

ROLE OF MARXISM AND SOCIAL SCIENCE METHODOLOGY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERLY SPORTS ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: Marxist social science methodology is characterized by its scientificity, advancement and contemporaneity. In the field of social science activities, Marxism has also undergone creative development. A profound understanding of Marxist social science methodology, including its features, significance, contemporary value and connotation, is conducive to solving the problems faced in social development during the contemporary development process of China by using Marxist social science methodology as ideological guidance. This study aims to explore the value and role of Marxist social science methodology in the development of elderly sports. With the further expansion of the elderly population and the increasing proportion of the elderly year by year, elderly sports, as an activity to improve the physical fitness of the elderly and enhance their quality of life, has received increasing attention. This article analyzes the current situation of population aging in China and the problems that arise in the development of elderly sports, briefly expounds the application of Marxist social science methodology in the field of elderly sports, and proposes solutions. This has a positive role in the orderly development of elderly sports and provides the elderly with better sports activities and services.

Keywords: Marxist social science methodology; Elderly sports; Aging

1 INTRODUCTION

Population aging is a current global trend in population development. This structural change in population age is widely and deeply influencing various aspects of human social life. The aging strategy has long been incorporated into the social and economic development strategies of many developed countries around the world. China also entered the ranks of elderly countries at the turn of the century[1]. As the world's largest developing country, China has the characteristic of "aging before prosperity". According to the data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, as of February 2023, the number of elderly people aged 60 and above in the country has reached 280 million, accounting for 19.8% of the total population; the number of elderly people aged 65 and above has reached 210 million, accounting for 14.8% of the total population. Thus, it can be seen that population aging in China is becoming increasingly serious, and it has a significant impact on the economic structure and population ratio of the entire society. Therefore, conducting sports activities for the elderly population is not only of great significance for the physical and mental development of the elderly, but also a demand of the country and society. However, there are currently some related problems in the implementation of sports activities for the elderly population in China. Analyzing them using methods from Marxist and social science methodologies is of great significance for solving the problems existing in sports activities for the elderly population, thereby promoting the standardized and rational development of sports activities for the elderly population.

1.1 The Construction of Talent Teams for Sports Activities for the Elderly Population is Lagging Behind

To enhance the physical health of the elderly and improve their quality of life through sports requires the establishment of a talent pool for promoting sports activities among the elderly population. Elderly individuals have significant differences in their physiological systems compared to teenagers. Their musculoskeletal system, cardiovascular system, respiratory system, nervous system, and immune system all experience varying degrees of functional decline as they age. The implementation of sports activities requires the mobilization of different systems to work together to complete the tasks. Therefore, the implementation of sports activities for the elderly population requires the participation of professional instructors and coaches to guide the activities. However, currently, the focus of sports activity promotion and training in China mainly lies in youth training, sports teaching, and fitness training, lacking instructors and coaches who have an understanding of the physical and mental development of the elderly. This may affect the quality and safety of sports activities for the elderly and even cause harm to their physical development. Moreover, the mental health development of the elderly is even more worthy of attention. When the elderly engage in sports activities, they need additional incentives and support. At present, the construction of talent teams for sports activity promotion among the elderly population is relatively lacking, and there is a lack of suitable training plans for talent cultivation, and the assessment standards also need to be further improved. Therefore, the development of elderly sports activities in the new era requires the focus on the cultivation of relevant talent teams.

1.2 The Distribution of Sports Resources for the Elderly Population in Urban and Rural Areas is Unbalanced

For a long time, the distribution of sports resources for the elderly population in urban and rural areas of our country has been unbalanced. This unbalanced distribution has led to differences in sports resources between urban and rural areas[2]. Influenced by the mindset of "emphasizing cities but neglecting rural areas", the government's financial investment and resources have been more inclined towards cities. The public financial investment in rural sports services is small, resulting in a lack of funding. Currently, there are insufficient sports facilities in cities, and cities usually have more and more diverse sports facilities, such as gymnasiums, swimming pools, and fitness centers, while rural areas may lack these facilities. This makes it easier for urban elderly people to access sports facilities, while rural elderly people lose more opportunities to participate in activities due to the lack of corresponding facilities. Currently, the development of rural sports activities mainly relies on spontaneous efforts and sports activities organized by rural grassroots organizations. The level and scale of these activities are relatively rudimentary, lacking correct guidance, and the financial expenditure for such activities is relatively limited. The development of sports activities is of great significance for the physical and mental development of rural elderly people. From the perspective of the state and society, sports activities improve the physical health of the elderly, thereby extending their working life and helping them better engage in entertainment, work, and activities. Rural elderly people have a greater demand for labor compared to urban areas. The development of sports activities can help alleviate the problem of a large labor demand in rural areas. Therefore, the issue of uneven distribution of sports resources between rural and urban areas deserves our attention. Measures such as government support and infrastructure construction should be adopted to reasonably allocate sports resources between urban and rural areas.

1.3 The Influence of Cultural Background, Social Pressure and Prejudice on the Development of Elderly Sports

Cultural background, social pressure and prejudice play significant roles in the development of elderly sports and have an impact on it. Excellent sports culture can influence the interest and hobbies of the elderly in participating in sports activities. For example, some excellent Chinese culture links sports with longevity and health, thereby triggering the elderly's attention to health and longevity and making them voluntarily engage in sports activities. Many sports cultures in traditional Chinese ethnic sports also link sports with health. For instance, Qigong, Tai Chi and traditional dances all play an indirect role in promoting sports activities to the elderly. However, at present, the problems in the promotion of sports culture in China restrict the formation and development of cultural background. The promotional forms of sports culture in China are monotonous, mainly focusing on competitive sports, professional sports and commercialized sports, while there is less promotion of non-competitive sports and excellent traditional sports cultures. This leads to two aspects: on the one hand, the elderly are more likely to view sports as commercialized sports activities and professional activities; on the other hand, it also results in the lack of achieving popularization and introduction of sports activities in the promotion. In addition, social pressure and prejudice are also an urgent issue in the development of elderly sports. The pressure and prejudice from society may also cause the elderly to gradually become marginalized when engaging in sports activities, reducing their enthusiasm for participating in sports activities independently. In conclusion, the promotion of sports culture can not only enhance the understanding and cognition of the elderly towards sports activities, but also reduce the social pressure and prejudice existing in the development of elderly sports, helping the elderly to better and consciously participate in various sports activities.

2 THE APPLICATION OF MARXIST SOCIAL SCIENCE THEORIES IN THE PROMOTION OF ELDERLY SPORTS ACTIVITIES

2.1 The Role of Practice-Based Research Methods in the Promotion of Elderly Sports Activities

The practice-based research method requires us to always respect reality and adhere to the methodological approach of starting from reality when promoting elderly sports activities. Elderly sports activities are also based on practice, so when addressing issues related to elderly sports, we should respect the objective reality, adhere to starting from reality, and conduct relevant research based on the current social development status and in combination with the target group. Based on the analysis in my previous text, the current problems in the promotion of elderly sports activities in China include: a lack of professional athletes and coaches for the elderly, a lack of sports culture promotion, constraints from social pressure and prejudice, a lack of sports resources for the elderly and uneven distribution, and insufficient policy and financial support. Therefore, in the promotion of elderly sports activities, we should face the actual problems and formulate corresponding measures, adhere to starting from reality, and improve the quality and level of elderly sports activities. First, we should combine the existing problems in the promotion of elderly sports activities and formulate corresponding plans based on reality; strengthen the construction of the talent team for elderly sports activities, cultivate coaches and instructors who can cater to the physical and mental development of the elderly; strengthen the promotion of sports culture, emphasize the diverse promotion of sports and the promotion of grassroots sports, help the elderly correctly understand the connotation and value of mass sports; local governments should combine the actual situation and adopt relevant policies to balance the uneven distribution of sports resources between rural and urban areas, strengthen the construction of sports facilities in rural areas, and carry out various sports activities in rural areas; finally, clearly define the rights and responsibilities of each department in the sports activities, to prevent the occurrence of unclear rights and responsibilities. Only in this way can we truly solve the problems existing in the promotion of elderly sports activities, gradually improve the level of elderly sports activities, and meet the sports needs of the vast number of elderly people.

2.2 The Role of Social Contradiction Research Method in the Promotion of Elderly Sports Activities

Contradictions have both universality and particularity. Contradictions exist everywhere and at all times. Social contradictions are present in all aspects of social life. When it comes to the promotion of elderly sports activities, we must be able to face the contradictions, so that we can correctly resolve them. Contradictions can be classified as primary and secondary contradictions, and they also have primary and secondary aspects. Therefore, when solving contradiction issues, we must be able to grasp the primary contradiction, so that we can solve the problems encountered in the promotion of elderly sports activities. We must correctly recognize the actual needs of the elderly for sports activities and the contradictions in the promotion of elderly sports activities such as the lack of professional coaches or instructors, sports facilities, and financial support. We must correctly recognize and analyze the contradictions, so that they can develop in a positive and beneficial direction. Moreover, the development of contradictions is both universal and specific. The promotion of elderly sports activities must always be centered around the elderly and cannot be separated from the elderly group. We must correctly recognize the differences between the physiological systems of the elderly and those of teenagers, and reasonably arrange related sports activities by combining the relevant systems such as the movement system, cardiovascular system, respiratory system, and immune system related to elderly sports. At the same time, the psychological development of the elderly also deserves our attention. There are individualized needs, and we should be able to carry out sports activities in line with the characteristics of the psychological development of the elderly group. However, at present, the promotion of elderly sports activities in our country is not perfect and cannot precisely meet the needs of the elderly. Therefore, we must continuously improve the systems and norms for the promotion of elderly sports activities, plan the development of elderly sports institutions in a targeted manner, and the government should continuously provide relevant support and policy guarantees. Only in this way can we effectively solve the problems existing in the promotion of elderly sports activities.

2.3 The Role of Social Process Research Method in the Promotion of Elderly Sports Activities

The scientific foresight method in the social process approach requires us to view issues from the perspectives of movement, change, and development. Although the laws of human historical development are objective and independent of human will, humans possess subjective initiative, and the choices of the subject play a very important role in the success of practice. Only by correctly grasping the objective laws can we utilize them for our own benefit. Therefore, we must uphold the unity of subjective initiative and objective laws [3]. The promotion of elderly sports activities and social development are inseparable. The implementation of elderly sports activities cannot be separated from the support and development of society. Therefore, when conducting elderly sports activities, we should be able to base ourselves on the demands of the development of the times, formulate long-term plans for the development of elderly sports activities, and establish corresponding systems and policy frameworks. In the implementation of elderly sports activities, we should periodically improve the norms and models for the implementation of elderly sports activities, continuously design the implementation of elderly sports activities, and actively respond to the increasing sports demands of the elderly.

2.4 The Role of the Social Subject Research Method in the Promotion of Elderly Sports Activities

The social subject research method requires that in conducting elderly sports activities, we should always adhere to the people-oriented perspective. We must clearly recognize the dominant role of individuals in the development of social history and focus on the cultivation of talents, as well as the exertion of people's subjective initiative. Adhering to the people-oriented perspective means that when conducting elderly sports activities, we must not separate ourselves from the elderly group. As people age, their physiological systems inevitably experience functional decline, their bodies are more prone to related diseases, and the difficulty of completing sports activities increases. Therefore, when conducting elderly sports activities, we must uphold the people-oriented development concept and implement the objective requirements of the people-centered development philosophy. We should reasonably arrange sports activities that meet the physical and mental development needs of the elderly based on their actual needs and objective circumstances. At the same time, the development of elderly sports activities in our country is at a relatively stage. Conducting elderly sports activities requires us to cultivate a professional team of sports service personnel with specialized knowledge and related managers, improve the overall quality of sports activity service personnel, and accelerate the professionalization process of sports activities. Therefore, the social subject research method requires us not only to pay attention to the actual situation of the elderly in the sports activities, but also to focus on the cultivation of professional talents in the actual implementation process. The government should further strengthen the cultivation efforts for elderly sports activities and service personnel, and improve the relevant training mechanisms.

3 COUNTERMEASURES FOR PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERLY SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN CHINA

3.1 Policy Support and Framework Construction, Ensuring the Conduct of Elderly Sports Activities

The functional theory of policy system holds that the development of elderly sports requires a sound policy system for promoting health through sports, and the construction and improvement of various regulations and systems for elderly

sports. In particular, in the policy planning for elderly sports, the continuity of policy guidance for elderly sports should be ensured, and legal and regulatory guarantees in the field of elderly sports should be strengthened [4]. The government plays an important role in the development of elderly sports activities, and the implementation of any activity cannot be separated from the support of the government and policies. Regarding the development of elderly sports activities, the government needs to formulate specific regulations, continuously improve the legal system for the development of elderly sports activities, clarify the rights and guarantee measures for elderly people to participate in sports activities, and standardize the responsibilities of relevant organizations and institutions, promoting the development of elderly sports. On this basis, a specialized elderly sports management institution or department should be established to be responsible for planning, coordinating, and supervising the development and operation of elderly sports activities. On the other hand, the government should provide relevant financial support for the construction, training of talent teams related to elderly sports activities, and the construction of community sports facilities to ensure that elderly sports activities are carried out and conducted safely and orderly. The government should actively assume relevant responsibilities, promote the publicity and development of elderly sports activities, and increase the enthusiasm of more elderly people to participate in sports activities.

3.2 Health Education and Technological Support Promote the Healthy Promotion and Development of Sports Activities

Health is the basic life demand of the elderly in their later years, and sports is an important means to implement the concept of active health. Achieving the health of the elderly through sports is an important goal for promoting active aging [5]. Improving the physical fitness of the elderly, enhancing their physical health, and improving their quality of life through sports activities is the primary goal of conducting sports activities for the elderly. Therefore, while conducting sports activities for the elderly, auxiliary health education activities for the elderly should be carried out. Through community health stations, hospitals, etc., healthy sports concepts should be conveyed to the elderly, emphasizing the important role of sports activities in maintaining health and preventing diseases, thereby increasing the enthusiasm and autonomy of the elderly to participate in sports activities. According to the physical and mental development characteristics of the elderly at different stages, guidelines for elderly sports exercises should be formulated and promoted, providing detailed exercise suggestions and precautions to ensure the safety of elderly sports activities. In addition, technology is also an important factor that can be utilized in conducting sports activities for the elderly. With the support of the state and the government, applications suitable for elderly sports activities should be developed, transferring offline sports courses to online platforms, making it more convenient for the elderly to exercise at home, and also further integrating and utilizing sports resources.

3.3 Improve Community Organizations and Facilities to Ensure the Implementation of Elderly Sports Activities

According to the social support theory, the development of elderly sports cannot be separated from the leadership of group organizations. It requires all levels and regions' management departments or communities to establish a series of activities to connect elderly enthusiasts together, helping each other during exercise, providing psychological comfort to each other, and continuing to play a promoting role of the elderly in the development of sports undertakings [4]. Promoting the development of sports activities in China through community organizations and development relies on a positive impetus. Encourage communities, elderly care institutions, and relevant sports departments to actively organize elderly sports activities[6]. By establishing community sports centers and conducting community sports activities, attract the participation of the elderly. Meet the needs of the elderly for sports activities, and we should focus on promoting the establishment of elderly community sports organizations, continuously improving community sports public facilities, and promoting the stable development of elderly sports organizations[7]. Finally, establish a volunteer team for elderly sports activities in the community, provide more social support for the implementation of elderly sports activities, and better stimulate the interest and enthusiasm of the elderly to participate in sports activities[8].

4 CONCLUSION

This article focuses on the implementation of sports activities for the elderly in our country as the main research subject. It uses Marxist and social science methodologies to address the relevant issues encountered in the actual implementation of elderly sports activities. Marxist and social science methodologies provide a theoretical framework and methodological tools for the study of elderly sports, enabling us to have a more comprehensive understanding of the social, cultural and economic impacts in this field. This not only promotes the further advancement of academic research but also provides strong support for the formulation of policies and guidance for social practice. Through in-depth research on elderly sports activities, we can promote the health, social integration and quality of life of the elderly in society, making positive contributions to building a more fair and inclusive society.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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