

## Article

# Hainan Sport Tourism Development—A SWOT Analysis

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**Abstract:** Hainan, as a popular tourism destination, is well-promoted by the Chinese central government. In particular, both central and local governments encourage Hainan's sport tourism-related professionals to develop sport tourism as one of the most important tourist activities in Hainan. However, previous research has not reported on Hainan's sport tourism strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a tourism destination or a sports event host. This study uses SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the context of Hainan's sport tourism development. A total of 12 dimensions, including branding, culture, finance, infrastructure, location, market, nature, policy, product, specialty, sustainability, and tourist were generated from our data analysis. In addition, a total of five future directions, including emphasizing event-oriented sport tourism, prioritizing sport motivation, identifying major sport tourism markets, making the rational use of sport tourism resources, and nurturing sport culture, are recommended as a result of this study.

**Keywords:** Hainan; sport tourism; SWOT



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## 1. Introduction

Sport tourism was not paid attention to as a form of specialized tourism until 1990 [1]. Sport tourism is seen as a unique combination of sports and tourism, which are two large industries for many countries. Although COVID-19 is still a factor influencing the sport tourism sector's growth, the global sport tourism market is expected to grow by USD 890.9 billion between 2020 and 2025. The U.S. is the country that is doing best in terms of the number of sports travelers, sports-related travel spending, employment generation, and fiscal contributions [2]. For example, as either a participant or spectator, nearly 180 million people traveled to a sporting event in the U.S. in 2019, which generated 69 million hotel room night stays. On the other hand, Europe accounts for 57% of the market's growth and is expected to grow more quickly than other regions' markets. Among European countries, Germany and Spain are the major markets for sport tourism [3].

In China, sport tourism has also become popular in recent years. In the 1980s, Chinese people's leisure activities were not diversified. Playing table tennis, doing morning exercises, and playing board games were the major leisure activities. Due to economic development, Chinese people have become more affluent and therefore have more leisure choices. As a result, outdoor recreation, traveling, and other sport activities have grown as

new forms of leisure activity. Among these new forms, sport tourism is a popular activity in China [4].

Whether to develop sport tourism destinations or focus on sport tourism legacy events as a strategy to foster sport tourism is still debated. From a marketing point of view, some tourism researchers have claimed that it is important to understand destination images [5]. However, Chalip argues that we should trade outcomes that are relevant to the sporting event itself (legacy) for leverage and not the host destination [6].

Hainan, as a major tourism destination, is well-promoted by the Chinese central government. In particular, both central and local governments encourage the development of sport tourism as one of the most important tourist activities in Hainan. Unfortunately, previous research has not reported on Hainan's sport tourism situation in terms of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a tourism destination or as a sport event host from the perspective of sport tourism industry professionals. Therefore, this paper reviews the previous research on sport tourism and then focuses on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the context of sport tourism development in Hainan. In particular, this study identifies major internal factors, including the strengths and weaknesses related to the sport tourism industry's growth in Hainan. At the same time, this study examines the external factors, including opportunities and threats, that the Hainan sport tourism industry is facing from the perspective of sport tourism industry professionals. Finally, this paper explores these strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats using SWOT analysis and provides recommendations for Hainan sport tourism development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The Rise and Evolution of Sports Tourism

In 1907, R. H. Nicholson, a traveler, wrote *Travel and Sport in Texas*, which recorded and shared his travel notes about his seaside fishing sport experience. This was the first link between sport and tourism. In 1911, *Travel and Sport*, a book review, was written by H. H. Prichard, which discussed travel and sport together. Although it is not an academic work, it played an important role in promoting sport tourism as the subject of academic research. In Martyn's 1969 work titled *The Influence of Sports on International Tourism*, he fully discussed the relationship between sport and tourism from a sociological perspective. This article first proposes that participants and spectators of sports events have different travel motivations.

In 1973, Zurn conducted a questionnaire survey on the sport, recreation, and tourism behavior of urban residents in Krakow, Poland, which may be considered the first ever piece of sports tourism research. Interestingly, Krakow became one destination in Central Europe that suffered from overtourism [7]. Krakow also became a popular research site for tourism scholars to study destination familiarity, perceived attractiveness, and residents' attitudes [7,8]. Later, Sue Glyptis carried out further research on sports tourism, and she put forward the important idea of linking sports and tourism together, which laid a theoretical foundation for solving many focal issues in the field of sports tourism. In contrast to other sport tourism studies, Gibson and Yiannakis' study examines people's preferences for travel behaviors. Their study found that exercise enthusiasts' preferences declined throughout their life cycle. In the mainstream tourism literature, there are also some studies on skiing, which are mainly focused on understanding participation patterns, participation constraints, and family travel patterns.

In 1975, a one-day conference, Sport and Travel, was held in New York to examine issues related to the tourism and sports markets. This conference focused on the exploration of future trends and made recommendations regarding how to promote the emerging markets that the two together constituted. The conference discussed market integration between sports and tourism as a public topic and also attracted extensive attention from the academic community [9]. Later, due to some major sporting events (such as the 1988 Seoul Olympics), sports-related tourism studies became an important research agenda in academic circles and were increasingly incorporated into institutional academic research

throughout the 1980s [10]. For example, *the Proceedings of International Seminar and Workshop on Outdoor Education, Recreation and Sport Tourism*, edited by Mike Garmise, was created in this period. Since the establishment of the *Journal of Sport & Tourism* (JST) in 1993, the term, “sport tourism” has become a standard word in the English-speaking world. However, at the same time, articles in this journal mainly use the plural form of “sport” (“sports” tourism). This usage is inconsistent with “sport tourism” in the journal’s title. This is one of the sources of the controversy surrounding the English terms “sport tourism” and “sports tourism”, where the former emphasizes sport events whereas the latter pays attention to sport activities [11].

By the turn of the 21st century, more than 50 English journals had published sports tourism-related research. On the other hand, in the past 10 years, the research level in related fields has been greatly improved. For example, some journals have published special sports tourism issues to focus on the display of relevant research results [12]. During this period, JST published a total of 11 Special Issues, covering a wide range of sport tourism topics, including sports tourism; heritage, sports, and tourism; sports fans and spectators as tourists; the sustainable development of sports tourism; sports tourism culture; sports, tourism, and national flags; sports, tourism, and the Olympic Games; the experience of sports tourism; sports tourism destinations; sports tourism theory; and participative sports tourism. In the meantime, *European Sport Management Quarterly* (ESMQ), *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* (IJSMM), and *Tourism Economics* (TE) also launched Special Issues to discuss sport tourism from different perspectives such as management and marketing. The launch of these Special Issues has greatly promoted academic research on sports tourism, making sports tourism an important academic research field [12].

Research on the interaction between sport tourism and society, the economy, culture, and the environment has been widely reported. For example, Daniels [13] used the central place theory to study the differences in economic benefits caused by geographical and spatial differences in the hosting of sport tourism events. He pointed out that although sports tourism can boost the economic development of destinations, not all destinations can benefit from hosting sports events. Lasanta et al. [14] explored the impact of winter sports skiing on sports tourism destinations in terms of population distribution, industrial development, social culture, and other aspects in Spanish mountainous areas. He found that areas influenced by ski resorts are restricted to the municipalities nearest to them. These municipalities show positive demographic changes and a negative evolution of primary activities. Municipalities more distant from the ski resorts show the opposite pattern. Sports tourism and the ecological environment also have an inseparable relationship of interaction. Rodriguez [15] studied the impact of ski tourism on the ecology of the Rio Hondo watershed in Taos, New Mexico. He found that although the long-range impact of ski resort development on river biology is uncertain, the increasing demand that expansion places upon surface water quantity threatens downstream community resource domains and irrigation agriculture.

## 2.2. Factors Influencing Sport Tourism Participation

In 1988, Pyo et al. [16] studied six Summer Olympics from 1964 to 1984 in terms of various factors that influence sports tourists’ decisions to watch sports events in person, including motivation, decision-making, behavior, consumption, perception, and preference. They found that the encouraging factors influencing attendance are housing arrangements, simplified entry procedure, tax exemption, and block ticket sales whereas the discouraging factors are boycott of the games, tightened entry, unfavorable exchange rate, and so on. Green and Chalip [17] studied the tourism motivation of sports tourists. They pointed out that the participation intention of sports tourists is mainly related to their own interests, safety risk control, cost protection, and other aspects. Kim and Chalip [18] conducted a survey on the willingness of 556 rugby club members to watch World Cup football matches, and the results showed that interest in the event itself, risk control, and financial constraints would affect the motivation and desire of potential participants to participate.

In addition, their study also found that the impact of financial constraints on the willingness to participate is not obvious, and the desire to study in the host place is a direct factor that affects the willingness to participate and interest in itself.

Many previous studies on sport tourism focus on how to promote attraction to tourists through the image design of a tourism destination and how to promote the sustainable development of tourism destinations through product development. Singh and Hu [19] interviewed the managers of the 2004 Athens Olympic Committee and the Greek Tourism Board to give an in-depth interpretation of the strategic plans of Greece as a sport tourism destination in terms of product planning, market development, image communication, and marketing. They discovered the major issues and proposed a conceptual framework for future Olympic host countries. Roehl et al. [20] believe that the development of sport tourism products should be designed according to the process of tourists making tourism decisions, and he took the American fishing industry as an example to analyze the information of fishing enthusiasts in the process of making fishing decisions. Green [21] pointed out that the satisfaction of sports tourists mainly comes from a specific identity, emotion, or cultural identity, which has a profound impact on promoting the sustainable development of sports tourism destinations.

Prior to COVID, research on sport tourism safety and risk management mainly involved the safety of sports venues, public health and disease prevention, terrorist attacks, riots, food safety, fan violence, and so on. For example, Shaw et al. [22] studied the public health and disease prevention measures at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games from the perspectives of tourism medicine and infectious diseases. Heggie [23] studied the health and safety of potential visitors to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Canada with a specific focus on pre-travel planning, road, and transportation safety in British Columbia, natural and environmental hazards, Olympic medical facilities, safety and security, and infectious disease. Page et al. [24] conducted a comparative analysis and study on tourist safety management and health protection experiences in adventure tourism in Britain and New Zealand by analyzing accidents, mortality rates, and countermeasures in different types of adventure tourism industries.

### 2.3. Chinese Sport Tourism Research

China's sport tourism research started in the early 1980s. Zhanchun Wang [25], a Chinese scholar, first linked sports with tourism. Although Wang mainly focused on physical education in schools, it is worth noting that his study was keenly aware of the internal relationship between sports and tourism in the sense that travel is one of the means of physical movement. Wang Shipping [26], a researcher at the Beijing Tourism Administration, proposed to make full use of the good opportunity of the Asian Games to promote the development of Tourism in Beijing and took the lead in associating sports events with tourism. The only two studies related to sports tourism in the 1980s were both countermeasures for social practice rather than academic research.

Water-based sports activities are not new to sport tourism development in China. In ancient China, water sports activities mainly included dragon boat racing, swimming, diving, fishing, etc. At that time, China also had a Chinese style of skating called Bingxi (冰嬉), which was a leisure activity for the upper classes. Bing (冰) means ice and xi (嬉) means happiness. In modern times, some modern and emerging water sports have begun to be introduced into China, and after the founding of the People's Republic of China, other water sports activities have gradually developed, such as rowing, motorboating, sailing, windsurfing, water skiing, canoeing, and so on. In 1996, the National Tourism Administration put forward the theme of "96 China Leisure Vacation Tour" and also launched rafting tours and ice skating tours. Thus, water-based tourism was gradually becoming more popular and organized at this time [27]. In the 1990s, sport tourism gradually became a lucrative business and commercial water sports and leisure clubs gradually developed. These commercial water sports institutions are economic entities that provide sports venues, technical services, and related consulting services and organize training courses. For ex-

ample, in the 1990s, the British established a boating association in Shanghai that made rowboats appear on the Huangpu River for the first time.

China's sport tourism development heavily relies on policies that are related to sports, tourism, and sports tourism. For example, on April 29, 2011, The General Administration of Sport of China formulated and distributed the "12th Five-year Plan" for the Sports Industry, pointing out that the development of sport tourism and sports exhibitions should be the focus to promote the combined operation of the sports industry and related industries. The development of sport tourism is embodied in the development of sports events, the development of characteristic sports exhibitions, and the active use of sports venues. On 23 June 2016, the State Council issued the *National Fitness Plan (2016–2020)* to promote China's sports development to the whole population, which proposed to cultivate consumption-leading fashion sports such as sailing, surfing, and extreme sports. The measures involved promoting the development of clubs and the construction of public ship docks for water sports as the highlight and the promotion of the formation of the "two rivers and two seas" (Yangtze River and Pearl River, the East China Sea and the Bohai Sea) water sports industry area. On 26 December 2016, the State Council issued the *Notice on Printing and Distributing the 13th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development*, proposing to promote the professional development model of all-region tourism, promote the in-depth integration of tourism and sports industries, and increase the development of the coastal, island, mountain, and other leisure tourism products. On 25 October 2021, the General Administration of Sport of China issued the *14th Five-Year Plan for Sports Development*, encouraging all regions to give full play to their regional advantages and build various sports demonstration zones with regional characteristics, such as accelerating the construction of the National Sports training base in South China (Hainan) and supporting Hainan in establishing a national sports tourism demonstration zone.

On the other hand, each province also has its own sport tourism-related policies. Our research site, Hainan, is no exception. For example, on 25 November 2016, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Radio, Film, and Sports of Hainan Province issued the *13th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development in Hainan Province*, which integrated the development of sport tourism into the development of marine tourism and cultural tourism. In order to adapt to the development of the national strategy, on 1 July 2021, the *Hainan Tourism Development "13th Five-year Plan"* clearly stated that Hainan should pay equal attention to sport tourism businesses and sports tourism industries and build the National Sports Tourism Demonstration Area, National Demonstration Zone for Sports Reform, and the "One Belt and One Road" International Sports Culture Communication Center.

Unlike in other countries, sport tourism-related policies in China guide the sport tourism market and are imperative to sport tourism development in China. Wang [28] conducted a thorough study on the development of sports tourism policies in China, and the research results divided the development of sports tourism policies in China into three stages: the blank period of sports tourism policies from 1949 to 2007, the development period of sports tourism policies from 2008 to 2015, and the clear period of sports tourism policies from 2016 to now. Wang and An [29] found that the application of sports tourism policy tools in China is mainly environment-oriented, and the policy themes mainly focus on four aspects: sports tourism infrastructure, sports tourism products and sports events, equipment manufacturing, and sports tourism safety.

#### 2.4. SWOT Analysis in Previous Studies

A SWOT analysis is a strategic technique for planning that is used to evaluate an organization's strategic position [30]. The empirical basis of a SWOT analysis emerged in 1952 in Lockheed's Corporate Development Planning Department; later, this approach was used in large companies worldwide, mainly for corporate aim setting in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats [31]. In China, the method has been widely used since the 1990s, as it has greatly contributed to tourism planning [32].

Chinese scholars have identified the overall characteristics of sport tourism resources (e.g., pleasant climate and scenic views) and proposed suggestions such as enhancing tourism-related regulations and promoting unique sports areas via SWOT analyses. However, most of the research results are limited to summaries of the literature, and few scholars use quantitative or qualitative research methods to carry out concrete and systematic research in this field. Other researchers have focused on SWOT analyses of tourism resources and products. For example, Gao and Liu [33] divided sports tourism resources into seven catalogs, including experience, sightseeing, business, ethnologic, participating, extreme, and health, and identified the general strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in terms of policy, the market, resources, and the development model of the current sport tourism industry in Hainan. On a larger scale, the analysis of sport tourism in different cities and regions in China has been widely covered in previous studies. SWOT analysis, expert interview, questionnaire, comparative analysis, and mathematical statistics methods are used to identify internal and external pros and cons of sport tourism. In the following subsections, we summarize previous SWOT studies on sport tourism in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

#### 2.4.1. Strength

Based on the previous research, strengths can be summarized in terms of location and resources. Wang et al. [34] evaluated the strengths of sport tourism resources in 11 cities in Shanxi province. They found that strengths are tied to local conditions and unique local characteristics. In addition, Zhou, Chen, Li, and Huang [35] found that the tourism landscapes of state-owned forest farms in China can be strengths in terms of development strategies.

#### 2.4.2. Weakness

In previous research, weaknesses have been divided into environment-related and structure-related factors. Interestingly, sustainable and ecological development are often considered to be strengths; however, they could be weaknesses in the Chinese tourism sector as they are barriers to development. Awareness of the development of sustainable sport tourism has increased in recent years, but Liang [36] identified that one of the weaknesses is that visitors' perceptions of ecological sports tourism are relatively negative when analyzing demographic factors such as educational attainment and income. Weakness is also associated with poor service quality, a shortage of professionals, and dissatisfaction with the workplace due to a lack of rewards and promotions among employees.

Apart from a lack of infrastructure and a shortage of high-skilled personnel with good management knowledge, particular factors such as the weak integration of tourism resources have been discovered in research on northwestern regions [37]. In reality, there is an uneven distribution of sports resources in different parts of China; although resources for sport tourism are identified as weaknesses in most cities, they are considered to be strengths in more developed cities in China, such as Shanghai and Guangzhou, because these cities have rich resources for sport tourism development.

#### 2.4.3. Opportunity

In general, policy is widely considered to be a good opportunity for the development of sport tourism in China because sports tourism policies implemented by the government are strongly associated with the sports and tourism industries [29]. Sport tourism research in north China focuses on evaluating the level of sports facilities and services, identifying that the awareness of sports as a leisure and tourism activity has greatly increased among Chinese people, which could be considered an opportunity for sports tourism to develop in China. However, the lack of completed infrastructure, solid branding, or products strongly restricts the development of these areas [38]. Simultaneously, hosting sport events is also an opportunity for some regions. For example, large sports and leisure events held in Hainan in recent years, such as the Hainan International Marathon in 2016 and the Ocean Race between 2017 and 2018, have received attention from both domestic and foreign media in the form of pre-match promotion,

in-game live broadcasts, and post-match follow-ups, enhancing the influence of Hainan sports tourism [39]. On the other hand, the traditional and folk sports activities of ethnic minorities are considered opportunities for the sports tourism industry [40,41]. For example, Miao people participate in horse racing and Yi people hold wrestling competitions on certain days every year, which can be seen as a strength for these regions.

#### 2.4.4. Threat

Previous research has discovered that a lack of management skills pertaining to sports seriously restricts Chinese sports-based construction and operations. Other factors such as disastrous weather, intense competition, the challenges of urbanization, insufficient laws and regulations, and a lack of mature and diversified market demand [42] have also been identified as threats to sport tourism development in China.

In summary, previous studies on Hainan sport tourism have been too abstract for practitioners to implement in real-life situations. Voices from the sport tourism industry are missing. Therefore, this study is an empirical study that focuses on collecting data from the sport tourism industry to explore practitioners' perspectives in a SWOT analysis to contribute to sport tourism development in Hainan.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Research Sites

Hainan is an island in the southern part of China. Although Hainan is a relatively new travel destination, it has been developing very quickly compared with other tourism destinations in China. In 2000, Hainan received a total of 10 million tourists. However, the number of tourists was over 30 million in 2011 [43]). During the COVID pandemic, more than 81 million domestic and overseas tourists visited Hainan in 2021 [44]. Hainan has a tax-free policy, fresh air, tropical weather, white beaches, mountains, and other natural resources. All forms of tourism are encouraged to develop in the region. Therefore, outdoor recreation, sport events, and sports-related tourism activities are particularly welcomed by the government. Hainan is thus a unique place to study sport tourism. Among its sport tourism-related facilities, we chose to look at the NBA training center, the Haikou Sea People Sailing Windsurfing Club, the Sanya Beiwei Water Sports Center, and the International Big Regatta Co. LTD based on the type of sport, location, potentiality, availability, and popularity (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map of Hainan province in China with the research sites indicated [45].

### 3.2. Data Collection

Qualitative research methods were used to collect and analyze data. We conducted structured interviews to collect interview data. Each structured interview lasted 60–90 min. We asked about their business operation situation and the following four major questions for the SWOT analysis:

1. What are the strengths of sport tourism development in Hainan?
2. What are the weaknesses of sport tourism development in Hainan?
3. What are the opportunities for sport tourism development in Hainan?
4. What are the threats to sport tourism development in Hainan?

### 3.3. Research Subjects

Table 1 shows our interviewees' information. The criteria for selecting interviewees were as follows: First of all, the interviewees should have a certain level of knowledge in the field of sport tourism. Some of them studied at a local university as undergraduates and witnessed the growth and development of local sports tourism. Some of them returned to Hainan to work in the field of sport tourism after studying for relevant degrees elsewhere. Secondly, the interviewees should have extensive practical experience in this industry. Most of the interviewees selected were in top leadership positions in sports tourism businesses. Some of them were the operations directors and some were the general managers of businesses. Most of them had decades of experience in the business and have an in-depth understanding and experience of the advantages and difficulties of the development of sport tourism.

**Table 1.** Information about the interviewees.

Name	Gender	Occupation	Site
Basketball A	Male	Coach, Project Manager	NBA training center (Haikou)
Basketball B	Female	Operations Director	
Sailing A	Male	General Manager	Haikou Sea People Sailing Windsurfing Club (Haikou)
Surfing A	Female	Center Director	Sanya Beiwei Water Sports Center (Sanya)
Bicycle and yacht A	Male	General Manager	International Big Regatta Co. LTD (Haikou)
Bicycle and yacht B	Female	Marketing Director	
Bicycle and yacht C	Male	Marketing Manager	

### 3.4. Data Analysis

NVivo 12 software was used to analyze the interview data. The first step involved sorting out the interview audio of all the interviewees. The second step was to classify the collected data from each interview, which can be divided into four categories: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The third step was to integrate the classified data of the interviewees according to the four major categories of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Next, we encoded the integrated data. We carried out three-level coding for the classified original text. The first-level coding extracted the keywords of the original text, with a total of 99 codes, and then summarized the first-level coding to form a more general second-level coding. The secondary codes were classified into highly generalized dimensional-based codes with a total of 13 dimensions, including a branding dimension, a culture dimension, a finance dimension, an infrastructure dimension, a location dimension, a market dimension, a nature dimension, a policy dimension, a product dimension, a specialty dimension, a sustainability dimension, and a tourist dimension. Finally, NVivo 12 software was used to analyze the proportion of each dimension of sports tourism (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) in Hainan province.

In addition, for the sake of making the results more consistent with the original text, we input the original Chinese data on the four aspects of the SWOT into NVivo 12 to obtain a Chinese word cloud graph, which can show the frequency of keywords in the Chinese data. In order to show the English version of the obtained word cloud graph, we translated the words displayed in the Chinese word cloud into English, then input them into NVivo 12 according to the word frequency. Table 2 shows the comprehensive distribution of the 12 dimensions in the SWOT analysis of Hainan sports tourism's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

**Table 2.** SWOT coding dimensions of Hainan's sports tourism.

Coding/Dimension	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Branding Dimension	✓		✓	
Culture Dimension		✓		✓
Finance Dimension		✓		
Infrastructure Dimension	✓	✓		
Location Dimension		✓		
Market Dimension	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nature Dimension	✓	✓		✓
Policy Dimension	✓	✓	✓	✓
Product Dimension	✓	✓		✓
Specialty Dimension	✓		✓	
Sustainability Dimension		✓	✓	
Tourist Dimension	✓	✓		✓

Note: Specialty Dimension: The specialty dimension means that tourism in Hainan province is different from other regions in China and has local characteristics, such as local conditions and customs.

#### 4. Result

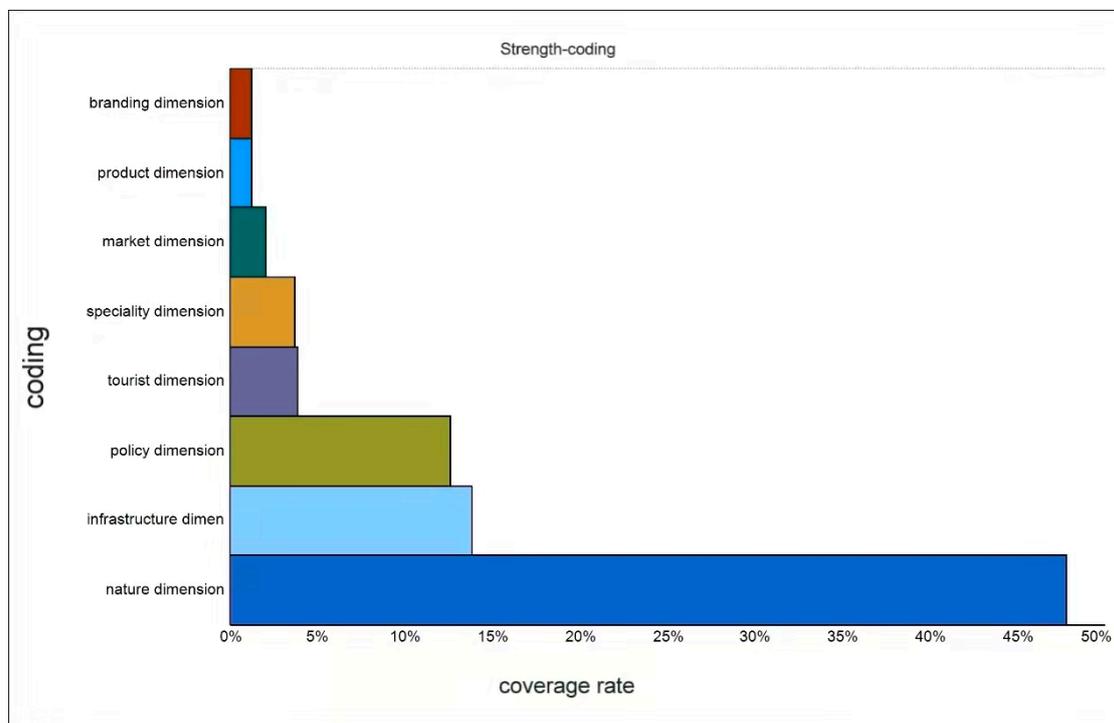
The purpose of this study is to obtain the dimensions related to the SWOT of Hainan sports tourism and the most common keywords by coding interview content to provide a reference for the future development of Hainan sports tourism. Based on our data analysis, we found that strength has 8 dimensions, weakness has 10 dimensions, opportunity has 5 dimensions, and threat has 6 dimensions. We elaborate on them in the following subsections.

##### 4.1. Strengths

By extracting high-frequency words from the interviews on strengths, word cloud maps were generated using NVivo 13 software. Because the interviews were conducted in Chinese, we initially analyzed text fragments in Chinese in NVivo. As a result, Chinese word cloud maps were generated. We then translated all interview transcripts into English. We also ran the same analyses to see if English word cloud maps generated by NVivo are the same as the Chinese word cloud maps. However, the two different language cloud maps are visually different. Therefore, we do not present the word cloud maps in two different languages in this paper. Instead, we provide the high-frequency words in both English and Chinese as they pertain to Hainan's sports tourism strengths (we do the same protocol in the following sections on weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), which are event–项目 (16), sailboat–帆船 (11), suitable–适合 (7), special–特别 (7), bicycle–自行车 (6), facility–场馆 (5), and resource–资源 (5). The seven words with the highest frequency were categorized into four groups, namely *sports tourism itself*, *sports tourism category*, *sports tourism environmental characteristics*, and *adjectives to describe Hainan sport tourism*. The events with the highest frequency are mostly combined with sports to form sports events. Sailboat and bicycle are sports developed in Hainan. Facility and resource represent the conditions needed for the development of sports tourism in Hainan province. Suitable and special are adjectives that describe Hainan sport tourism.

Based on the coding of strength, we obtained eight dimensions of the advantages of Hainan's sports tourism development. As is shown in Figure 2, the strength factors are the nature dimension, infrastructure dimension, policy dimension, tourist dimension, specialty dimension, market dimension, product dimension, and branding dimension in

descending order of coverage percentage. The strength of sports tourism in Hainan is the nature dimension, which accounts for half of all its advantage dimensions (about 48%). The natural dimension includes seasons, wind direction, waves, sand, water, and so on. Only the NBA is almost immune to the natural environment. Compared with the nature dimension, the coverage percentage of the infrastructure dimension (second) and policy dimension (third) is significantly reduced (about 10–15% each). Infrastructure includes roads and urban infrastructure, sports facilities, and other supporting facilities for tourism products. The remaining strength factors of tourist dimension, speciality dimension, market dimension, product dimension, and branding dimension account for less than 5% of the total. These five advantages do not exist in every sports tourism activity. In the interview, the tourist dimension and the speciality dimension were only mentioned in cycling around the island. The interviewees described the tourists' sense of enjoyment and the unique scenery that could be appreciated when cycling around the island. The market dimension and the product dimension only have a development advantage in sailing sports, which is reflected in the broad market and attractive products. Among all sports tourism programs, only the NBA has branding.



**Figure 2.** Strength Coding.

#### 4.1.1. Natural Dimension

From the bar chart, we can conclude that natural resources are the most important strength for Hainan to develop sports tourism. Most sports tourism projects in Hainan are closely related to the natural environment. For example, surfing, sailing, and cycling around the island are all limited by natural conditions. The strengths of Hainan's natural environment are mainly reflected in the climate, seawater, beach, and wind. The climate strength is mainly reflected in the moderate temperature of Hainan, especially in winter. The seawater strength is reflected in the clean water, the size of the waves suitable for water sports, and the depth and water quality along the coast. Bicycle and yacht A, the general manager of the International Big Regatta Co. LTD said:

“Sailing is a maritime sport activity. Hainan is the best province to carry out the sailing. Firstly, Hainan has the advantage of the season, and secondly, the water is relatively clean. The water quality of the Pearl River Delta and Yangtze River

Delta is not good; In winter, people cannot just go sailing in Dalian and Shandong because these places are too cold, and there are lots of reefs. Hainan can be said to be the best resource for water sports and sailing in China”.

Beach advantage refers to fine sand along the coast and the length of the beach. The strength of wind is shown in the wind direction and wind power, which provide good conditions for water sports in Hainan, especially sailing and surfing. Sailing A, the general manager of Haikou Sea People Sailing Windsurfing Club concluded that:

“First, the wind here is often back to shore, which is very safe. No matter what problems at sea, wearing a life jacket can float back; Second, the wind is perfect, the core of sailing windsurfing is the wind, and there is a lot of wind.”

Therefore, the natural environment not only provides Hainan with a high-quality natural environment for sports but also improves the safety of sports events.

#### 4.1.2. Infrastructure Dimension

The infrastructure dimension mainly refers to stadiums, equipment, facilities, and other tourism and urban infrastructure construction for sports tourism development, such as transportation, accommodation, and other leisure and entertainment facilities. Basketball A, the coach and project manager of the NBA Basketball Training Center, highlighted the strength of NBA Basketball stadiums. He stressed that:

“Currently, there are very few standardized stadiums like Hainan NBA Training Center in China . . . . The facilities of the stadium are basically complete and suitable for the event. In addition, the training center has two competition fields and three training fields.”

The surfing club also mentioned that Hainan has a good recreational environment for tourists. “Houhai is a great place for tourists to have fun, and entertainment facilities around Houhai have been built this year,” the Sanya Beiwei Water Center manager said. In addition to the sports facilities provided by Hainan sports tourism practitioners for the development of Hainan sports tourism, the Hainan government has also made contributions to the construction of Hainan sports tourism infrastructure. Bicycle and yacht A believes that “the greatest strength of bicycle cycling in Hainan is the advantages of Hainan’s roads (which is suitable for riding bicycles)”. Sailing A points to one reason for its rapid growth: “There are now 14 docks in Hainan and over 2000 berths available, so sailing is a water sport that is growing very fast”.

#### 4.1.3. Policy Dimension

From the perspective of informants, the policy support for the development of sports tourism is mainly reflected in the support for the development of sports tourism events in Hainan province. Hainan has long supported the development of sports and tourism events, and Bicycle and yacht A said:

“It first proposed three major events in 2000 when it became an international tourist island: the tour of Hainan bicycle race, the big sailing race, the golf race, and later the marathon and WGP windsurfing were added.”

The 14th National Games surfing competition was held in Wanning, Hainan. All these activities show that Hainan has the foundation and advantages to hold sports events. Bicycle and yacht A also proposed his views on Hainan’s support for the development of sports events: “First, to enrich Hainan’s tourism products and promote the transformation and upgrading of tourism; second, to promote the development of sports; third, to promote Hainan Island”.

#### 4.1.4. Tourist Dimension

The tourist dimension means that different types of tourists can have a sense of acquisition and engagement in the process of sports tourism and that tourists can experience

the value of sports. This strength is most pronounced when cycling around Hainan Island, where Bicycle and yacht A believes that tourists “have a purpose in cycling around Hainan, a sense of the value of participation. Different people have their own goals”.

#### 4.1.5. Specialty Dimension

As the southernmost island in China, Hainan province is unique compared with other provinces in terms of its tourism scenery and tourism mode. Bicycle and yacht A believes that “Hainan has unique scenery”. He said, “There is a saying among cycling friends that there are three cycling destinations in China: Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Hainan Island, and Taiwan.” The island landscape offers a cycling experience completely different from that of most parts of China, and this carries over to other sports. This unique tourism experience has also become an important factor in attracting tourists to Hainan.

#### 4.1.6. Market Dimension

The market dimension refers to the broad market of sports tourism development in Hainan. With its unique natural conditions and cultural factors, Hainan has become an exclusive area for the development of some water sports. Taking sailing as an example, Sailing A believes that “Sailing tourism in Hainan is aimed at the whole Chinese market. Most of the Chinese who play this sport come here. There is a huge market behind it.” Therefore, Hainan’s characteristic water sports have broad market development potential.

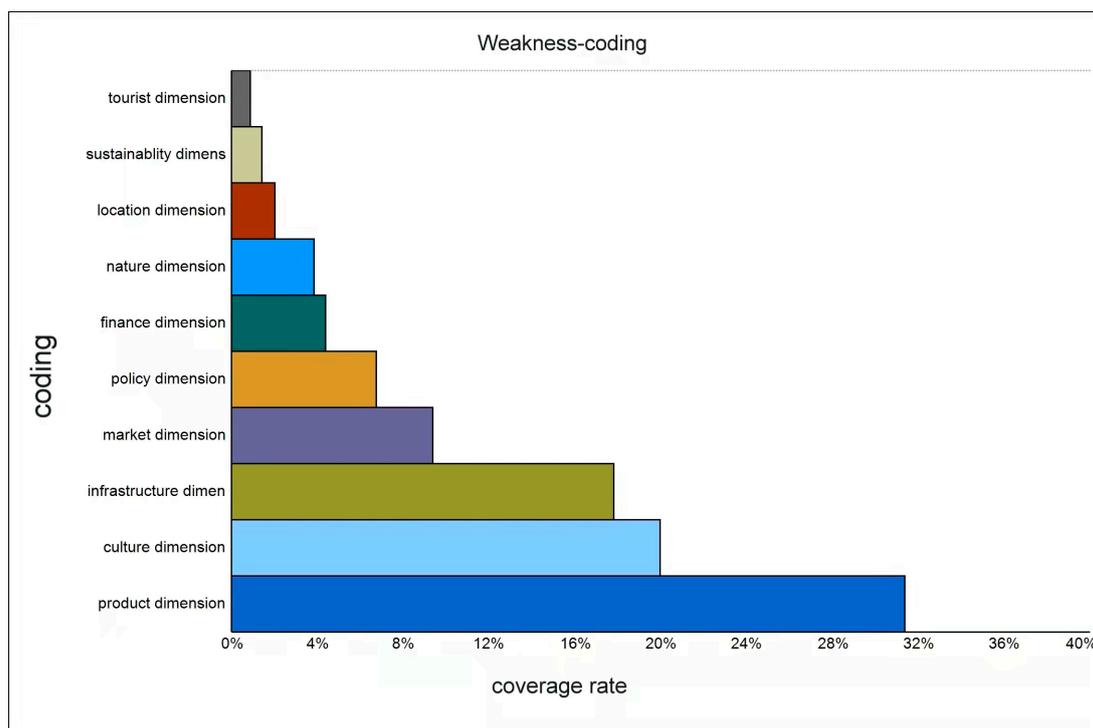
#### 4.1.7. Product Dimension and Branding Dimension

Both product dimension and brand dimension provide a good public image for the development of Hainan sports tourism and can bring passenger flows to Hainan sports tourism programs. The product dimension means that Hainan sports tourism programs have a good image and attraction, and sports projects have a high level of internationalization. Sailing’s product attributes are “sunny, fashionable and attractive”, Sailing A explains. Brand dimension refers to sports events that have independent standardized brand management models and high brand awareness. The advantages of this dimension refer specifically to NBA basketball. “We (the NBA Basketball Training Center) are owned by the NBA, we have our own brand,” Basketball B said during the interview.

#### 4.2. Weaknesses

The high-frequency words in terms of Hainan’s sports tourism weaknesses were training—训练 (8), bicycle—自行车 (7), place—地方 (7), club—俱乐部 (6), surfing—冲浪 (5), and so on. Obviously, the “product” is the main weakness of Hainan sports tourism. This part focuses on the disadvantages of sports tourism in Hainan and involves a discussion on how to make up for these disadvantages.

For the weaknesses of sports tourism in Hainan Island, ten dimensions can be analyzed and summarized from the interview: product dimension, cultural dimension, infrastructure dimension, market dimension, policy dimension, financial dimension, natural dimension, location dimension, sustainable dimension, and tourist dimension (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Weakness Coding.

#### 4.2.1. Product Dimension and Nature Dimension

We include both the product dimension and nature dimension in this part because we think both dimensions show some overlap. As the most important dimension of weakness, it can be seen that Hainan sports tourism activities themselves have room for improvement. Sport tourism-related products' disadvantages are mainly reflected in their security, product range, and specialization aspects.

First of all, the safety of tourism products is the key to whether a sport is widely welcomed. As mentioned in our interview and conversation, surfing itself, as an extreme sport, is very dangerous compared with badminton, table tennis, and other sports we are familiar with. Surfing requires a basic familiarity with how to swim. Surfing A said that "the tail fin of the surfboard could cover on the body or hit the head after the rider loses balance and falls into the water, putting the rider at risk of drowning and injury". As for the natural dimension, waves are also important risk factors. Surfing is associated with waves, but they can also be dangerous if the rider is not a good swimmer.

Secondly, Hainan sports tourism products are insufficient. In our interview, Surfing A said "the small waves in the sea area only suitable for beginners to play". When the skills of tourists are improved, this sea area is not enough for tourists to further study, and tourists need to move to other sea areas to learn a higher grade.

Thirdly, the specialization of sports tourism products in Hainan is not enough. These include a lack of professional coaches; a lack of international certification, accreditation, and training systems; and a loose development model. This, in turn, restricts the safety and brand building of sports tourism products in Hainan.

#### 4.2.2. Culture Dimension

Wei and Mao [46] indicated that sports culture is competitive sports culture, and it is the transformation of this kind of competitive sports culture by human beings that leads to the continuous innovation and development of the economy and culture. However, our data show that Hainan sports tourism often has not formed the characteristics of sports culture.

Surfing A mentioned that “Haikou surfing lacks Langren Culture which is surfing culture, and surfing cannot be promoted as a form of culture”. She said that “it is just a business”. Bicycle and yacht A also said, “bicycle as a means of transportation is well known and used in China, but bicycle as a sport is not well understood”. Without the formation of cycling culture, it is not easy to develop any sport tourism activities. When it comes to sailing, the experience of high barriers and the purchase of yachts and sailboats is often carried out for the purpose of showing off one’s identity for some Chinese people and not in order to form a good cultural atmosphere.

Secondly, Hainan’s sports culture is also deficient in terms of education. Bicycle and yacht A noted that “cycling in China is not incorporated into the education system and lacks clubs and organizations”. It is difficult to create a sports culture if sports facilities and organizations are few and far between.

#### 4.2.3. Infrastructure Dimension

The perfection of infrastructure can reflect the development of tourism projects. Hainan sports tourism infrastructure is not good enough, which restricts its development to a large extent. Infrastructure is divided into basic infrastructure and supporting infrastructure.

In terms of supporting infrastructure, Basketball B, director of operations at the NBA Haikou Training Center, said that “public transportation and shopping malls are lack around the training center and beverage vending machines are lack in the training center”. Sailing A, general manager of the Haikou Sea People Sailing Club, said that “hotels and accommodations are lack around the club”. He also mentioned that “symbolic road signs and supporting facilities are infrequent for the cycling race around the island”.

From the point of view of basic infrastructure, Sailing A said that “hard facilities are scarce on the shore to store equipment”. Bicycle and yacht A said that “Hainan’s sports training facilities are old and lacking, which cannot support the vigorous development of sports tourism”.

The perfection of infrastructure is directly related to the smooth development of sports tourism and the experience of tourists.

#### 4.2.4. Market Dimension

In the interview, the interviewee told us that “the biggest disadvantage of sports in China is that there is no market”. Due to the lack of a market, a business model cannot be formed, which leads to the healthy and sustainable development of sports tourism. Chen mentioned that China sells a lot of sports apparel and sports products, and the sports manufacturing industry is booming. However, this does not necessarily stimulate the consumption of sports and stylish equipment. At the same time, Chen says, the number of people who love sailing is huge but relatively small compared to the whole country. It can be seen that Hainan sports tourism has a large potential market that has not been developed and has a certain degree of difficulty in terms of its development. Therefore, how to connect sports and the market is a challenging issue.

#### 4.2.5. Policy Dimension

As can be seen from the above, the government has introduced many policies to promote the development of sports tourism. However, at the same time, policy and the commercial development of sports tourism also have certain obstacles.

Sailing A said that “the government’s development model of focusing on sailboarding as a sport and cultivating talent reserves will lead to a long return on economic benefits”. Bicycle and yacht A said that “there is no special sports department in Hainan. The functions of the sports department are mainly divided into the following aspects: first, competitive sports for achievement; Second, the national fitness; Third, youth sports, youth sports is the main body. However, at present, this function is performed by the education department rather than the sports department. Youth sports are therefore not professional enough”.

#### 4.2.6. Finance Dimension

The finance dimension directly reflects the development difficulty of sports tourism. In the interviews, we learned that Hainan sports generally exhibit certain economic weaknesses. These can be divided into the construction capital, income, and expenditure dimensions.

In terms of sailboat and sailboard sports, the industry investment capital base is large and the return on income time is longer. In terms of expenditure, equipment loss is very large, and maintenance and renewal costs are high. Bicycle and yacht A mentioned that “cycling and sailing are not profitable at the moment, and no one wants to do it. At the same time, the high cost of participating in sports in China restricts the participation of the broad masses of the people”.

#### 4.2.7. Location Dimension

Location is also an important factor affecting the development of sports tourism. It is mainly divided into two aspects: the natural geographical location factor and the human geographical location factor.

Basketball B said that “the location of The Haikou training Center of NBA is far from the downtown area”. This leads to a large distance between the venue and the source of tourists and fails to attract more tourists. From the perspective of human geography, the weak economic foundation of Haikou is also an important factor that restricts the development of sports tourism.

#### 4.2.8. Sustainability Dimension

As an important element of opportunity, the sustainable aspect accounts for a few of the weaknesses. Haikou NBA Training Center is in a low development stage due to the lack of officially certified coaches and low development maturity, and its sustainable development has become a weakness. This is the result of a combination of weaknesses in infrastructure, markets, and other factors.

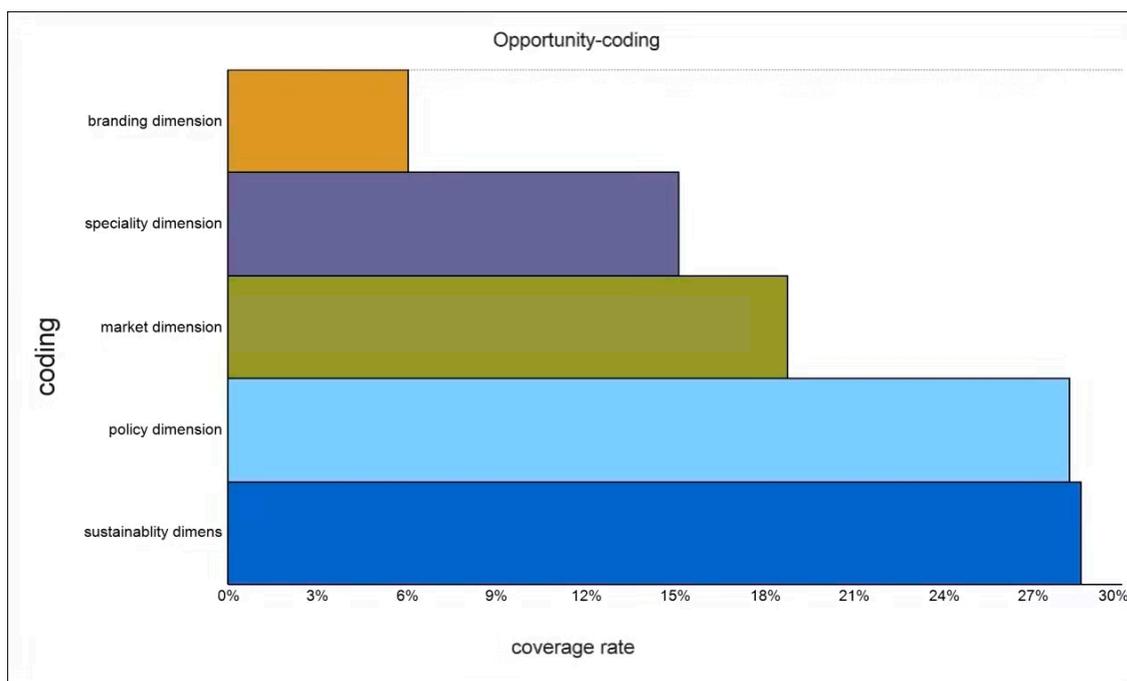
#### 4.2.9. Tourist Dimension

From the perspective of tourists, many sports in Haikou, such as sailing and surfing, have a high threshold in terms of their economic level, and people with low economic ability have a large consumption burden, so they cannot expand the tourist market. This is also an important factor restricting the development of sports tourism in Hainan.

### 4.3. Opportunity

By extracting the high-frequency words from the interviews on the opportunity, the high-frequency words in terms of Hainan’s sports tourism advantages were development—发展 (5), aspect—方面 (3), future—未来 (3), project—项目 (3), city—城市 (3), surfing—冲浪 (3), and events—赛事 (3).

As is shown in Figure 4, sports tourism opportunities in Hainan Island have five dimensions, including the sustainability dimension, policy dimension, market dimension, specialty dimension, and branding dimension.



**Figure 4.** Opportunity Coding.

#### 4.3.1. Sustainability Dimension

Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs [47]). According to the investigation and data analysis, we find that the sustainable dimension is an important dimension of the opportunities for sports tourism on Hainan Island. This dimension is divided into three parts: resource, market, and cultural sustainability.

First of all, resource sustainability means that Hainan Island's sports tourism has abundant potential resources to be developed and existing resources that can be exchanged in the future. In our interview, Basketball A told us that there are foreign coaches in other NBA places, such as basketball parks in different regions, and we can support each other. Coaches from other cities are able to come here to support us, and we will also go to other cities. NBA Training Center (Haikou) not only has local coaches but also receives coaching resources and other development support from first-tier cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. The efficient use of these existing and interactive resources in the future is an important opportunity for the development of sports tourism on Hainan Island.

The second part is the market sustainability dimension. In our interview, Surfing A stated:

"Surfing, as a new sports industry, will last the hot tendency for five to six years. This industry has rich growth potential and can attract new customers from different ages continuously through marketing and other means".

Another dimension to consider is the cultural sustainability dimension. Surfing A also said:

"Surfing has a different characteristic from other water sports, namely, progression. Visitors can try different waves and moves at different stages, so surfing culture can continue to grow for years to come. These characteristics make surfing different from other sports with customer stickiness, customer diversity and rich development potential, creating unique development opportunities for surfing."

#### 4.3.2. Policy Dimension

On 4 January 2010, *Several Opinions of The State Council on Promoting the Construction and Development of Hainan International Tourism Island* was officially released, marking that the construction of Hainan International Tourism Island was officially promoted as a national strategy. This document has brought unprecedented opportunities to Hainan's development. The state has given Hainan more flexible preferential policies. Article 12 of the document (*Several Opinions of The State Council on Promoting the Construction and Development of Hainan International Tourism Island*, 2010 [48]) clearly states that "We support Hainan to hold international sailing events, international road cycling events, professional golf tournaments and other sports events." With the strong support of the General Administration of Sport of China and the active operation of the Hainan government, the scale of sports events in Hainan has expanded year by year, providing more opportunities for the development of sports tourism in Hainan province.

According to our interviews, managers of different destinations all mentioned the positive impact of these good policies on the development of sports tourism on Hainan Island. Basketball A pointed out that Hainan is not only developing in terms of tourism but also in sports. Apart from tourism, Hainan is also developing toward sports. For example, every year Hainan holds sea sports events, a marathon, and so on, which are the future direction of Hainan sports and sports culture development. He said it was important to pay attention to the competition and support its development. The holding of domestic and international sports events is very important to the development of sports tourism on Hainan Island. Sailing A pointed out that the Haikou municipal government attaches great importance to sailboat and sailboard tourism in Hainan and has conducted many investigations and assessments. Bicycle and yacht A also said that the current policy opportunities for the development of sports tourism in Hainan Island are better, an example of which is the abovementioned document that mentioned vigorously developing water sports.

#### 4.3.3. Market Dimension

In recent years, sports tourism has developed rapidly in China, especially from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, which has created a large market for young people to engage in sports tourism in Hainan.

In addition, Hainan has its own unique market for students and athletes. Through field interviews and investigations, we learned that Haikou Sea People Sailing Windsurfing Club has cooperated with primary and secondary schools in Hainan and has welcomed thousands of people. In addition, the marketing manager of the International Big Regatta Co. LTD (Haikou) also mentioned working with sailing teams from different universities. College students are a very broad market, which not only has unlimited development potential but can also make outstanding contributions to the cultivation of excellent athletes for the country.

#### 4.3.4. Specialty Dimension

Hainan has unique resource advantages, and each resource has its own strong regional characteristics. In an interview, Sailing A said that compared with other sports, sailing is the most local sport in Haikou, which combines its advantages with tourism. Careful use of these unique resources can boost the local economy, tourism, and urban taste, and can boost the entire coastline.

#### 4.3.5. Branding Dimension

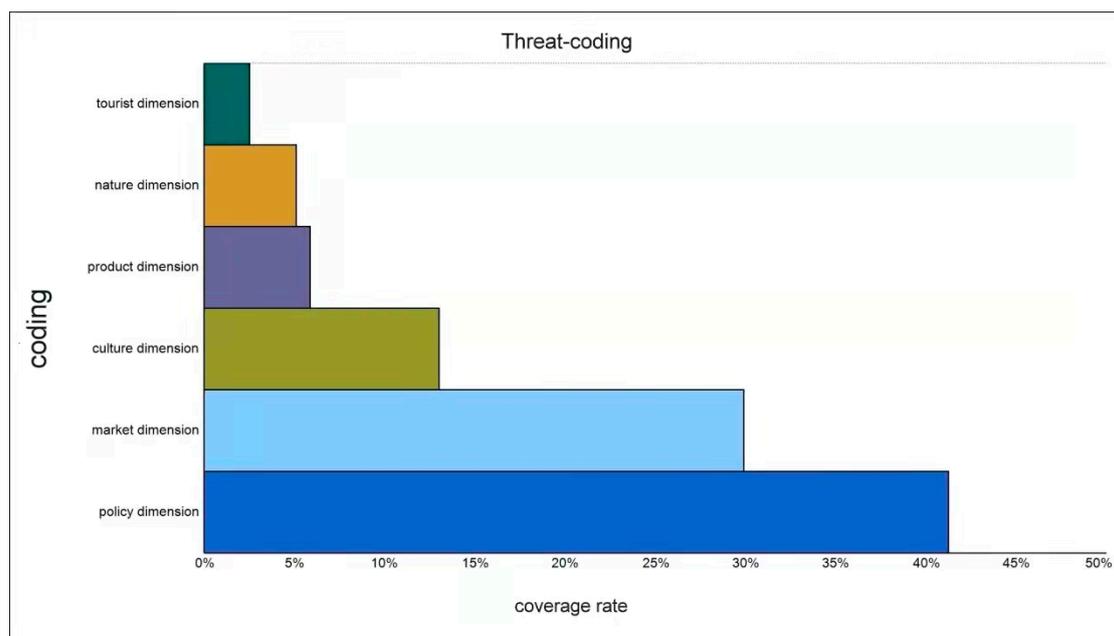
The branding dimension of sports tourism development opportunities in Hainan Island is mainly reflected in sports events, especially international events. Basketball A said that establishing an international standard event process is crucial to the development of tourism in Hainan. The establishment of international standards can not only help Hainan attract more and better international tourism resources but more importantly, it can help Hainan to establish the brand of international competition tourism. The establishment

of international brands, coupled with the constantly optimized service industry and infrastructure, can help Hainan to become a world-class sports event base, which has an immeasurable positive impact on the development of sports tourism on Hainan Island and even the entire economy of Hainan Island.

#### 4.4. Threat

The high-frequency words related to the threats factors were certification—证书 (5), market—市场 (4), status quo—现在 (4), surfing—冲浪 (4), consideration—考虑 (3), acknowledgement—认可 (3), problems—问题 (3), project—项目 (3), cognition—认知 (3), government—政府 (3), and so on. Meanwhile, “market”, “cognition”, and “acknowledgement” were mentioned frequently in the interviews. External threats are mostly concerned with structural restraints and policy-related issues.

In general, six dimensions of threats to the development of Hainan’s sports tourism were identified: policy, market, culture, product, nature, and tourism. From the bar chart below, it is easy to see that the policy dimension accounts for the biggest share of threats to developing Hainan’s sports tourism. Market-related and cultural aspects are also relatively crucial in terms of threatening the sports industry in Hainan. In contrast, the product dimension, nature dimension, and tourist dimension are less decisive but still influence the tourism industry to some extent (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Threat Coding.

##### 4.4.1. Policy Dimension

From the results above, restrictions related to policy can be seen as the biggest threat (about 40 percent) for managers working in the selected four spots. According to the original text of the interviews, the managers of all four centers mentioned policies as restrictions. For example, when we interviewed Sailing A, he shared his concerns that “while the policy seems to be advantageous for the sports sector, it is barely implemented”. According to Sailing A and Surfing A, the policy-related threats could be divided into three aspects, which are “strict control from the government”, “unsatisfactory execution and guidance”, and “a lack of professional and certification systems in the whole market”. To be more specific, confusion about how to operate in the sports tourism industry is quite normal among managers since the government does not arrange and map out specific introductions or establish standards or qualification systems. For example, Bicycle and

yacht C mentioned a concern that “there is less guidance from the government that leads them to operate and develop, and we are confused to practice”.

#### 4.4.2. Market Dimension and Tourist Dimension

Essential threats also comprise the sports market and certain groups of visitors. Compared with the external shortcoming of an unsatisfactory number of tourists and consumers (around 5 percent), the disadvantages in the market dimension, which are the “competition in the domestic market” and “the lack of attractions for tourists”, are more threatening (approximately 30 percent), according to Surfing A and Bicycle and yacht A. Bicycle and yacht C also said that “it is hard to identify and target the market”. The lack of universal standards in terms of market access is also a threat to the market dimension. Additionally, it should be noted that as a supplement to the market dimension, where the tourist-related factors are included in another sense, the tourism aspect is considered to be an independent measurement in this research.

#### 4.4.3. Culture Dimension

The lack of sports culture and environment in China negatively influences Hainan sports tourism in a moderate way. Bicycle and yacht A shared his concerns regarding “the less developed sports market and less awareness of sports in China”. He viewed it as a threat since local people in Hainan Island, who are born and raised near the sea, are “less interested in coastal sports tourism”, as well as sports-lovers being rare in China. Chinese visitors from other provinces are more likely to choose pure leisure and recreation instead of experiencing sports tourism products. From another perspective, “insufficiency in sports culture” leads to a lack of professional trainers in the destination; according to Bicycle and yacht A, there is an urgent need to cultivate more qualified basketball players, which is the biggest threat to the development of the NBA training center.

#### 4.4.4. Product Dimension and Nature Dimension

Sports tourism products were found to be another factor that moderately threatens the industry. Compared with similar sports products in other regions, including domestic and foreign sports tourism destinations, Hainan has “less built resources” and “sports-related facilities and infrastructure”, not only in terms of sports tourism but also in the tourism industry in general, according to Sailing A. Additionally, the scales and volumes of the sports destinations and leisure options in Hainan are smaller when compared with its competitors. Apart from social factors, external threats also include natural elements for outdoor sports such as surfing and sailing, which mainly comprise the limitations brought about by the season, weather, and location. For example, when we interviewed Surfing A, she mentioned that “conditions of wave” strongly influence different levels of surfing, and “tourists should go to places with rough wave to continue further learning of surfing”.

### 5. Main Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion

This study focuses on identifying Hainan sports tourism’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats using a SWOT analysis. A total of 12 dimensions were generated from the data analysis. Among the 12 dimensions, the strengths have 8 dimensions, the weaknesses have 10 dimensions, the opportunities have 4 dimensions, and the threats have 6 dimensions. Surprisingly, this study found that the weaknesses have the most dimensions, whereas the opportunities have the fewest dimensions. This indicates that Hainan is still underdeveloped in many areas and that the sport tourism-related industry professionals are still not sure about sport tourism business opportunities. Zhang and Ju [49] pointed out the same issue. For example, Hainan’s tourism resources are not sufficiently developed, inbound tourism is less developed, and the construction of basic road networks should be improved. At the same time, among the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, both market and policy dimensions are identified in our SWOT analysis. This shows that sport tourism professionals are aware of Hainan as a potential

sport tourism destination. However, the issues related to the SWOT analysis cannot be avoided. On the other hand, many tourism and sport tourism-related policies have been implemented in recent years in China. Although these policies encourage the tourism sector to develop sport tourism in China, sport tourism professionals are concerned that too many policies may hamper sport tourism development. This means that Hainan's tourism policies are not aligned with the idea of inclusive development proposed by Gupta and Vegelin in 2016. Inclusive development principles include social inclusiveness, ecological inclusiveness, and relational inclusiveness. The implementation of too many policies may not enable the effective participation of both local people and tourists (social inclusiveness), involve all sport tourism-related stakeholders (ecological inclusiveness), or guarantee sport tourism produce for both the rich and the poor (relational inclusiveness). The culture dimension was identified in both the weaknesses and threats categories. This indicates that developing sport tourism should be based on a sport culture that is popular in the area. However, many sport tourism activities such as surfing, scuba diving, and sailing are new to the area, which means these activities have not been developed as a cultural trend. It is not surprising that Chinese people are reluctant to accept new leisure activities because culture affects individuals' perceptions of leisure choices [50]. The financial dimension was identified in the weaknesses category. This means that developing sport tourism is very costly and Hainan's economic situation is an issue for sport tourism development. To solve this issue, Dong et al. suggested that travel motivation, destination images, participation experience, and tourism activity time should be prioritized to foster the development of sport tourism [51]. In addition, although the traditional SWOT analysis focused on identifying the current situation and existing issues regarding Hainan sport tourism, it can help us to determine a sustainable development strategy such as appropriate policy implementation, driving action, or collaboration regarding environmental challenges to motivate all stakeholders to work together to create long-term value [52,53]. In the SWOT analysis of this paper, market and policy were at the center of all dimensions, which forces us to consider these two variables as being decision-making factors for sport tourism development. In summary, Hainan has a bright future for sport tourism development. However, Hainan should also realize that many factors will negatively influence sport tourism development. In terms of future directions, this study suggests the following strategies for Hainan sport tourism development. First, Hainan should develop "sport tourism" but not "sports tourism". Sports tourism focuses on activities-based strategies, whereas sport tourism pays more attention to sport event tourism, which fits Hainan's current social and economic situation. Sport tourism is a new form of tourism in Hainan. It thus needs more local people and tourists to participate in sport tourism activities. Sport events will encourage more people to participate in sport tourism activities and create opportunities for local people to interact with sport tourism. The Hainan Ocean Sports Season is a great example that can help promote the integration of sports, tourism, and education. Second, although many policies emphasize economic development through sport tourism, its economic purpose should not take priority over other tourism dimensions. Hainan has been focused on creating sport training centers for many national and provincial sports teams [44]). Traveling for sports purposes should be the top motivation for sports travelers who visit Hainan. Third, identifying major sport tourism markets should be the top priority for Hainan's tourism development. Hainan is an island that has many opportunities to develop water sports. However, some water sports are expensive for most tourists, whereas some water sports are constrained by natural resources. For example, although Wanning is a natural place to develop surfing tourism, the region is relatively small and cannot be developed into a large surfing tourism site. Based on Hainan's current situation, Hainan should find a way to identify which sport tourism activities are more suitable for the island in terms of cost, popularity, and natural resources. Fourth, sport tourism resources present both advantages and disadvantages for Hainan's sport tourism development. Hainan has a long coastline, beaches, and mountains that are suitable for developing water-based sport activities and outdoor recreation. However, environmental

protection and weather conditions can make it difficult to access these resources in all seasons. In fact, the Hainan government is monitoring the environmental impact of new constructions. The demolition of part of the world's largest artificial resort island built by China Evergrande Group is an example of environmental constraints on sport tourism development. Hainan should develop sport tourism-related activities and events that are not constrained by the environment or the weather. Finally, Hainan needs to develop its own sport culture for sports activities. Although the people of Hainan do play volleyball, which was a very popular sport activity for local people at the beginning of the 20th century, volleyball sport events for sport tourism have not been developed. Therefore, for a long-term development strategy, sport culture is a must for Hainan sport tourism.

This study has three limitations. First, this study only collected data from sport tourism professionals, so future studies should pay attention to sport tourism lovers' perceptions. Second, this study only used a qualitative research method, so a quantitative research method should be used to obtain a larger sample size. Finally, this study only focuses on Hainan Island, so future studies should conduct comparative studies with other islands such as Hawaii, Okinawa, and Jeju Island.

**Author Contributions:** B.F. collected the data and wrote the paper. B.F. made equal contributions and is the first author along with E.D. collected and analyzed the data and wrote the paper. E.D. made equal contributions and is the first author along with B.F. and Y.L. analyzed the data and wrote the paper. J.J. analyzed the data and wrote the paper. H.H. analyzed the data and wrote the paper. Y.M. analyzed the data and wrote the paper. Z.Z. designed the research and collected the data. Q.X. collected and analyzed the data. Z.C. participated in the research project. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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