

International Mirror and Chinese Path: Research on the Promotion Path of Zhangjiakou Sports Culture Tourism Brand in the Post-Winter Olympics Era

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Abstract: As a significant component of the Winter Olympics legacy, the exploration of the global sports culture tourism industry, with a focus on ice and snow culture tourism, and the sustainable development trajectory of the brand in the post-Winter Olympics era, has become pivotal in creating a “business card” tourism destination or distinctive regional tourism brand for Zhangjiakou. This is crucial for the ongoing development of Zhangjiakou’s ice and snow tourism and sports culture tourism brand in the post-Winter Olympics era. To gain insights, three cities with a geographical location similar to Zhangjiakou were chosen as Winter Olympics hosts, and the author analyzed the experiences of their internationalization development. Building upon this comparative analysis, the author presents recommendations for the development of sports culture tourism brands in Zhangjiakou in the post-Winter Olympics era, taking into account the specific circumstances of the region. The research highlights the following key points: leveraging Winter Olympics characteristic resources to enhance brand quality and recognition, harnessing regional advantageous resources to augment overall brand competitiveness, utilizing regional characteristics to enrich brand cultural connotation and appeal, and leveraging digital intelligence technology to bolster brand technological sophistication and communication.

Keywords: Post-Winter Olympics era; Zhangjiakou; Sports culture tourism; Brand promotion; International mirror; China path

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1. Introduction

As the co-organizer of the primary snow events for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, Zhangjiakou has successfully established itself as a renowned sports and cultural tourism destination both domestically and internationally. This accomplishment is attributed to Chongli ski tourism serving as the core and adopting an all-season tourism operating model. Zhangjiakou leverages its natural snow and ice resources, coupled with the

opportunity presented by the Winter Olympic Games. However, faced with the relatively underdeveloped ice and snow industry chain across China, this study aims to synthesize the branding experiences of well-known international ice and snow tourism cities. It then proposes suitable suggestions for the post-Winter Olympics development path of the sports and culture tourism brand in Zhangjiakou. The objective is to offer insights that can guide the enhancement of the sports and culture tourism brand construction in Zhangjiakou.

2. Development experience in prominent international ice and snow tourism cities

This research focuses on Chamonix (France), Whistler (Canada), and Nagano (Japan). The primary rationale behind this selection is that these three regions served as co-organizers for major snow events during the Winter Olympics. Furthermore, they are exemplary global cities with year-round tourism, encompassing a complete industry chain, and centered around ice and snow tourism. These cities, being in close proximity to domestic locations, make them particularly relevant for the study.

2.1. Chamonix, France

Chamonix, the site of the first Winter Olympic Games, known as the International Winter Sports Week, is nestled at the base of Mont Blanc in the Alps. Situated in the southeast of France and in proximity to Switzerland and Italy, Chamonix is a mountain city situated at the junction of these three countries. Renowned as a prominent ice and snow tourism city in France, Chamonix not only excels in the preservation and development of Winter Olympics heritage but also serves as a successful model for the comprehensive development of the entire ice and snow industry chain.

In its early tourism years, Chamonix primarily centered around mountain exploration and glacier viewing. With the advent of the Winter Olympic Games, a year-round tourism industry system emerged, with winter ice and snow tourism and summer outdoor sports as its primary components. Evolving into an internationally acclaimed ice and snow tourism brand destination, Chamonix boasts two major characteristic resources – its ice and snow, and its mountains.

The entire region offers over 5,000 routes for rock climbing, mountaineering, ice climbing, and various other sports, providing a solid foundation for activities like mountain climbing, rock climbing, and hiking. Additionally, Chamonix features skating, tennis, sledding, the Alpine Museum, the Crystal Museum, artist galleries, and other specialized art, culture, leisure, and recreational projects within the snow park or the city itself^[1]. These amenities not only facilitate easy access to various snow resorts but also cater to the diverse needs of tourists.

Chamonix's city planning and construction follow a beaded northern, central, and southern group layout, effectively organizing urban functions and layouts to highlight the suitability and operation of Chamonix's seasonal tourism.

Functioning as an international ice and snow tourism hub, Chamonix actively hosts high-level international ice and snow events to uphold the professional influence of its ice and snow characteristics brand. The comprehensive ice and snow education and training system, along with an alpine education and training system, positions Chamonix as a world-class international education and training base.

This robust education and training system enhances brand awareness and connotation, ensuring the year-round operation of hotels, catering, and related industries while extending the sustainable development of its industrial chain^[2]. Noteworthy examples include specialized mountaineering and skiing coaches, professional competitive athletes conducting training on ski mountaineering technical analysis and medical aid, as well as specialized alpine military training schools training the French Alpine Army and armed police forces.

Furthermore, the region hosts the Chamonix Institute of Alpine Medicine, which not only regularly organizes international alpine medicine conferences but also conducts alpine medicine research and provides alpine medicine rescue training. Relevant information indicates that Chamonix Ski School coach qualification requirements are stringent, encompassing not only professional skiing skills but also proficiency in teaching, training, multilingualism, and knowledge of snow and ice medical rescue – significant pillars of Chamonix’s snow and ice training industry chain.

2.2. Whistler, Canada

Whistler, the host of the primary skiing events during the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada, is situated in the northern mountains of the city, approximately 125 kilometers (about a 2-hour drive) from downtown Vancouver. Riding on the brand effect of the Winter Olympics, Whistler transformed from its original status as a Canadian summer resort to a globally renowned ski destination. This evolution not only facilitated the enhancement of its own resource development but also marked the successful and creative development of the Olympic legacy. Whistler has established itself as a year-round tourism destination, offering a comprehensive resort industry system that spans winter and summer activities, with a focus on alpine skiing and mountain riding. The result is an attraction for skiers and outdoor sports enthusiasts worldwide, solidifying its reputation as a world-famous tourist resort.

With its natural snow and ice resources and the continuous development of transportation conditions and urban infrastructure, Whistler secured its position as the host for the main snow events of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2003. Capitalizing on the Olympic opportunity, ski resources in the Whistler area underwent an upgrade and integration process. The renowned Whistler ski resort in the region entered a joint operation with the Blackcomb Mountain Ski Resort. Tourists can now seamlessly transverse between the two ski resorts via a high-speed cable car, enjoying panoramic views from the Whistler Peak and the awe-inspiring local glacier landscape.

Additionally, with government oversight, a dedicated Olympic heritage institution, Vancouver Olympic Winter Games 2010 Legacies Now (2010LN)^[3], was established. This institution further developed the Olympic Games venues, the Olympic Village, and the Olympic Park. Not only has Whistler continued to actively host high-level international snow events, but it has also constructed a national training base. Post-Winter Olympics, the region has actively attracted sled, snowmobile, and steel frame snowmobile associations from Canada and other countries to train and compete, fostering the creation of an international ice and snow training base. This initiative has propelled the development of related formats, nurtured a positive cultural atmosphere, enhanced the international influence of ice and snow sports, and increased brand recognition for ice and snow tourism destinations.

Whistler has also embarked on an active development of a summer cultural tourism program. From June to September each year, it hosts various music and children’s festivals, such as the Summer Festival. It takes advantage of these events to host mountain outdoor sports such as cycling and marathons, creating a comprehensive vacation model that combines culture, entertainment, and leisure. According to statistics, the average proportion of tourists in Whistler in summer and winter is 1.31:1. The influx of tourists from outside the city has spurred the growth of related industries such as catering, accommodation, and transportation. The sustained benefits of the Olympic economy provide a valuable reference for the host city’s sustainable development in the post-Winter Olympics era.

2.3. Nagano, Japan

As the host of the 1998 Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Japan, Nagano Prefecture stands as a renowned ski area in the Asia-Pacific region. Situated in the central region of Japan, in the central highlands often referred

to as the “roof of Japan,” Nagano enjoys convenient transportation via the Shinkansen, seamlessly connecting it to major cities such as Tokyo and Nagoya. Leveraging the brand effect of the Winter Olympics, Nagano has successfully established a comprehensive industry chain system centered around ice and snow tourism, marking a transition from traditional agricultural production to the development of a modern tourism industry.

Through actively hosting various ski competitions, the Nagano Ski Resort has not only expanded its global popularity and influence but has also integrated regional characteristic resources and advantageous assets to achieve industrial integration and create a regional growth pole effect^[3]. For instance, Nagano’s Hakuba Goryu Ski Resort, located near Hakuba Village, seamlessly combines ski tourism with the health industry to create diverse family-oriented health and leisure tourism projects. Tailoring service content and facilities to meet the needs of different family members, the resort actively refines its course system, developing skiing and hot spring health options catering to children, teenagers, youth, and the elderly. This approach realizes a comprehensive sports and cultural tourism industry system that integrates skiing, sightseeing tourism, health, physical leisure, and characteristic cultural tourism.

Simultaneously, in terms of post-competition development and the utilization of Winter Olympics resources, Nagano has not only actively developed the industrial chain for ice and snow equipment production, competitions, and training but also expanded the use of the “Olympic legacy” for year-round sightseeing. For instance, the Winter Olympics speed skating venue has been transformed into an Olympic museum, hosting an annual marathon to commemorate the Nagano Winter Olympics. The ski jumping competition facilities of the Winter Olympics have undergone improvements in supporting facilities and function transformations, integrating traditional agricultural industry tourism and other special tourism projects, ultimately becoming a new landmark for local tourism^[4].

In summary, leveraging natural resource endowments and location advantages, utilizing the hosting of the Winter Olympics as a pivotal opportunity for the integration and upgrading of ice and snow resources and characteristic culture, and creating a comprehensive industry chain model suitable for year-round operation and the coordinated development of the entire region represent common experiences in the industrial development and brand construction of international ice and snow tourism cities.

3. The path of promoting sports culture tourism brands in Zhangjiakou region in the post-Winter Olympics era

3.1. Relying on Winter Olympics’ characteristic resources to improve brand quality and recognition

The successful hosting of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games not only showcases the renewed vigor of the Chinese nation in the new era but also sparks the enthusiasm of the Chinese people to engage in ice and snow sports. The achievement of the goal of “300 million people participating in ice and snow sports” not only establishes the groundwork for the development of China’s ice and snow tourism industry but also supplies manpower, market demand, and consumption resources for the expansion and extension of the ice and snow industry chain. Leveraging the characteristic resources of the Winter Olympics heritage and creating deeply engaging characteristic tourism projects represent significant avenues to enhance the brand recognition of Zhangjiakou’s sports culture tourism.

Firstly, by utilizing the professional, high-specification venue tracks and event organization talent resources left over from the Winter Olympics, the region should actively host and organize various high-level ski events domestically and internationally. Establishing “Olympic standard” ski events and training bases will attract the attention of both professional and amateur ski sports enthusiasts, ultimately enhancing the brand quality and

distinctiveness of Zhangjiakou as an ice and snow tourism destination.

Secondly, capitalizing on the brand effect and human resources of the base, there should be active engagement in teaching and training for skiing professionals with high demand. Constructing renowned ski training bases and ski training courses domestically and internationally is crucial. Drawing inspiration from Chamonix's ski course training system, focusing on the ski skills course as the core, and integrating professional training courses such as snow and ice sports technical analysis, alpine medical rescue, snow resort management, and snow equipment maintenance with multi-language teaching capability will be key. Actively seeking and developing professional qualification certification bases and related institutions and facilities for alpine skiing, cross-country skiing coaches, ski resort rescue workers, ski trainers, etc., will contribute to building the world's top ski training institutions and enhancing the brand recognition of Zhangjiakou's sports training industry.

Thirdly, utilizing Olympic research, tourism, education, and training activities to propel the development of related industries such as catering and accommodation. Simultaneously, transforming the Winter Olympics heritage into a link for multi-industry integration will enhance the cohesion and brand recognition of Zhangjiakou tourism throughout the entire year. For example, during the summer and autumn seasons, making active use of grasslands and mountain resources to host various outdoor cross-country events and thematic research activities. Designing routes based on the Winter Olympics' main award square and different Olympic venues, tailored to the characteristics of different event subjects and research themes, will enhance the recognition of thematic activities.

3.2. Relying on regional superior resources to enhance the comprehensive competitiveness of the brand

The strategic location of Zhangjiakou, adjacent to Beijing, coupled with the construction, reconstruction, and expansion of various fundamental public facilities during the Winter Olympics preparations, has significantly elevated transportation and basic infrastructure in Zhangjiakou. Capitalizing on the national strategic advantages presented by the Beijing-Zhangjiakou sports culture tourism belt and the coordinated development within the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, an overarching plan for Zhangjiakou's sports culture tourism resources is being executed, coordinating and connecting with Beijing, Tianjin, and other regional tourism resources. Enhancing the comprehensive competitiveness of regional tourism brands and fostering regional cooperative and mutually beneficial development represents a crucial approach to bolstering the competitiveness of Zhangjiakou's sports culture tourism brands in the post-Winter Olympics era.

Firstly, leveraging the construction of the Beijing-Zhangjiakou sports and cultural tourism belt, there are efforts to establish a year-round leisure resort, with the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei leisure circle as the nucleus and radiating throughout the entire country. Recognizing the escalating demand for mass events in China and the seasonally fluctuating mass tourism market, and with the advantage of being in proximity to Beijing, active efforts are underway to connect with and host Beijing's tourist resources throughout the year. Creating a comprehensive tourism development model across the entire Zhangjiakou region, encompassing functions such as tourism distribution, accommodations, and reception services for Beijing, aims to enhance the comprehensive competitiveness of Zhangjiakou's sports and cultural tourism brand.

Secondly, clarifying the tourism development orientation of the Zhangjiakou region in the post-Winter Olympics era involves rational planning of target consumer groups and consumption contents across different tourism resources within the Beijing-Zhangjiakou tourism belt. Drawing inspiration from Nagano's ski tourism model, precise connections are established with various consumer groups at different levels and types, catering to diverse, personalized, and humanistic sports culture tourism consumption needs. This approach aims to improve Zhangjiakou's sports culture tourism brand recognition and enhance service quality satisfaction.

Additionally, learning from the integrated operational model of Whistler Snow Resort, the sports culture tourism belt in Beijing-Zhangjiakou offers diversified and continuous choices through integrated operations, thus improving tourists' freedom and coherence in selecting different types of tourist attractions. This facilitates the realization of comprehensive competitiveness for regional sports culture tourism brands and fosters brand loyalty based on the Beijing-Zhangjiakou sports culture tourism belt.

Thirdly, guided by the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei regional coordinated development strategy, and with snow and ice resources at the core, there are efforts to integrate human resources, production, transportation, and other resource elements within the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. The goal is to create a new regional development model for sports culture tourism with the entire ice and snow industry chain at its core, operating throughout all four seasons. This approach aims to enhance regional comprehensive brand awareness and leverage the effect of comprehensive brand competitiveness.

3.3. Relying on regional characteristics to enhance brand cultural connotation and attractiveness

Experiencing cultural differences between the tourist destination and the tourist source is a crucial driving force for tourism development, representing one of the primary behavioral motives for tourists during their journeys^[5]. Drawing inspiration from the international ice and snow tourism cities, it is imperative to strengthen the promotion and protection of regional characteristic culture and appreciation services within the framework of conforming-meaning brand development. This approach aims to further expand the influence and attraction of Zhangjiakou's sports culture brand, enhancing the connotation and brand recognition of Zhangjiakou's regional characteristic cultural tourism in the post-Winter Olympics era.

First and foremost, Zhangjiakou stands as a mountain city with a rich historical and cultural heritage, serving as a melting pot of Mongolian, Han, Manchu, and other ethnic cultures. The region boasts natural features such as basins, mountains, grasslands, and plateaus, offering distinctive cultural and tourism resources. In the post-Winter Olympics era, taking a cue from Whistler's all-season development model, efforts are made to create a blend of Chongli skiing, Zhangbei Grassland, Zhuolu Zhongyuan three ancestors culture, Yu County folk culture, and other content suitable for different seasons. This multifaceted approach aims to provide residents of Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei with summer grassland experiences, autumn scenic excursions, winter ski hot springs, and spring exploration, offering four-season tourism projects to enhance the attraction of Zhangjiakou's tourism brand and foster consumer loyalty.

Secondly, by leveraging the material and cultural heritage of the Winter Olympics, along with the talent and higher education advantages in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, an industry-wide system is being created. This system integrates the snow and ice quality education and training system with characteristic regional culture and high-tech research and development. Simultaneously, it enhances and extends the service chain of the sports culture tourism industry, offering comprehensive and immersive participatory experience services for tourists in terms of regional high-quality education and training tourism and regional cultural tourism guide services. This initiative aims to propel the integration of global cultural tourism projects and sports culture tourism projects, ultimately heightening the cultural connotation and brand attraction of Zhangjiakou's global sports culture tourism brand.

3.4. Relying on digital intelligence technology to enhance the brand's scientific and technological connotation and communication

Building upon the already-established snow and ice equipment, clothing, and other high-tech research and development industrial bases, there is a continuous effort to expand and reinforce the brand of Zhangjiakou's

high-end snow and ice technology product research and development base. This initiative serves dual purposes: firstly, to amplify the driving force behind Zhangjiakou's sustainable economic transformation and development in the post-Winter Olympics era, and secondly, to safeguard the ecological environment in the Zhangjiakou area. This approach increases the scientific and technological connotation for the sustainable development of Zhangjiakou's ice and snow tourism culture and sports culture tourism brand, ultimately enhancing the brand's scientific and technological communication power.

In the era of big data and intelligence, seizing the opportune moment presented by "300 million people participating in ice and snow sports" is essential. Leveraging the talents and technological advantages of Beijing and Tianjin, there is a concerted effort to vigorously research and develop ice and snow sports-related high-end technical equipment such as ice and snow equipment, auxiliary teaching equipment, and ice and snow medical rescue equipment, incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) intelligent technology. This aims to elevate the scientific and technological connotation and industry standing of Zhangjiakou's ski industry. For instance, utilizing high-tech ski equipment research and development, and integrating modern digital simulation technology to create a high-precision, identifiable, and replicable skier ski action risk identification system. This system provides protection for the training of professional athletes and establishes a world-class high-end ski special training and development system.

Additionally, capitalizing on Beijing's convenient geographical conditions and digital communication technology, efforts are made to open up information exchange technology based on the modern Internet of Things (IoT), big data, and smart media communication technology. The objective is to present and communicate the culture and characteristic tourism resources of the Zhangjiakou region through multimedia after diversified integration, utilizing the high-end talent pool and communication technology. For instance, using virtual reality (VR) technology to create special science and technology tourism projects such as the Yunshang China Snow and Ice Museum and Zhangku Culture Grassland Theater to enhance their network communication power.

4. Conclusion

The profound impact of the Winter Olympics brand has bequeathed a rich legacy of ice and snow heritage and cultural significance to the event venue. Leveraging the brand's effect and superior resources for the development of a distinctive brand has been a shared experience among renowned ice and snow tourism and culture cities worldwide. For Zhangjiakou, serving as the primary venue for the snow events of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games, this not only represents a crucial opportunity to drive the transformation of regional economic development but also stands as the optimal moment to foster the comprehensive and coordinated development of sports, culture, and tourism in the region.

With the Winter Olympics' characteristic cultural heritage and snow and ice resources as its core, operating across all seasons as the primary model, and emphasizing the promotion of regional brand cultural and technological connotations, Zhangjiakou's sports culture tourism industry system, positioned as the tourism reception center for the Beijing-Zhangjiakou sports culture tourism belt, embodies the essence of advancing and developing Zhangjiakou's sports culture tourism brand in the post-Winter Olympics era.

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