, clubs should prioritize the selection and training of coaches to ensure quality teaching. It is crucial to establish a clear system for evaluating coaches' professionalism, daily conduct, player and parent satisfaction, and marketing skills. Professor Li emphasizes that coaches play a crucial role in shaping children's values and behaviors; thus, high-level coaches should exhibit strong work ethics, a sense of responsibility, and the ability to motivate and guide children towards healthy growth. Similarly,

findings from (Liu, 2021) suggest that coaches act as role models, becoming idols for students through their sports skills. Coaches should focus on their emotional attitudes, words, actions, and behaviors to mold students' personalities and characters positively. Coaches' salaries represent a significant expense for clubs, highlighting the importance placed on them. Coaches with comprehensive skills, including sales and communication abilities, can aid clubs in retaining and attracting new parent resources. In study categorizes coaches' competency factors in social football youth training organizations as athletic training ability, on-field match direction, team management, and general competencies, including marketing skills. This innovative approach aligns with the current trends in amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou (Wang & Wang, 2021).

4. Economic environment

Economic factors, such as the financial standing of clubs and consumer economic levels, are crucial for club sustainability. Clubs must have adequate funds for daily operations, facility maintenance, staff salaries, and consumer-friendly pricing strategies. Post-epidemic economic planning is vital for clubs to thrive. Guangzhou, a city with a high GDP in China, offers a significant market for sports consumption (Zhang, 2017). As living standards rise, the demand for sports activities grows. Emphasizes equal service provision for families of varying economic backgrounds, focusing on children from average economic situations. Public service engagements by clubs can enhance their standing and social responsibility. Research shows that parents' low socioeconomic status can lead to adolescent physical inactivity, underscoring the importance of clubs' social responsibility in engaging with average economic families (Männikkö et al., 2020).

Conclusions

The study on amateur youth football club operations in Guangzhou, utilizing the GROW Model and 4M Management Theory, reveals that parental support and youths' passion for football are the main driving forces. Findings from consumer surveys and interviews show that club facilities, coaching team, activities, and development plans are well-regarded, yet there is potential for business expansion. The economic environment, including parental financial support and Guangzhou's economic growth, significantly influences club development. The proposed PLACE Model emphasizes parental support, youths' enthusiasm for football, facilities, coaching quality, and economic factors as crucial for the success of amateur youth football clubs in Guangzhou.

Suggestion

When implementing the PLACE Model, it is crucial to start with a trial phase, ensure that managers and coaches are well-versed in the model through training, and regularly assess its impacts. Clubs should use feedback to refine communication and collaboration, base decisions on data, optimize operational strategies consistently, and support youth football growth. The next research phase should concentrate on enhancing club managers' competencies, such as strategic planning, resource management, leadership, communication, adaptation, and innovation, which are vital for successful model implementation. Improving managers' skills in these areas will facilitate better application of the PLACE Model, leading to coordinated club development and ongoing enhancements. When applying the model in different regions, flexibility is advised to align with local economic conditions, cultural contexts, and market requirements.

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