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The Integration and Development of Chinese and Western Sports Culture and Olympic Globalization

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the uniqueness of Chinese and Western sports cultures and their integration and development in the context of globalization, especially in the Olympic Movement. Through a literature review, this paper analyzes the core features of the two sports cultures, the impact of globalization on sports culture, and the role of the Olympic Movement as a platform to promote cultural integration. In addition, the author examines the controversial points in the current research, and through deepening the comparative cultural research, the interaction mechanism between globalization and localization, the role of technology and social media, and sustainability and social responsibility, she proposes that the direction of future research should focus on deepening cultural understanding, promoting inclusive dialogues, and exploring the path of sustainable development of sports culture under the background of globalization, to maintain and enrich the diversity of human sports culture, emphasizing the importance of cross-cultural understanding and cooperation in promoting the pluralistic coexistence of global sports culture.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, sports culture, as a vital component of human society, not only preserves the historical traditions and spiritual values of each nation but also increasingly serves as a bridge for communication and integration across diverse cultures. The Olympic Movement, embodying the motto "faster, higher, stronger, and more united," has emerged as a unique platform that fosters mutual understanding and respect within global sports culture. This global interconnection of sports cultures manifests not only in competitive exchanges but also in deeper dialogues concerning sports values, training methodologies, and social and cultural identities (Ubaidulloev, 2018).

The contrast between Western values of individual achievement and Eastern ideals of collective honour and physical-mental harmony is profound. However, the convergence of these cultures within the Olympic arena illustrates the power of sport as a universal language, transcending national boundaries. Globalization, while promoting the standardization of sports rules and techniques, simultaneously revitalizes traditional sports forms such as Chinese martial arts and yoga, showcasing the enduring relevance and international appeal of these practices (Lau et al., 2007).

Nonetheless, the globalization of sports culture has encountered significant challenges, notably concerns regarding cultural homogenization and the erosion of local characteristics. In light of these issues, comparative cultural studies exploring the balance between globalization and localization have gained academic prominence (Liu, Broom, & Wilson, 2014). The Olympic Movement, positioned at the forefront of this discourse, not only provides a stage for multicultural expression but also prompts deeper reflection on the role of sports culture in promoting global sustainability and respect for cultural diversity (Wang, 2007). Technological advancements, particularly the rise of the Internet and social media, have opened new avenues for the dissemination and exchange of sports culture. Live-streaming technologies allow global audiences to experience events in real time, while social media has facilitated emotional connections between athletes and fans, enabling the worldwide sharing of sports narratives. However, these advancements also present a challenge: how can we leverage technology to preserve the diversity of sports cultures in the digital age, moving beyond mere commercialized representations to uncover the deeper cultural and social meanings embedded in sports (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005)?

As globalization presents both opportunities and challenges, future research in sports culture must focus on fostering cross-cultural understanding and cooperation while investigating the sustainable development of sports within a global context. This inquiry extends beyond competitive sports to examine how human society can reconcile and harmonize diverse cultural expressions in a shared global space. The Olympic Movement, as a crucial catalyst in this process, will continue to play a key role in advancing the integration and prosperity of global sports culture (Yao, 2009). The purpose of this paper is to explore the distinctiveness of Chinese and Western sports cultures and how globalization influences their dissemination and evolution, particularly in the Olympic arena.

2. METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the cultural distinctions between Chinese and Western sports traditions and to assess the impact of globalization through the lens of the Olympic Movement. The research draws from a wide range of scholarly sources, including journal articles, books, and official documents published between 2000 and 2023, selected from databases such as CNKI, JSTOR, and Google Scholar.

Both Chinese- and English-language literature were included to ensure a balanced and cross-cultural perspective. The primary method of analysis involved a thematic review of the literature, focusing on key concepts such as individualism and collectivism, competition and harmony, and the evolving role of sports in society. Special attention was given to the Olympic Games as a central site of intercultural exchange. Recurring patterns and thematic contrasts were identified inductively, allowing for a comparative interpretation of how Chinese and Western sports cultures interact, influence each other, and adapt within a globalized sports context. This method provided the foundation for discussing broader issues of cultural integration, technological mediation, and the preservation of traditional sports values in a rapidly globalizing world.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Core Characterization

Western sports culture finds its roots in the ancient Greek tradition of athletics, emphasizing individualism, competitiveness, and a deep respect for rules and regulations. From the revival of the ancient Olympic Games to the establishment of modern sports systems, Western culture advocates for fair competition, physical aesthetics, and scientific training methods, highlighting the balance between individual accomplishment and teamwork (Lau et al., 2007). This focus on individual achievement is mirrored in the prominence of athletes as iconic figures within Western sports.

In contrast, Eastern sports culture, particularly in China, places greater emphasis on inner harmony and balance. Practices such as martial arts and Tai Chi promote the unity of body and mind, integrating both internal and external training approaches. These values are also evident in modern sports, where ethical considerations, collective honour, and social responsibility are central to the practice (Zhang, Wang, Xu, et al., 2006). The focus on holistic development within Eastern sports culture contrasts with the often individual-centred approach of Western sports, yet both systems contribute uniquely to the global sports landscape.

1.1 Impact of globalization

Globalization has significantly accelerated the spread of sports culture across borders, facilitating interactions between Chinese and Western sports cultures. This exchange has enabled mutual influence and integration within a broader, globalized context. On one hand, Western competitive sports such as soccer and basketball have rapidly gained popularity in China. On the other hand, traditional Chinese sports such as Wushu and Qigong have gradually expanded beyond China's borders, garnering international recognition and admiration (Liu, Broom, & Wilson, 2014).

In the context of globalization, the dissemination and integration of sports culture have transcended competitive exchanges to encompass deeper-level interactions regarding sports values, training systems, and even social and cultural identities. The professionalization and commercialization of Western sports have had a profound impact on China's sports industry, catalyzing the maturation of its sports market and redefining sports consumption patterns. For instance, the introduction of elite international sports leagues, such as the NBA and the English Premier League, has spurred growing demand among Chinese audiences for sports events. Additionally, the rise of sports media and digital platforms has accelerated the global circulation of information and the sharing of sports culture (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005).

Simultaneously, elements of traditional Chinese sports culture, such as Wushu and Taijiquan, have captured global interest due to their unique fitness concepts and philosophical depth. International events like the International Wushu Federation competitions and World Taijiquan Day not only showcase the allure of Chinese sports but also promote broader cultural exchange between the East and the West (Zhang et al., 2006). More critically, the health and wellness principles embedded in these traditional practices are increasingly integrated into global sports culture, contributing to the promotion of physical and mental health and fostering social cohesion across diverse cultures (Yao, 2009).

It is important to emphasize that this cultural exchange is not merely a process of imitation or replication, but rather a dynamic symbiosis involving mutual reference, innovation, and adaptation. The convergence of Chinese and Western sports cultures enriches the global sports landscape, laying a robust foundation for a more inclusive and harmonious international sports community (Lau et al., 2007). The challenges and opportunities presented by this interaction call for an exploration of the evolving role and mission of sports culture in the age of globalization, to achieve sustainable development and universal prosperity on a global scale.

1.2 The Role of the Olympic Movement

The Olympic Movement serves as both the pinnacle of competitive sports and a crucial force in fostering cultural integration. It provides a unique platform where athletes and spectators from all corners of the globe can engage with and experience different sports cultures, contributing to the diversification of global sports culture (Ubaidulloev, 2018).

Guided by the Olympic spirit, athletes from diverse cultural backgrounds respect one another and learn from each other on the playing field, embodying the core message that sport transcends borders. This direct cross-cultural engagement not only cultivates appreciation for various sports traditions but also deepens understanding and respect for the core values of different national cultures (Liu et al., 2014). Within the Olympic Village, the daily interactions of athletes whether through language exchanges, culinary practices, or recreational activities become a microcosm of global cultural exchange, further promoting the diversification of global sports culture.

More profoundly, the Olympic Movement advocates for values such as peace, friendship, and solidarity, encouraging participants to look beyond mere competition and explore a more inclusive, harmonious worldview. Through the universal language of sport, the Olympic Games build a bridge connecting diverse cultures, races, and beliefs, fostering the integration and innovation of global sports culture. In this way, sport emerges not only as a competitive activity but also as a force for social progress and cultural understanding, emphasizing its unique value and significant role in shaping a global community (Yao, 2009). The Olympics exemplify how sport can contribute to the broader goal of unity and mutual respect in a globalized world.

2. Points of contention and future directions

Despite the positive developments resulting from the integration of sports cultures, there are concerns about cultural homogenization and the loss of local characteristics in the process of globalization. As sports cultures from both the East and the West converge, there is a growing risk that distinctive local practices and values could be diminished in favour of a more uniform global culture. This issue has led to increased interest in comparative cultural studies and the search for a dynamic balance between globalization and localization. Scholars

have focused on how sports cultures can maintain their unique characteristics while engaging with global trends (Lau et al., 2007).

The proliferation of social media and advanced technologies has created new opportunities for the global spread of sports culture, but these tools also raise questions about how to use them effectively to foster cross-cultural exchanges while preserving cultural diversity. Scholars have emphasized the importance of cultural adaptability, which involves retaining the unique aspects of local cultures while embracing the best features of global sports cultures. Such adaptability is necessary to ensure that sports cultures can both preserve their heritage and evolve in the context of globalization (Ubaidulloev, 2018). Additionally, transnational collaborations have been identified as key to safeguarding and transmitting sports cultural heritage, encouraging a more inclusive and diverse global sports community.

The use of emerging technologies and social media platforms has created unprecedented opportunities for the dissemination of sports culture. These platforms allow for the global sharing of sports information and provide an avenue for niche sports to gain international attention. However, this progress requires a careful strategy to ensure that technology serves as a promoter of diversity rather than a homogenizing force. For example, multicultural sports festivals, organized via social media, could highlight regional sports customs and foster greater awareness and respect for cultural diversity (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005). In this way, technology can help build a global sports ecosystem that values openness and inclusivity while respecting the unique contributions of local cultures.

Future research in sports culture should focus on sustainability and social responsibility, examining how to foster inclusiveness and shared prosperity in global sports while maintaining cultural uniqueness. This will require interdisciplinary approaches, drawing on fields such as sports, sociology, psychology, and history, to explore the complexities of sports culture in the globalized world. Research directions could include the role of technology in promoting sports diversity, the adaptation of sports cultures to global influences, and the examination of sustainable practices within sports (Ubaidulloev, 2018).

4. CONCLUSION

In the context of globalization, the collision and integration of Chinese and Western sports cultures is an inevitable trend, with the Olympic Movement serving as a pivotal driver in this process. The Olympics not only showcase the excitement of sports competitions but also reflect the mutual respect and understanding between diverse cultures. As the world continues to embrace global interconnectedness, deepening cultural understanding and promoting inclusive dialogue becomes essential. This approach enables us to explore a sustainable path that preserves cultural diversity while fostering the common development of global sports culture. Ultimately, such efforts will contribute to the creation of a more harmonious and cohesive global sports culture ecosystem, benefiting athletes, spectators, and societies worldwide.

5. AUTHOR'S NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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