

Problems in the Implementation of After-School Sports in Primary and Secondary Schools in China and Solutions

Dejun Tan^{1,2}

¹Huizhou University, Huizhou, Guangdong, 516001, China

²Adamson University, Manila, 1002, Philippines

Keywords: After-school sports; overview; solution strategies; study

Abstract: After-school sports are an important part of China's physical education teaching system, but the review of relevant literature shows that there are many problems in the specific practice of after-school sports in primary and secondary schools in China. Therefore, in this paper, the methods of literature review and induction were used to summarize the concept, characteristics and development forms of after-school sports, as well as the problems existing in its implementation in primary and secondary schools in China, and then the strategies and methods for the development of after-school sports in primary and secondary schools were proposed accordingly. Finally, it was concluded that the quality and overall effect of after-school sports can be continuously improved by clarifying the purpose of after-school training, coordinating the relationship with cultural classes, strengthening teachers, improving competition level and expanding financing channels.

1. Introduction

In the document *Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Sports and Education to Promote the Healthy Development of Adolescents* jointly issued by the General Administration of Sport and the Ministry of Education, it is pointed out that primary and secondary schools should actively carry out after-school physical exercising and competitions with the educational concept of "putting health first" [1]. Apparently, the integration of sports and education, as an important aspect of the healthy development of school physical education in the new era, is an important step towards the all-round and healthy development of teenagers, and also the basis for building a sports, education and healthy China.[2] However, the teaching of after-school physical education has not yet been fully integrated into the realm of scientific management in the current educational environment. So, how can we make it fully penetrate into students' lives and encourage them to actively participate in physical activities? This requires further exploration, with the ultimate goal of achieving a harmonious symbiotic relationship between in-class and after-school physical education, and achieving the final goal of physical education teaching, which will be explored in depth in this paper.

2. Overview of After-School Sports

2.1 Concept

Typically, after-school sports refer to an essential component of the physical education curriculum that students learn within the school setting. It works in harmony with physical education instruction and athletic training to achieve the learning objectives of physical education classes through mutual influence, while also accomplishing learning tasks.[3] After-school physical activities effectively utilize students' free time by engaging them in various forms of exercise that benefit the body. These activities appropriately integrate natural forces and healthcare measures to promote proper full-body workouts, enhancing students' physical fitness and fostering good exercise habits. Additionally, after-school sports help regulate students' psychological state and enrich their after-school lives, promoting their all-around development.[4] However, physical education classes are subject to certain limitations due to objective factors, which can easily impede students' enthusiasm and participation. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct some interesting and engaging after-school physical activities to encourage students to actively participate in sports, enjoy the process, and benefit from the positive influence throughout their lives.

2.2 Characteristics

First, strong cohesion. Students often have a very strong cohesion and a certain degree of behavior consistency through spontaneous sports groups. In primary and secondary schools, student sports groups that are formed spontaneously are often based on similar basic interests, personal goals, and individual personalities, in order to improve their sports skills, satisfy their interests, or simply to win against a particular opponent. The psychological bond that is maintained through personal emotions has a strong cohesiveness, which can significantly enhance the sense of belonging and obligation of each member in the group, thus greatly increasing the probability of achieving the group's goals. However, this cohesion is relatively unstable, and once it disappears, these groups formed spontaneously by students will also disappear.

Second, organizational flexibility and diversity in content and approach. The after-school sports have a strong non-curricular nature and do not rely on fixed courses or syllabi. Therefore, their organization is very flexible, and they can be carried out not only in class groups but also in small groups or individually. The activities themselves are diverse and can be tailored to meet the different needs and requirements of individual students based on their actual situations.

Third, the complementarity of the activities themselves. Generally speaking, among all courses in primary and secondary schools, only physical education classes can directly improve students' health and physical fitness. Most non-sports majors can get a certain level of physical activity in physical education classes, but after recovering from fatigue, they also need to spend time and energy on studying. Therefore, engaging in physical activities also requires an appropriate environment. From this perspective, after-school physical activities and physical education classes themselves are strongly complementary.

2.3 Forms

2.3.1 Mandatory, Fixed Sports Content

The main components of after-school activities are organized as part of the school curriculum, in addition to physical education activities. They are a part of students' learning and living experience, and also serve as a primary manifestation of maintaining a scientific schedule. Students are required

to participate in them. In terms of current curriculum theory, this type of physical activities is often a major component of the physical education curriculum.

First, morning exercise: This is a good way to exercise, usually lasting no more than 20 minutes, with a variety of activities including running and gymnastics. It can help elementary and middle school students form good daily habits, and is usually conducted at school on a class or grade basis.

Second, physical education activity classes: Compared to morning exercises, physical education activity classes usually last longer, ranging from 40 minutes to 1-2 hours, and involve more intense physical activities, and often conducted on a class basis.

Third, sports meeting: The sports meeting is a form of physical activity that is widely held in China, from kindergartens to universities. Different age groups of students participate in different events, and it has a strong educational impact and wide publicity, and is mostly popular among students.

2.3.2 After-school Sports

This mainly includes various types of physical activities that students participate in outside of the school's compulsory activities. It is also an important part of students' physical life, and together with the school's physical activities, it forms a complete structure for the physical activities of primary and secondary school students. Participating in such activities can improve students' physical fitness and encourage them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. According to different after-school activities, the after-school activities of primary and secondary school students can be divided into the following types:

2.3.3 Those Organized by the School

Some primary and secondary schools organize hiking or adventure activities, usually in the milder seasons such as spring or autumn, in the form of school outings, so that students can develop an awareness of environmental protection and a love for nature through contact with the natural world. At the same time, through the collective activities of schools or class groups, their collective consciousness can also be indirectly improved, as everyone is a member of the group in this process.

2.3.4 Those Organized by the Relevant Departments

Some primary and secondary schools will organize teams to participate in sports organized by relevant departments or organizations, such as sports competitions or various types of sports performances and promotional events organized by higher education departments.

2.3.5 Those Organized by the Local Communities

In the community where primary and secondary school students live, regular collective sports are organized, so that students can participate in their favorite sports competitions according to the relevant arrangements. This is not only a common part of after-school sports, but also one of the contents of interaction between social sports and students. It is also an important link between social and school sports.

2.3.6 Those Arising from Individual Subjective Consciousness

Some elementary and middle school students engage in sports they enjoy during their free time or days off, mainly because of their own development needs and interest in sports. This indirectly reflects students' personal pursuit of improving their physical fitness and self-development, as well

as the important impact of sports on their after-school life. Subjective physical activities have a wide range of activities and a strong sense of personalization. The content of the activities is often determined by individual physical inclinations.

3. Problems Existing in After-School Sports at Present

3.1 Management

The main contents of after-school sports management in primary and secondary schools include external and internal aspects, [5] in which most of the external management work needs education departments at all levels and local sports bureaus to work together with relevant sports associations according to certain plans, while the relative internal management work needs to be managed by relevant departments and leaders at all levels. But as far as the current situation is concerned, although most primary and secondary schools do not have perfect training conditions, most of them already have a better after-school sports management training system, notwithstanding at this stage they cannot bring greater economic returns and ideal social benefits.

3.2 Financial Security

According to the survey results in Table 1, the after-school sports training in various primary and secondary schools has not received attention from relevant staff and leadership, which indirectly results in unreliable funding for physical training. Most schools often face insufficient budget for after-school sports training, which results in many self-formed sports teams in primary and secondary schools relying only on limited surplus funds to develop advantageous projects, making it difficult to allocate additional funds and resources to develop weaker projects. Even some projects are directly abandoned, resulting in many students in primary and secondary schools not having the opportunity to participate in sports competitions, and even lacking a venue for the activities of that particular sport.[6]

Table 1: Questionnaire of funds for after-school training (n=152)

School	With funds for after-school training	Without funds for after-school training
Number	18	134
Proportion	12%	88%

3.3 Construction of Programs and Facilities

Table 2: After-school training fields of primary and secondary schools (n=152)

Training field	Sufficient	Enough	Deficient	Lacking	Absent
Quantity	7	15	64	63	3
Proportion	4.3%	10%	42.3%	41.6%	1.8%

Most of the after-school sports programs in primary and secondary schools are limited to common competitive sports such as running, volleyball, basketball, and so on[7], and many of these programs are much fewer in number compared to those in colleges or vocational schools. In most cases, these programs are not updated or only updated to a lesser extent. Training facilities and equipment are not only the basic guarantee for after-school sports training, but also a necessary condition for a school. The quantity and quality of these facilities and equipment have a significant impact on both the training enthusiasm of students and coaches and the development of after-school sports training in primary and secondary schools.[8] According to the survey results in table 2, as

many as 83.9% of the schools are in shortage of after-school training fields, which indicates that the problem of places that restrict the development of after-school training is rather serious and should be paid attention by schools and education departments.

3.4 Structure of Training Personnel

There are also some defects in the selection of athletes in the process of after-school sports in primary and secondary schools. As the main participants in after-school sports in primary and secondary schools, many athletes have to be precisely selected from students. However, due to the limitations of the growth environment and other objective factors of primary and secondary school students, they tend to have relatively weak foundations in training, which naturally makes it difficult for them to achieve good training results and obtain good performance. Although some primary and secondary schools can hire some professional coaches or retired athletes with high academic qualifications, many of them still lack level qualification certificates and may have relatively weak sports experience or may not be up-to-date with the current trends. In addition, some coaches are part-time staff, which results in the uneven distribution of part-time and part-time coaches, and consequently the unscientific arrangement of after-school sports structure in primary and secondary schools.[9]

3.5 Development Goals

The ultimate development goal of after-school sports in primary and secondary schools is to continuously enrich and develop students' cultural life in the schools during the exercise process, improve their physical and psychological health level and comprehensive quality level, provide their schoolyard experience with the content of participating in competitive sports and enrich their life experiences.[10] However, at present, the main development goal of after-school sports in primary and secondary schools still lies in the simple aim of exercising students' bodies while providing a certain degree of entertainment and relaxation, rather than participating in professional sports competitions. Especially due to the lack of high-level athletes, even with after-school sports training in schools, it is challenging to cultivate students who can achieve ideal sports results.

4. How to Solve the Problems in the Process of Implementing After-School Sports

4.1 Correcting the Guiding Ideology, Making Clear the Purpose of After-School Sports

The mindset of leaders and administrators towards sports work should be adjusted to ensure that after-school sports in schools can occupy a place in the future development. As for schools, after-school sports should be included in the work plan of primary and secondary schools, and cultivating outstanding sports reserves should be regarded as a very important task to be accomplished, overcoming short-termism and avoiding "fickleness". The emphasis on the pursuit of professional sports competition ranking should be improved, and the purpose of extracurricular sports activities should be clearly defined to cultivate outstanding talents.

4.2 Fully Coordinating the links between General Knowledge Courses and After-School Sports

The integration of ideological work, cultural learning, and training should be ensured, and different systems and measures should be established to incorporate the work of providing sports training for athletes and ensuring that their academic studies can form a harmonious coexistence

into the daily work plan of schools or academic affairs offices. The supervision and inspection should be carried out at any time, especially for academic studies. School leaders and class teachers should regularly inspect the homework of the members of the sports teams in the classroom, ensuring that they can fully cooperate with the school's teaching activities and avoid falling behind in their academic subjects. In addition, they should regularly organize meetings of the sports leadership group to listen to the situation of the athletes and promptly handle and coordinate any issues that arise.

4.3 Strengthening the Teaching Staff to Enhance the Level of Scientific Training

To strengthen the ideological and political education of coaches, and to improve their cultural literacy, management level, training ability, and so on, is also the most crucial aspect of ensuring after-school sports. Therefore, the coaches' working time needs to be reasonably used and arranged. Moreover, school leaders need to care for their growth from a strategic perspective and give them regular opportunities to study and improve themselves, so as to ensure that they can properly master the means and methods related to sports training on the basis of the training theory of modern sports. Meanwhile, sports department should develop a training program with a high degree of science and a wide range of adaptability as soon as possible.

4.4 Understanding the Ultimate Goal of Participating in the Competition and Strengthening the Reform.

The ultimate purpose of participating in the competition is to review the training results, communicate and learn from each other, so as to accelerate the popularization of sports and the improvement of skill level. To ensure that students' studies remain the top priority, the time for sports training in primary and secondary schools is relatively limited. Therefore, the education commission needs to appropriately coordinate the different relationships within the system, fully leverage its own advantages, and the education departments focus on providing students with ideological and cultural education, while the sports department should play to its professional strengths and provide appropriate support and assistance in areas such as coach training, facilities, and equipment. After-school sports in primary and secondary schools can be better improved on the basis of reforming the existing system. Competition allows more students to participate in and be exposed to after-school sports, providing more opportunities for students who love sports to realize their dreams. It can also stimulate athletic potential and showcase training results in a competitive format, enhancing students' sense of achievement.[11] In addition, competition discipline should be standardized. If acts such as masquerading are found, relevant schools should be investigated for responsibility in time and punished according to the actual situation.

4.5 Expanding Financing Channels and Promoting the Social Value of Sports Undertakings

Anything that wants to be stable and develop is not natural, it requires a certain degree of economic and material foundation to ensure its smooth development and operation. Since the serious lack of funds for after-school sports in primary and secondary schools has seriously hindered its development, departments at all levels need to open up financing channels to all sectors of society in addition to expanding administrative funds, strive for the help of public and private enterprises in terms of funding, and rely on the help of various forces to improve and accelerate the development conditions and sports level of after-school sports in primary and secondary schools.

5. Conclusions

Overall, with the continuous popularization and development of the national fitness spirit throughout the country, the sports industry has also witnessed a vigorous development. The importance of regular physical education in the classroom has gradually permeated the work of physical education teaching, and has also achieved gratifying results. However, we should not ignore the fact that at present, after-school sports haven't attracted more comprehensive attention, and it is very common. If we can't take appropriate measures to solve the problem, it may have a bad influence on the final effect of classroom teaching. Therefore, we should not only do a good job in classroom teaching, but also strengthen the teaching of after-school sports, and enhance students' interest in sports and their enthusiasm for participation.

References

- [1] Li Yihuan, Xiong Xu. *Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Sports and Education to Promote the Healthy Development of Teenagers. Give full play to the educational function of sports. Adolescent Health*, 2020(21):92-93
- [2] Liu Haiyuan, Zhan Enyan. *Thoughts about the implementation with the proposal of deepening the integration of physical education and cultural education to promote the healthy development of the teenagers. Journal of Physical Education*, 2020, 27(06):1-11.
- [3] Gu Xincun. *On how to cultivate students' after-school sports awareness. Selected Works of Young Writers: Teaching Exchange*, 2014(04).
- [4] Liu Hongxin. *The Role of Teaching-oriented Sports Clubs in University Campus Cultural Construction. Journal of Jiangsu Ocean University (Humanities & Social Sciences Edition)*, 2013(16).
- [5] Zhao Zhifei. *The Construction of Sunshine Sport from the Perspective of Ecological Philosophy. Journal of NanJing Sports Institute: Natural Science Edition*, 2013(02).
- [6] Wu Xiaomin. *On lifelong physical education in college physical education teaching. Education & Vocation*, 2013(02).
- [7] Lu Yan, Xie Qian. *Experimental Study on Effects of College Students' after School Sports on Self-confidence. China Educational Technology & Equipment*, 2013(24).
- [8] Gao Hejia. *Research on the development of after-school sports training system in primary and secondary schools in China. Capital University of Physical Education and Sports*, 2022.
- [9] Pei Bin. *A comparative study on the current situation of "one-hour campus sports every day" in urban and rural primary schools in Handan City. Capital University of Physical Education and Sports*, 2014.
- [10] Xiong Yuling. *On the formation of college after-school sports and students' lifelong sports concept. Journal of Pu'er University*, 2012(03).
- [11] Zhang Congyuan, Li Guoqing, Liu Yaoyao, Wang Congshuai. *A study on the present situation of after-school training for senior high school students in Henan Province and its enlightenment. Track and Field*, 2022(10):72-74.