



Current Development Status of Chinese Eight-Ball in Khon Kaen Province A Perspective on Wellness and Lifespan Participation

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Abstract. In recent years, with the rapid rise in popularity of billiards in China, more and more people have taken it up as both a recreational and a professional sport. Among them, Chinese 8-ball, with its fair rules, diverse playing styles, and strong competitiveness, has gradually become one of the most representative billiards events in China. However, in Khon Kaen Province, Thailand, Chinese 8-ball remains in its infancy with a low profile, as the local market is dominated by American 9-ball and snooker. Based on a questionnaire survey of billiards enthusiasts and practitioners in Khon Kaen Province, this article analyzes attitudes toward, and the market potential for, Chinese pool locally. The research reveals that, although Chinese eight-ball currently lacks presence, survey respondents indicate significant interest and see high potential for development and promotion in Khon Kaen Province, particularly if awareness campaigns and dedicated venues increase. With improvements to facilities, Chinese eight-ball is expected to create new growth opportunities in Khon Kaen Province and most other cities in Thailand, paving the way for internationalizing the game and expanding the Southeast Asian market. In addition, Chinese eight-ball can also be understood from the perspective of wellness and lifespan participation. As a low-impact, skill-based, and socially interactive indoor activity, it may contribute to stress relief, concentration, emotional adjustment, and regular leisure engagement among different age groups.

Keywords: Chinese Eight-Ball, Marketing, Development Potential, Wellness, Lifespan Participation

1 Introduction

As society develops, recreational sports play an increasingly important role. Billiards, as a sport that combines entertainment and competition, enjoys the reputation of "gentleman's sport" due to its unique cultural connotations and elegant competitive atmosphere, and has a broad mass base worldwide. Chinese 8-ball, also known as Chinese billiards, originated in Beijing, China, in the 1980s and has gradually become one of the most influential billiards events in China, thanks to its fair rules, diverse playing

styles, and strong competitiveness. In 1986, the Chinese Billiards Association was officially established and actively promoted the sport's planning and development. The successful hosting of the first Joy Chinese-Eight ball Masters in 2006 marked the official start of the professional track; The first Chinese Pool World Championship was successfully held in 2015. Officially open up the international market and bring Chinese eight-ball to the world stage. In recent years, there have been tens of thousands of billiard rooms in China, and well-known brands such as Joy, Xingpai, and Kangxi Shengshi have emerged; all kinds of professional events are held across the country, the system is increasingly complete, and the influence continues to expand. However, compared with the prosperity of the Chinese billiards market, Chinese 8-ball in Thailand, especially in Khon Kaen Province, lags. Local billiards enthusiasts are mainly involved in American nine-ball and snooker, with less awareness and participation in Chinese eight-ball. Due to factors such as cultural differences and insufficient marketing and venue facilities, Chinese 8-ball has not yet established a systematic mechanism for promotion and development in Khon Kaen Province.

Beyond its role as a competitive or recreational cue sport, Chinese eight-ball may also be viewed as a form of accessible leisure activity with potential wellness value. Compared with many high-intensity sports, it places relatively low physical demands on participants while requiring concentration, emotional control, and interpersonal interaction. Therefore, it may be suitable not only for young competitive players, but also for students, working adults, and other community members seeking relaxation, social connection, and sustainable leisure participation in everyday life.

Compared with the first-tier central cities, the number of billiards enthusiasts in Khon Kaen province is smaller and unevenly distributed. Although the current billiards market in Khon Kaen province is large, most people's knowledge of Chinese billiards remains limited, and, due to the province's low level of internationalization and complex import logistics, introducing hardware presents significant challenges. However, behind the challenge lies a huge commercial market. Khon Kaen province has a large pool community, and most enthusiasts have never played Chinese 8-ball. Still, many have shown cross-regional interest and love for China's top professional billiards players, such as Zheng Yubo, Ko Pin-yi, and Wang Sinuo. The stark contrast between this cognitive vacuum and the popularity of idols suggests that once Chinese 8-ball is introduced as a professional competitive sport, it will quickly fill the market gap and generate extremely high mass attention and brand suction effect.

Given these factors, it is practical to study the market and promotion of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen Province. This study helps foster collaboration between Chinese and Thai billiards fans. It also offers theory and guidance for expanding Chinese 8-ball internationally and into Southeast Asia—helping to globalize the sport (R. Li, 2024)[1]. A systematic study of the current state of Chinese 8-ball development in Khon Kaen Province will not only provide a practical basis for promoting Chinese 8-ball in Thailand, but also offer new ideas for sports and cultural exchanges between China and Thailand. In addition, this study can provide data and theoretical references to support Chinese eight-ball enterprises and event organizers in formulating marketing strategies for the Southeast Asian market, which is of significant value in promoting the interna-

tional development of Chinese eight-ball. Introducing Chinese billiards, a new and entertaining sport, fills the local gap in Khon Kaen Province, Thailand. It diversifies billiards, supports the sport's internationalization, and deepens China-Thailand sports and cultural exchanges. This effort also energizes cooperation under the Belt and Road policy. Overall, domestic research looks at the Chinese 8-ball's industrial and cultural value. Foreign research focuses on its sports and cultural integration. Research in Thailand, and especially in Khon Kaen, is rare. This study, based on field research and questionnaires, aims to fill the gap and provide references for international promotion. The significance of this study is not limited to sports promotion or market expansion. It also relates to the conference themes of wellness and lifespan innovation, because the localized development of Chinese eight-ball may provide an age-inclusive participation model that combines leisure, social interaction, psychological well-being, and sustainable community engagement. In this sense, the sport can be discussed not only as an economic or cultural phenomenon, but also as a potential contributor to active living and community wellness.

2 Literature Review

In recent years, as Chinese eight-ball has rapidly developed, scholars have conducted in-depth research on its tournament system, industrial value, and cultural dissemination. Some scholars have noted that research on Chinese eight-ball is relatively limited, yet there is a general focus on the sport's cultural dissemination and market adaptability. C. C. Li (2013) noted that Chinese eight-ball has established a relatively complete professional event system and has driven the development of related industries, including equipment manufacturing, event operations, and media communication. Qiu (2023) believes that Chinese eight-ball embodies the Eastern sports spirit of "fairness, etiquette, and skill" and combines traditional Chinese culture with modern competitive concepts. In addition, Miller (2023) found through field research that the popularity of Chinese 8-ball is closely related to regional economic levels and venue construction, and that there remains significant market potential in second- and third-tier cities. Chen (2012) further noted that the Joy Chinese 8-ball Masters' success demonstrated a feasible path for local sports brands to achieve international communication. Smith (2018) argues that the internationalization of sports requires cultural integration while maintaining core characteristics. Johnson and Clarke (2020) noted that non-Western sports often face dual challenges of cultural identity and institutional compatibility when entering the international market. Qiu (2023) suggests that promoting Chinese eight-ball in Thailand should be combined with local entertainment culture and localized through university courses and community activities. Wang and Liang (2024) said that the international spread of Chinese eight-ball shows a model of cultural export in sports. This matches the trend of exchanges along the Belt and Road. Existing studies on cue sports often focus on competition, industry development, management, and cultural communication. However, from the perspective of wellness and lifespan participation, cue sports may also have broader value. Because of their low-impact nature, strategic characteristics, and strong social attributes, they can support

healthy leisure habits across different age groups. For younger participants, such activities may improve concentration and self-discipline; for working adults, they may offer stress relief and social bonding; for older participants, they may function as moderate and sustainable forms of recreational engagement. This perspective provides an additional theoretical basis for discussing the development of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen Province.

3 methods and framework

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative research was employed in this paper. Through literature review, interviews, data analysis, and additional qualitative research methods, the background, current situation, and core issues of the development of Chinese eight-ball in Thailand were systematically analyzed.

Secondary data collection. By reviewing relevant literature in China and Thailand on the development of billiards, the marketing of Chinese eight-ball, and sports consumption behavior, the current research status at home and abroad was systematically organized to provide a theoretical basis and a research reference for this paper.

Interview method. To understand the Chinese 8-ball setting in Khon Kaen, the study used semi-structured interviews. Five billiard hall operators, three coaches, and five experienced fans (a total of 13 people) discussed the sport's local market acceptance, venues, and event challenges.

3.2 Data analysis method

A quantitative analysis of awareness, interest, and willingness to consume Chinese eight-ball among residents of Khon Kaen Province was conducted using questionnaire data analyzed with descriptive and comparative statistics. A qualitative analysis was conducted alongside the interview content to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current development status of Chinese eight-ball in the local area. The questionnaire design is based on the research on sports participation and health behaviors, and has been adjusted according to the actual situation of Chinese eight-ball sports. It consists of three parts: basic demographic information, participation behavior and frequency, and health cognition and attitude. The questionnaires were distributed in the billiards clubs and related leisure venues in Kongking Province, Thailand. The respondents were mainly local billiards players and potential consumers. To enhance the representativeness of the sample, the study tried to cover people of different ages, genders and participation frequencies. However, due to objective limitations, the sample of this study still has certain limitations.

This study aims to explore the current development status of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen Province, Thailand, and its marketing potential. Guided by theories of sports marketing and cross-cultural communication, the study aims to understand the awareness, interest, and willingness to participate in Chinese 8-ball among residents and billiards enthusiasts through a combination of field investigations and in-depth interviews, and

to comprehensively analyze the structural characteristics and development bottlenecks of the billiards market in Khon Kaen Province. Based on this, targeted promotion strategies and development suggestions are proposed.

The main target of this study is billiards enthusiasts, billiard room operators, and related practitioners engaged in event organization in the Khon Kaen region of Thailand. The study covered billiards venues in the city of Khon Kaen and the surrounding major urban areas. Sample selection was conducted using a combination of random and purposive sampling to ensure that respondents of different ages, genders, occupations, and billiards skill levels were representative of the current situation of promoting Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen Province. From a lifespan perspective, Chinese eight-ball has the potential to attract participants at different life stages. Young people may be drawn to its competitiveness and skill development, while working adults may value its social and stress-relieving functions. In addition, older adults or those who prefer low-impact activities may find it more accessible than many physically demanding sports. This cross-age adaptability increases its potential as a sustainable leisure sport in local communities.

4 Marketing research planning and strategy proposals

4.1 The current status of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen province

Khon Kaen, located in the northeastern part of Thailand, is an economically and educationally developed city. With rising incomes and growing awareness of leisure, sports, and entertainment, consumption has gradually become an important part of the lifestyles of local young people, office workers, and even retirees. At present, the sports and leisure market in Khon Kaen Province is dominated by fitness, badminton, football, billiards, and other activities. Among them, billiards, with its social, entertainment, and competitive nature, accounts for a relatively high proportion of nighttime leisure activities. In recent years, billiards has experienced significant growth and increased popularity in the local area, laying a solid foundation for the introduction of Chinese eight-ball.

However, even in the central area of Khon Kaen Province, the number of professional billiards clubs remains relatively small, and their tables are mainly American-style and snooker tables. According to feedback from local billiards enthusiasts and billiard room operators, the number of people participating in billiards recreational activities in Khon Kaen Province has continued to increase from 2020 to 2025, indicating that the rebound in social entertainment demand after the pandemic has led to an increasing need for a leisure sport, and billiards is one of the options for the masses. According to the field survey, participants over the age of 50 mainly view it as a leisure activity with alcohol for relaxation and entertainment. By contrast, participants aged 20 to 40 are the main consumer group of billiards. They tend to be more competitive and usually play billiards for at least 2 hours at a time, more than other age groups, and are the mainstream consumer group. In many small bars or restaurants, there are often one or two American billiard tables for consumers to relax and have fun. Still, restaurants that originally

served only food or alcohol are willing to attract customers by combining food and billiards, reflecting the majority of consumers' acceptance of the sport and their willingness to spend on it. It shows the feasibility of introducing Chinese eight-ball into the local billiards market and promoting it. According to the survey, although the vast majority of local billiards enthusiasts have never formally encountered Chinese 8-ball, they are generally open to learning about the sport and not opposed to it. On the contrary, many people show curiosity and interest. They are willing to learn the unique rules of Chinese 8-ball actively and experience its distinct gameplay compared to American 9-ball and snooker, thus gaining a new form of entertainment. Get a different kind of entertainment experience and a competitive edge. And with the ongoing internationalization of Chinese 8-ball, some of China's top professional and popular online players have become well-known and sought out by many people in the local area through the natural spread of the Internet, gaining large numbers of local fans of Chinese 8-ball. These are all favorable factors for the development of Chinese 8-ball in the local area. Most billiard rooms in Khon Kaen Province are centered on the city's central plaza. With its prime location and high customer traffic, the central plaza has become the preferred spot for billiard rooms, and during holidays, it is so crowded that people have to queue to play. In contrast, the area around Khon Kaen University. With its prime location and high customer traffic, the central plaza has become the preferred spot for billiard rooms, and during holidays, it is so crowded that people have to queue to play. best choice. Since there is still no Chinese 8-ball club in the area, opening a professional Chinese 8-ball room near the core area of the central plaza, which has the highest flow of people, will instantly attract a large number of visitors and become another popular billiard room in the area. Some of them have heard about Chinese 8-ball online or from friends. Those who have never experienced the sport, some have never heard of the sport but want to give it a try; some players have been exposed to it somewhere but stopped because it is not available in Khon Kaen province, where Chinese 8-ball has a very good development status.

Although the Khon Kaen billiards industry is relatively mature, the sport's almost non-existent popularity in the local area means some enthusiasts have never heard of it. Only a few have either known about it or actually participated in it, lacking a deeper understanding of its rules, characteristics, and cultural background. After years of development, it has formed a relatively fixed habit of playing billiards. For a long time, American nine-ball and snooker have been dominant. The lack of information and fixed movement habits have also made it difficult to promote Chinese pool in the early stages. The current development of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen Province should not be interpreted only in terms of market acceptance or sports diffusion. It may also reflect the emergence of a new urban leisure option that can contribute to wellness-oriented lifestyles. As an indoor activity combining skill, interaction, and moderate participation intensity, Chinese eight-ball may meet the needs of students, young workers, and community residents for relaxation, entertainment, and social connection after study or work.

4.2 The prospects of Chinese 8-ball

Given the difficulty of importing Chinese eight-ball tables and their limited local recognition, it is not advisable to conduct large-scale publicity in the initial stage. It is suggested to cooperate with well-known local large shopping malls to jointly hold a publicity and experience promotion event for Chinese eight-ball, creating a "model room" for Chinese eight-ball billiards rooms, allowing billiards enthusiasts to go there for free to try out Chinese billiards tables Try out Chinese brand cues and related billiards equipment, and experience firsthand the unique rules and stronger competitiveness and strategy that are different from American nine-ball or snooker. During the event, you can experience the Chinese billiard table for free. Each participant who completes the experience will receive a small billiards-related gift, such as cupboard powder, a cleaning cloth, or a photo of a Chinese professional billiards player, thereby increasing the event's reach and favorability. A small ring challenge can also be held, inviting a strong Chinese 8-ball player to be the ring champion, where local players can challenge with Chinese 8-ball rules on the spot. Challengers who successfully defeat the champion will receive generous rewards from the organizers. This session can not only directly boost local billiards enthusiasts' understanding of the rules of Chinese pool, allowing them to feel the fairness of the rules, the diversity of playing styles, and the strong competitiveness, but also greatly satisfy the desire to win and the sense of achievement of local players, creating topics and spontaneous dissemination. Through these methods, it is possible to quickly establish recognition and a mass base for Chinese 8-ball in Khon Kaen province at lower cost and in less time, laying a solid foundation for subsequent, larger-scale market promotion. Through these methods, it is possible to quickly establish recognition and a mass base for Chinese 8-ball in Khon Kaen province at a lower cost and in less time, laying a solid foundation for subsequent, larger-scale market promotion. stream projects:

At present, the billiards market in Khon Kaen province is dominated by American nine-ball and snooker. American nine-ball is the most popular form of billiards in the local area because of its simple rules, fast pace, and high equipment penetration rate; Snooker, on the other hand, is favored by some high-level enthusiasts and is more common in colleges and professional clubs. In contrast, Chinese eight-ball is very little popular at Khon Kaen, with almost no Chinese tables and a negligible number of participants.

4.3 Venue and facilities

According to field research, there are more than 10 billiard halls of various sizes in Khon Kaen Province, most of which are equipped with American nine-ball and snooker tables, but none with Chinese eight-ball tables. Most venues are old and poorly lit, lacking the conditions for standardized training and event hosting. In addition, due to the large size and high purchase cost of Chinese eight-ball tables, which are about 1.5 times those of ordinary nine-ball tables, some operators were more inclined to choose lower-cost nine-ball equipment in the early stage of investment, which objectively limited the popularization speed of Chinese eight-ball.

5 Conclusions

This study explored the current development status, market awareness, and promotional potential of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen Province, Thailand. Through a combination of literature review, field investigation, questionnaire survey, and semi-structured interviews, the research systematically examined the level of local recognition of Chinese eight-ball, the characteristics of the billiards market in Khon Kaen, and the major opportunities and constraints affecting the sport's future development. The findings indicate that Chinese eight-ball is still in the initial stage of introduction in Khon Kaen Province. Compared with the well-established presence of American nine-ball and snooker, Chinese eight-ball has yet to establish a stable market foundation in terms of participation, facilities, organizational support, or public awareness. Nevertheless, the research also demonstrates that the sport possesses considerable growth potential in the local context.

One of the major conclusions of this study is that the weak current presence of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen does not reflect a lack of market interest, but rather a lack of sufficient exposure, accessibility, and systematic promotion. Although most respondents had not previously participated in or fully understood Chinese eight-ball, a significant proportion expressed a positive attitude toward learning the sport and willingness to try it. This result suggests that Chinese eight-ball has not encountered substantial cultural or psychological resistance among local billiards consumers. On the contrary, the sport has the potential to attract attention as a novel and competitive leisure activity once it is introduced through appropriate channels. Therefore, the current underdevelopment of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen should be understood primarily as a problem of market entry and communication, rather than market rejection.

The study further reveals that Khon Kaen Province provides a relatively favorable environment for the future expansion of Chinese eight-ball. As an important economic and educational center in northeastern Thailand, Khon Kaen has experienced steady growth in leisure consumption and sports-related entertainment. Billiards already occupies an important position in the local nighttime leisure economy, especially among young adults and middle-aged consumers. Existing billiard halls, bars, and entertainment venues have cultivated a stable consumer base for cue sports, thereby creating a social and commercial foundation for introducing Chinese eight-ball. In this respect, the local market conditions are not characterized by a lack of interest in billiards, but by a concentration of demand in other established formats, particularly American nine-ball and snooker.

In future development, the promotion of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen Province may benefit from a wellness-oriented strategy rather than relying only on competitive publicity. For example, clubs and promoters may consider beginner-friendly pricing, community experience programs, intergenerational participation activities, and non-elite coaching arrangements. Such measures could improve accessibility, strengthen user retention, and help transform billiard venues into inclusive leisure spaces that support social well-being and regular participation.

At the same time, this research confirms that Chinese eight-ball has several distinctive advantages that support its possible localization and long-term development in Khon

Kaen. In comparison with American nine-ball, Chinese eight-ball places greater emphasis on tactical balance, overall technical ability, and strategic diversity. Compared with snooker, it is more accessible to ordinary players while still retaining a strong sense of competitiveness and professionalism. These characteristics make Chinese eight-ball suitable not only as a recreational sport, but also as a sport with potential for structured competition and commercial development. Furthermore, the influence of digital media and transnational sports culture has already created limited but meaningful awareness of Chinese eight-ball among some local enthusiasts, especially through exposure to Chinese professional players and online billiards content. This indirect familiarity may serve as an important starting point for future brand building and audience cultivation.

However, the study also identifies several practical barriers that cannot be ignored. The most immediate challenge is the lack of dedicated Chinese eight-ball venues and equipment in Khon Kaen Province. Most local billiard halls are currently equipped only with American-style tables and snooker tables, while Chinese eight-ball tables remain unavailable. In addition, the relatively high procurement and transportation costs of Chinese eight-ball equipment, together with the limited internationalization of the local market, create substantial obstacles for early investment. The field investigation also suggests that many venues still face shortcomings in lighting, spatial layout, and standardized training conditions, which limit the ability to host formal events or conduct professional promotion. These structural limitations indicate that the development of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen cannot rely solely on spontaneous market diffusion but requires targeted intervention and phased strategic planning.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that promoting Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen should follow a gradual, localized, and market-oriented development path. In the initial stage, priority should be given to low-cost, high-visibility promotional strategies, such as demonstration activities, free trial sessions, shopping center exhibitions, university-based promotions, and small-scale challenge competitions. Such measures would allow local consumers to develop direct experience with Chinese eight-ball and gradually build familiarity with its rules, values, and competitive appeal. At the same time, cooperation with existing billiard halls, local businesses, and social media platforms would help reduce market-entry risk and improve communication efficiency. Rather than attempting immediate large-scale expansion, a step-by-step strategy would be more consistent with the actual market conditions of Khon Kaen Province.

From a broader academic and practical perspective, this study also highlights the significance of Chinese eight-ball as a vehicle for international sports communication and cultural exchange. As a sport with distinctive Chinese characteristics and modern competitive value, Chinese eight-ball represents not only a commercial product within the sports industry, but also a form of cultural expression. Its introduction into Thailand may contribute to the diversification of local cue sports culture while strengthening sports exchanges between China and Thailand. In this sense, the development of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen is not merely a local market issue, but also part of a wider process of regional sports globalization and cross-cultural integration.

In conclusion, although Chinese eight-ball currently has only a limited presence in Khon Kaen Province, the findings of this study suggest promising prospects for the future. The province has an established billiards culture, a potential consumer base, and a favorable environment for introducing new sports-entertainment formats. The key constraints are insufficient awareness, a lack of facilities, and the absence of a systematic promotion mechanism. If these issues can be addressed through localized marketing, gradual infrastructure development, and culturally adaptive promotional strategies, Chinese eight-ball has the potential to establish itself as a new growth point in Khon Kaen Province's billiards market and, more broadly, in Thailand and Southeast Asia. Therefore, this study provides both a theoretical reference and a practical basis for the international promotion of Chinese eight-ball and offers useful insights for future research on the cross-border development of emerging sports.

More importantly, the development of Chinese eight-ball in Khon Kaen Province may be connected to the broader themes of wellness and lifespan innovation. Its low-impact nature, social interactivity, and adaptability across age groups give it potential to support relaxation, concentration, emotional well-being, and community participation. Therefore, its promotion can be regarded not only as an issue of sports development, but also as an example of sustainable management in which leisure, health, culture, and inclusive participation are meaningfully integrated.

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