

Research On the Collaborative Mechanism for Integrating School, Community, And Family-Based Sports Programs

Fang Na¹, Fang Lei²

¹*School of Mathematics and Computer Science, Nanchang University, Jiangxi, China*

²*School of Physical Education, Nanchang University, Jiangxi, China*

Abstract: Promoting the integrated development of school, community, and family sports is the core approach to deepening the integration of physical education and building a higher-level public service system for national fitness. It also serves as a key measure to address current challenges such as declining physical health levels among adolescents and fragmented allocation of sports resources. Based on the theory of collaborative governance, this paper outlines the significance of coordinated development across schools, communities, and families in sports, analyzes practical difficulties encountered in current practices—including unclear responsibilities among stakeholders, misaligned objectives, fragmented resources, inadequate support mechanisms, and insufficient collaborative motivation—and proposes specific pathways to improve the integrated collaboration mechanism from four perspectives: goal alignment, resource coordination, support coordination, and incentive alignment. These findings provide theoretical references and practical support for advancing the modernization of youth sports governance in China.

Keywords: School Community Family Sports; Integration; Collaborative Mechanism; Sports-Education Integration

1. The Significant Importance of Integrated and Coordinated Development of School, Community, and Family Sports

The theory of collaborative governance posits that multiple stakeholders can achieve the maximization of public interests through effective collaboration, which cannot be accomplished by any single entity alone. This theory provides a crucial analytical framework for the integrated development of school, community, and family sports. However, in

practice, China's sports development remains fragmented and operates in isolation, with low collaborative efficiency and an inability to form synergistic momentum. How to establish effective collaborative mechanisms and overcome practical obstacles to tripartite cooperation has become a critical issue urgently requiring resolution in the field of youth sports. Against this backdrop, the following content will investigate integrated collaborative mechanisms among schools, communities, and families, aiming to provide valuable insights for promoting high-quality development of youth sports in China.

1.1 Implementing the National Strategy for Integrating Education with Industry

The essence of integrating sports and education lies in breaking down the barriers between the sports and education systems, consolidating sports resources across society, and jointly promoting the healthy development of adolescents [1]. Schools, communities, and families serve as the three core arenas for adolescent sports activities, and their integrated collaboration itself represents a concrete manifestation of this integration at the grassroots level. For a long time, China's youth sports system has suffered from fragmented responsibilities: sports authorities oversee competitive sports, education departments manage schools, and families handle cultivation—resulting in isolated efforts among different stakeholders, which has confined the integration of sports and education to policy levels and hindered its practical implementation [2]. Establishing an integrated collaborative mechanism among these three parties can dismantle barriers between stakeholders, facilitate the free flow of sports resources across various domains, ensure that policy requirements for sports-education integration take root, transform top-level designs into concrete grassroots practices, and provide foundational

support for advancing the strategy of sports-education integration.

1.2 Optimize Sports Resource Allocation and Address Supply-Demand Mismatches

Currently, there is a significant mismatch between the supply and demand of resources in China's sports sector. On one hand, the school sports system boasts professional sports instructors and standardized athletic facilities, yet most of these resources remain idle after school hours and during holidays, resulting in substantial waste of high-quality resources. On the other hand, community sports lack dedicated venues and professional guidance, making it difficult for residents—particularly adolescents—to access suitable exercise facilities. Families' demand for quality youth sports services remains unmet, forcing them to incur high costs by enrolling their children in off-campus commercial training institutions, thereby further burdening households [3]. Integrated development across these three sectors can consolidate professional resources from schools, platform resources from communities, and family needs, revitalizing idle resources, addressing resource deficiencies, effectively alleviating the imbalance between sports resource supply and demand, and enhancing overall utilization efficiency of sports resources.

1.3 Promote the Comprehensive Development of Adolescents and Foster Lifelong Sports Habits

The value of sports for adolescents extends beyond improving physical fitness; it also fosters a sense of discipline, stress resilience, and teamwork spirit, promoting comprehensive physical and mental development. Sports serve as a vital vehicle for fulfilling the fundamental mission of cultivating virtue through education [4]. Developing lifelong sports habits cannot be achieved solely through the two to three weekly physical education classes in schools; it requires sustained reinforcement from families and communities. School sports focus on teaching athletic skills and nurturing interest in exercise; family sports form the foundation of daily physical activity by creating a positive sports environment that makes exercise a routine habit; community sports provide diverse exercise opportunities tailored to adolescents' varied interests, thereby expanding their social circles.

Only when these three components work synergistically can adolescents engage with sports across different contexts, gradually developing lifelong exercise habits and achieving holistic development.

2. The Practical Challenges in Achieving Integrated and Coordinated Development of School, Community, And Family Sports Programs

2.1 Ambiguous Rights and Responsibilities Among Multiple Stakeholders, With Insufficient Alignment of Objectives

Currently, the integrated development of school, community, and family sports in China is still in the exploratory stage, with unclear delineation of responsibilities among these three parties, leading to an awkward situation where everyone should be involved yet no one takes responsibility [5]. From a role perspective, schools, as educational institutions, focus primarily on academic instruction, while sports activities—particularly extracurricular joint sports events—are viewed as additional burdens. Moreover, due to safety concerns, schools generally reluctant to open sports facilities or organize collaborative sports activities, fearing they would bear primary liability for potential accidents that could disrupt normal operations. Communities, as grassroots self-governing organizations, handle substantial administrative tasks with limited staffing and heavy workloads, lacking professional sports personnel and sufficient authority to mobilize school sports resources; they can only perform basic notification and organizational duties, making it difficult for them to serve as effective platforms. Most families still hold the misconception that sports are solely the school's responsibility, believing that simply sending children to school ensures physical exercise is covered by the institution, while families need only focus on academic studies, showing little enthusiasm for participating in integrated sports activities.

2.2 Sports Resources Are Severely Fragmented, With A Significant Mismatch Between Supply and Demand in Resource Allocation

China's tripartite sports resources inherently exhibit complementary characteristics, yet due to the lack of an effective integration mechanism, these resources remain fragmented and hinder

shared benefits. Firstly, venue resources are highly fragmented: most regions have not established specific policies to ensure the opening of school sports facilities to communities. Schools, considering safety, management, and funding constraints, generally refuse to open their facilities; even when opened, they come with numerous restrictions—short operating hours and high entry barriers—making them inaccessible to families and communities. Additionally, community-built sports facilities primarily serve middle-aged and elderly residents, focusing on fitness trails and square dance venues, while facilities suitable for adolescents, such as basketball courts, football fields, and indoor sports arenas, are severely lacking, failing to meet the diverse exercise needs of young people. Secondly, teaching resources are fragmented: schools possess a large number of professionally qualified physical education teachers, but there are no corresponding incentive policies encouraging their participation in extracurricular community sports activities. Moreover, these teachers receive no additional compensation and face safety risks, leading to low motivation. Community sports instructors are mostly part-time professionals with varying levels of expertise, making them ill-equipped to meet the demands of youth sports instruction. Commercial sports coaches are prohibitively expensive for average households, resulting in a significant contradiction between the scarcity and waste of high-quality teaching resources.

2.3 Lack of a Collaborative Safeguard Mechanism and Insufficient Institutional Support

A robust safeguard mechanism is the foundation for the collaborative development of all three parties. Currently, integrated development in most regions of China lacks corresponding support systems, making it difficult to sustain long-term operations. Firstly, there is a lack of organizational safeguards: schools fall under the jurisdiction of education authorities, communities are managed by civil affairs and sports departments, while families have no designated supervisory body. Different departments operate in silos without a dedicated interdepartmental coordination mechanism to advance the integrated development of all three parties. When issues arise, departments often shirk responsibilities, hindering the formulation

of unified solutions and impeding progress in many initiatives. Secondly, institutional safeguards are inadequate. At the national level, only broad policy guidelines exist, with no specific regulations regarding division of responsibilities, safety management, or compensation for venue access. For instance, who bears responsibility for safety incidents occurring at school-opened venues? Who covers maintenance and staffing costs incurred during such activities? These critical issues that hinder implementation remain unaddressed by clear institutional provisions, leading both schools and communities to hesitate in advancing related efforts. Thirdly, funding support is insufficient. Current funding for tripartite integrated sports programs relies primarily on limited fiscal allocations from local governments, which are insufficient to cover routine expenses such as venue maintenance, personnel salaries, and event organization. Moreover, there are no effective mechanisms to attract private capital participation, making funding shortages a major bottleneck for coordinated development.

2.4 Insufficient Collaborative Momentum And Absence of Endogenous Incentive Mechanisms

Any collaborative effort requires corresponding incentives to sustain it. Currently, the integrated development of China's three parties lacks effective motivational mechanisms, resulting in low participation enthusiasm among all stakeholders. For schools, engaging in integrated collaborative development not only fails to earn them bonus points in performance evaluations but also increases safety risks and management costs, leading to insufficient motivation for participation—most schools merely go through the motions during inspections or organize a few symbolic activities, making sustained progress difficult. For physical education teachers, participating in community sports guidance or organizing extracurricular activities adds extra workload without corresponding compensation or recognition in professional title evaluations or performance assessments; the principle of "more work leads to more mistakes, less work results in fewer mistakes" further diminishes their motivation. For community staff, already burdened with heavy workloads and lacking additional subsidies or professional expertise, participation motivation is weak. For families, due to inadequate publicity, guidance, and policy

incentives, most still fail to recognize the importance of family sports for children's development and prefer investing time and money in academic tutoring, exhibiting insufficient intrinsic motivation for integrated sports activities.

3. Strategies for Improving the Integrated Collaborative Mechanism of School, Community, and Family Sports

3.1 Establishing a Goal-Coordination Mechanism with Clear Responsibilities and Authorities

Objective alignment serves as the prerequisite for integrated development among all three stakeholders. Only by clarifying each party's responsibilities and establishing shared developmental goals can a cohesive force for progress be created. First, it is essential to define the respective roles and obligations of each entity: Schools act as the central hub of integration, bearing primary responsibilities such as providing professional sports resources, delivering sports skill instruction, fostering athletic interest, ensuring orderly access to sports facilities, assigning qualified physical education teachers, and addressing needs from communities and families; Communities serve as the operational platform, tasked with organizing activities, bridging supply and demand, and consolidating resources—including promoting participation, engaging youth and families in programs, coordinating relationships, and collecting feedback; Families constitute the foundational unit, tasked with cultivating a sports culture, collaborating with schools and communities on regular exercise routines, sharing needs, fostering positive attitudes toward sports, and actively participating in sporting activities. Secondly, it is essential to establish shared development objectives and address the misalignment of goals among all three parties. Enhancing adolescents' physical health, fostering lifelong sports habits, and achieving comprehensive development should serve as the common core objectives for all stakeholders, while reducing the emphasis on utilitarian goals. Schools must abandon the misconception of prioritizing academics over sports, placing physical education on par with academic instruction and fulfilling the fundamental mission of cultivating virtue through education. Families need to shift from a utilitarian approach

to sports, moving beyond performance metrics to focus on nurturing children's interest and habits in physical activity, thereby actively fostering a family-oriented sports environment. Communities should overcome the tendency to prioritize quantitative targets over quality, transitioning from meeting assessment requirements to addressing the actual sports needs of adolescents and families by providing tailored sports services.

3.2 Establishing an Open and Shared Resource Coordination Allocation Mechanism

Resource sharing forms the cornerstone of collaborative development among stakeholders. Mechanism innovation is essential to dismantle resource barriers and achieve optimal allocation. First, we must promote open access to sports facilities by establishing a socialized opening mechanism for school grounds. The government should implement policies providing targeted financial subsidies to schools that open their facilities to communities, covering maintenance costs and personnel expenses while clarifying operating hours—specifically after school hours, during holidays, and during winter/summer vacations—for public use by residents and youth. An online reservation system should be developed to facilitate convenient access for families and young people. Additionally, communities should integrate local commercial sports venues, parks, green spaces, and cultural centers to create dedicated spaces for youth sports activities, addressing facility shortages and establishing a multi-tiered supply network. Second, teacher resource sharing requires creating a two-way mobility mechanism where educators serve in communities and instructors work in schools. School physical education teachers should be encouraged to participate in youth sports guidance during extracurricular hours, with their contribution hours factored into performance evaluations, compensation calculations, and professional title assessments to boost motivation. Furthermore, professional sports instructors, retired athletes, and qualified club coaches should be recruited to join school sports clubs and after-school programs, strengthening teaching capabilities through complementary expertise. Finally, a unified information resource sharing platform should be established. This online platform will be jointly developed by local sports and education

authorities to integrate data on school facility availability, sports events, and teaching staff information within their jurisdictions. It will enable families to conveniently book venues, register for activities, and provide feedback online, thereby achieving precise matching between supply and demand and addressing information asymmetry.

3.3 Establish a Comprehensive Collaborative Support Mechanism

A comprehensive support system serves as the foundation for collaborative development among all stakeholders, requiring establishment of a holistic framework across organizational, institutional, and financial dimensions. Firstly, organizational support necessitates creating a cross-departmental coordination body led by local government officials, involving departments such as education, sports, finance, civil affairs, and neighborhood offices. This body shall establish an integrated leadership group for school-community-family sports development, responsible for strategic planning, coordinated implementation, supervision, and evaluation. Regular coordination meetings should be held to address challenges, break down departmental barriers, and foster collaborative efforts. Secondly, institutional support requires implementing specific supporting regulations that clarify responsibilities and safety obligations for all parties, establishing a risk-sharing mechanism. The government shall purchase unified public liability insurance for schools using shared facilities, with insurers bearing primary compensation responsibility for accidents during joint sports activities, thereby defining clear accountability boundaries and alleviating concerns for schools and communities. Additionally, a supervision and evaluation system should be implemented, incorporating integrated development initiatives into performance assessment frameworks for education authorities, sports departments, and local governments to ensure accountability fulfillment. Third is financial support: a diversified financing mechanism should be established to create a funding system primarily based on government investment with participation from social capital. Local governments must include integrated development funds in their fiscal budgets to cover regular expenses such as venue

maintenance, personnel compensation, and event organization. Concurrently, policies like tax incentives and venue fee discounts should be introduced to attract commercial sports organizations and non-profit entities to participate in integrated development. Through means such as naming rights sponsorship and government procurement of services, social capital can be encouraged to invest, thereby diversifying funding sources.

3.4 Establishing a Collaborative Incentive Mechanism that Integrates Internal and External Efforts

Effective incentives serve as the driving force for sustained collaborative development among all stakeholders. A multi-party participation incentive mechanism should be established to motivate active involvement. Firstly, incentives should target participating personnel: school physical education teachers engaged in community sports guidance and social sports instructors involved in school sports services should not only receive appropriate hourly compensation but also have their participation experience incorporated into professional title evaluations and performance assessments for awards. Outstanding contributors should receive official recognition and material rewards to enhance their motivation. Secondly, family incentives should be implemented through a sports points system, where families actively participating in integrated sports programs earn points redeemable for public sports benefits—including free fitness sessions, venue discounts, sports equipment vouchers, and access to cultural services—to encourage proactive engagement. Concurrently, awareness campaigns should utilize new media platforms, community bulletin boards, parent-teacher meetings, and family activities to promote the concept of lifelong sports participation, address parents' bias toward academic over athletic pursuits, foster a society-wide emphasis on youth sports, and stimulate intrinsic motivation for family involvement. Thirdly, institutional incentives should be provided by granting policy preferences and honors to schools and communities demonstrating exceptional performance in integrated sports initiatives—such as designating them as "Model Units for Sports-Education Integration" and offering additional funding and resource support—to boost organizational commitment.

4. Conclusion

The integrated and coordinated development of school, community, and family sports is an inevitable path to deepen the integration of sports and education and promote the healthy development of young people, as well as a crucial component in advancing the construction of a sports powerhouse. Currently, China's tripartite integrated development faces multiple challenges, including misaligned objectives, fragmented resources, inadequate support, and insufficient motivation. Addressing these issues cannot be achieved by any single entity; it requires joint efforts from the government, schools, communities, and families. A comprehensive integrated coordination mechanism must be established at four levels—objectives alignment, resource sharing, support coordination, and motivation enhancement—to clarify responsibilities, integrate high-quality resources, improve institutional safeguards, and stimulate participation incentives. Only then can a synergistic force for tripartite collaboration be forged, driving high-quality development in youth sports and providing solid support for cultivating well-rounded socialist builders and successors with holistic development in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education.

Acknowledgments

Jiangxi Provincial Social Science Fund Project during the 13th Five-Year Plan Period (2020)

(20TY04): Research on the Collaborative Mechanism for Integrated School-Community-Family Sports in the Post-Pandemic Era.

References

- [1] Wu Jie, Zhong Hongli. An examination of community-based family education curriculum development through parent schools in residential communities: A case study from Changzhou, Jiangsu Province [J]. *Journal of Yunnan Open University*, 2025,27(4):16–22.
- [2] Xia Xue, Sun Bin. Research on adolescent fitness through collaborative development among schools, communities, and families [J]. *Youth Sports*, 2025, (9):125–127.
- [3] Ma Dehao. From Division to Integration: On Collaborative Governance of School, Community, and Family Sports in China [J]. *China Sports Science and Technology*, 2020,56(3):46–54.
- [4] Zheng Bing, Luo Jiong, Zhang Chi, et al. Model construction for a long-term mechanism integrating schools, families, and communities to promote youth sunshine sports activities [J]. *Journal of Physical Education*, 2015,22(2):63–71.
- [5] Ning Lijuan, Shi Facheng. Construction of a "trinity" physical health intervention approach integrating schools, communities, and families [J]. *Sports Science and Technology Literature Bulletin*, 2014,22(11):25–28+95.