



RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring Practical Pathways for Sports to Facilitate Rural Revitalization

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ABSTRACT

Under the strategy of rural revitalisation, sport has become a new engine for enhancing rural vitality, promoting residents' health and boosting economic diversification. However, how to effectively play the role of sports and explore the practical path that meets the reality of the countryside is the key at present. This study selects some typical villages in China, analyses their sports activities, facility construction, industry cultivation and other practice cases, and explores the specific role of sports in rural revitalization. Using literature, logical analysis and other methods, this study finds that sports play multiple roles in enhancing rural vitality, promoting residents' health and driving economic diversification. The role of sports can be effectively played through rational planning of facilities, enrichment of activity forms, and cultivation of sports industry. At the same time, suggestions such as strengthening policy guidance, promoting the integration of sports and rural tourism, and enhancing the cultural connotation of sports are put forward to provide new ideas and strategies for the comprehensive revitalisation of the countryside.

KEYWORDS Rural revitalisation, Pathways to practice, Policy Recommendations

Introduction

In the context of the rural revitalisation strategy, sport, as an important cultural and social activity, is gradually demonstrating its unique value in promoting the comprehensive development of villages. Sports can not only promote the physical and mental health of rural residents and enhance the vitality of rural society, but also drive the diversified development of the rural economy and inject new impetus for rural revitalisation. The purpose of this paper is to explore in depth the practical path of sports to help rural revitalisation, analyse the multiple roles of sports in rural revitalisation, and put forward actionable suggestions, with a view to providing new ideas and strategies for the comprehensive revitalisation of the countryside.

Literature Review

Yao Lei pointed out that with the full implementation of the strategy of rural revitalisation, the demand of rural residents for a better life is growing, while there are imbalances and insufficiencies in the basic public services of rural sports. These problems are mainly reflected in the misplaced and one-size-fits-all phenomenon of sports venue and facility supply, the number and scale of sports and cultural activities at the administrative village level need to be improved, the construction of rural sports organisations needs to be sustained in terms of the number, types and working methods, the funding inputs are diversified but with a large overall shortfall, as well as the overall satisfaction with the basic public services of sports for the residents needs to be improved (Yao, 2022). Wan Yi and Li Ke, in their article 'The Realistic Dilemma, Theoretical Logic and Realisation Path of Rural Sports Governance under the Strategy of Rural Revitalisation', provide an in-depth analysis of the status quo and challenges of rural sports

governance in the context of the rural revitalisation strategy and put forward the corresponding theoretical logic and realisation path (Wan and Li, 2022).

Material and Methods

Using literature, logical analysis and other methods, this study finds that sports play multiple roles in enhancing rural vitality, promoting residents' health and driving economic diversification. The role of sports can be effectively played through rational planning of facilities, enrichment of activity forms, and cultivation of the sports industry. At the same time, suggestions such as strengthening policy guidance, promoting the integration of sports and rural tourism, and enhancing the cultural connotation of sports are put forward to provide new ideas and strategies for the comprehensive revitalisation of the countryside.

Practical Path for Sports to Help Rural Revitalisation

Sports Industry Integration Path

Sports events, especially those with local characteristics, such as the Ten Thousand Villages Basketball Tournament in Guangxi and the 'Village BA' and 'Village Super' in Guizhou, can attract a large number of tourists to come to watch the matches and travel, thus driving the development of related industries such as catering, accommodation and transport in rural areas. The development of catering, accommodation, transport and other related industries in rural areas will thus be boosted. At the same time, the organisation of sports events can also attract external investment and inject new vitality into the rural economy.

The preparation and holding of sports events require a large number of human resources, including event organisation, venue maintenance, security and volunteer services. This provides more employment opportunities for rural residents and helps ease the employment pressure in rural areas.

By organising sports events, rural areas can showcase their natural scenery, folk culture and historical heritage, and enhance the brand image and popularity of the countryside. This helps to attract more tourists and enterprises to invest in business and promote the diversified development of the rural economy. In order to hold sports events, rural areas need to build and improve sports facilities, such as basketball courts, football fields, track and field, and so on. The construction of these facilities not only meets the needs of the event, but also provides more sports and fitness venues for rural residents, promoting the development of rural sports. The organisation of sports events can popularise sports knowledge and improve the sports literacy of rural residents. Through watching and participating in sports activities, rural residents can gain a deeper understanding of the rules, skills and spiritual connotations of sports, so as to participate more actively in sports and fitness. The organisation of sports events can also cultivate sports talents for rural areas. By participating in the organisation and preparation of events, village residents can accumulate more experience and skills in sports work and reserve talents for the future development of sports. The organisation of sports events requires close cooperation and mutual support among villagers. In the process of preparing and organising events, communication and co-operation between villagers is strengthened, which helps to enhance understanding and trust between villagers and strengthen the cohesion of village society.

The organisation of sports events can also enhance villagers' sense of belonging to and identification with their villages. By participating in the preparation of events and watching them, villagers can feel more deeply the unique charm and cultural heritage of the countryside, thus cherishing and caring for their homes more.

Sports events are an important platform for displaying village culture. In the preparation and organisation of the event, local folk culture, historical stories and other elements can be incorporated to make the event more local characteristics and cultural connotations. This helps to inherit and promote rural culture and enhance the cultural soft power of the countryside. The organisation of sports events can also innovate the dissemination of rural culture. Through live broadcasting, social media and other modern technical means, the exciting moments of the event and the unique charm of rural culture can be spread to a wider audience, increasing the popularity and influence of rural culture. For example, based on the hot trend of 'Village BA' and 'Village Super' in Qiandongnan Prefecture, a total of 78.7945 million tourists were received in 2023, realising a comprehensive income of 87.582 billion yuan from tourism (Guizhou Comprehensive Broadcasting, 2024).

The combination of sports and tourism, especially the development of rural sports tourism, has injected new vitality into rural revitalisation. The integration of sports elements into rural tourism has not only enriched the connotation of rural tourism, but also enhanced the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural areas. For example, Inner Mongolia has promoted cold resources to burst into hot vigour through 'ice and snow + culture and tourism', 'ice and snow + sports', 'ice and snow + industry', and received 5,002,000 tourists in the winter of 2023, achieving a total of 5,002,000 tourists. The total number of tourists received in the winter of 2023 was 50.02 million, and the income from ice and snow sports tourism was RMB 69.6 billion (Inner Mongolia Daily, 2024).

Pathways to Sports Facilities

Facilities suitable for various types of sports activities, such as football pitches, basketball courts, badminton courts, table tennis courts and national fitness paths, have been carefully laid out in rural areas to meet the sports needs of different groups of people. It has formulated standards for the configuration of sports facilities and equipment in rural areas, made up for the shortcomings in the configuration of facilities and equipment in rural areas and communities in accordance with the standards, and perfected the facilities and facilities of intelligent sports parks, sports service complexes and sports public venues in rural areas. Guiding enterprises and public institutions, autonomous sports organisations, sports enterprises, social sports instructors and colleges and universities to carry out activities to send sports to the countryside, carry out public welfare actions for sports to help make the countryside livable and beautiful, and donate intelligent sports and fitness equipment and digital sports goods to the countryside (Yang, Song and Bai, 2025). Equipped with accurate and error-free sports maps, eye-catching and easy-to-read directional signs and safety warning signs to ensure sports safety. Make full use of the natural landscape and human resources of the countryside to design challenging orienteering spaces, such as mountain and forest adventure zones and farming culture experience zones, to attract tourists and participants. Combining rural characteristics, develop sports with local features, such as dragon boats, dragon and lion dances and fishing, to enhance the attractiveness of rural sports.

Pathways for Physical and Cultural Activities

Protecting the intangible cultural heritage of traditional sports in the countryside and tapping into local specialities of vernacular folk sports and cultural resources. Showcasing the unique charm of rural sports culture and enhancing the popularity and reputation of villages through sports events and activities. Holding sports events and activities with local characteristics, such as farming competitions and dragon boat races, to enhance the driving force of sports events on rural revitalisation. Through the organisation of brand events, the popularity and influence of the countryside will be enhanced and more tourists and investors will be attracted. The traditional sports culture of keeping right and innovation provides an effective carrier for the continuation of the

historical lineage of the countryside. Traditional sports culture is born in the countryside and flourishes in the countryside, and it is an indispensable cultural element of local history and culture, with local cultural affinity and national identity. The creative development of traditional sports culture makes it more contemporary and regional, and contributes to the continuation of local historical culture and cultural self-confidence. For example, Zhanghu Township in Fujian Province has innovatively carried out the Lantern Race for Snake Lanterns, Dragon Boat Race for Dragon Boat Festival, and Live Snake Race for welcoming the gods in July (Zhu and Chen, 2021). The quality of sportsmanship is carried forward to gather spiritual strength for the improvement of social civilisation in villages. Sportsmanship is a unique spirit formed by people participating in sports, which advocates fairness and justice, hard work, solidarity and love and other good values. Promoting and carrying forward sportsmanship in the countryside can improve the spiritual outlook of farmers, raise the level of civilisation of the countryside society, and bring about a new climate of civilisation in the countryside. In-depth excavation and systematic integration of folklore sports, folk sports arts and sports non-legacy resources, and strengthening of digital technology to make these valuable national sports and cultural resources a new life. In-depth exploration and systematic integration of folklore sports, folk sports art and sports non-heritage resources, and strengthening of protection measures with the help of digital technology, so as to revitalise these valuable national sports and cultural resources (Li, Yu and Cai, 2024).

Building a civilised countryside and strengthening the management of sports and culture in villages: establishing a sound system for the management of sports and culture in villages in accordance with village rules and regulations, and providing strong support for the management of sports and culture at the grass-roots level. Through the grass-roots structure of 'sports commissioners, social organisations and village committees', the governance system has been optimised to enhance the synergy between multiple subjects and create a social atmosphere of solidarity and mutual help, with the collective being the most important.

Local governments and sports departments should lead village committees and sports social organisations to closely integrate rural sports and rural civilisation, rely on rich sports and cultural resources, and plan and organise sports events with distinctive regional characteristics, so as to set up brands of distinctive sports events, pass on the rural civilisation, and contribute to the construction of a beautiful countryside that is pleasant to live in and pleasant to work in.

Encouraging the diversified development of sports life services in villages, supporting the creation of sports cultural and creative products, and promoting the creation of innovative service projects in villages, such as sports film and entertainment, special sports lodging and sports folklore experience. Through the cultural and creative fusion mode of 'sports+' and '+sports', a number of unique and charming sports and cultural excellence products have been cultivated. At the same time, the use of digital media platforms, such as Jittery, Little Red Book, etc., to expand the network influence of rural sports culture, through live broadcasts, short videos and other forms, to create rural sports stars, showing the new image of livable and beautiful countryside.

Pathways for Cultivating and Introducing Sports Talents

The cultivation and introduction of sports talents is a key link in the sustainable development of sports, which is of great significance in enhancing the competitiveness of national sports and promoting the construction of a strong sports country.

Excellent coaches are the core force for cultivating sports talents. The training of coaches should be strengthened to improve their professional level and teaching ability to meet the demand of training high-level athletes. A good incentive mechanism should be

established to attract and retain excellent coaches and encourage them to constantly innovate training methods and improve training effects. Establish a fair, scientific and transparent selection mechanism and focus on cultivating diversified sports talents, including athletes of different sports, age groups and specialities. Taking into account the characteristics of different sports and age groups, formulate corresponding selection standards and assessment systems to discover and cultivate outstanding talents with potential. Increase investment in venues and facilities, equipment, research funding, etc., and provide advanced training equipment and conditions, so as to provide better training and development opportunities for students and athletes. To formulate a comprehensive plan for the development of sports infrastructure and improve the utilisation and modernisation of sports venues. Adopt scientific training methods and individualised training plans, and formulate targeted training programmes according to different sports and individual characteristics. Focus on the cultivation of comprehensive quality, including the development of physical fitness, technology, psychology, tactics and other aspects. Comprehensive evaluation of sports talents not only looks at competitive performance, but also takes into account factors such as moral quality, academic level and teamwork. Through the feedback from the evaluation system, training programmes and methods are adjusted in a timely manner to promote the all-round development of sports talents. According to the needs of the development of national and local sports undertakings, formulate attractive policies for the introduction of talents, including the provision of favourable treatment, a good working environment and space for development. Define the key areas and targets for the introduction of talents, such as outstanding talents in competitive sports, sports industry, sports research and so on. Broaden the channels for talent introduction. Broaden the channels for talent introduction by establishing cooperative relationships with international sports organisations, professional clubs, colleges and universities. Use recruitment websites, social media and other platforms to publish recruitment information to attract more outstanding talents to pay attention to and apply for joining. For some of the outstanding talents that are difficult to introduce full-time, flexible introduction strategies can be adopted, such as temporary employment, part-time employment, project cooperation and other forms. Flexible introduction of talents can be flexibly arranged according to the actual needs of the work time and location, to improve the flexibility and efficiency of the introduction of talent. Establish a perfect management and service mechanism after the introduction of talents to provide a full range of support and services for the introduction of talents. Strengthen the assessment and evaluation of the imported talents to ensure that they can play a maximum role in the new working environment. Taking Hanzhong City and Liaoning Province as examples, the two places have achieved remarkable results in the introduction and cultivation of sports talents. Hanzhong City has formulated the Measures for the Introduction of Outstanding Sports Talents in Hanzhong City, which clearly defines the scope, basic conditions and modes of introduction, and provides favourable treatment and protection. Liaoning Province has issued the Measures for Cultivating Competitive Sports Talents in Liaoning Province and other relevant policy documents, included sports talents in the Liaoning Province Cultural Masters and 'Four Batch' Talent Programme, and taken a variety of measures to strengthen the construction of sports reserve talents.

In short, the path of cultivating and introducing sports talents requires comprehensive consideration of a number of aspects, including strengthening the construction of the coaching team, deepening the reform of the selection mechanism, increasing inputs, adopting scientific training methods, establishing a comprehensive evaluation system, and formulating policies for the introduction of talents, etc. Through the implementation of these measures, it is possible to promote the development of sports talents. Through the implementation of these measures, we can promote the sustainable development of sports and contribute to the construction of a strong sports nation.

Implementation Strategies and Policy Recommendations

Policy support and funding

In the booming development of sports, government policy support and financial input play a crucial role. In order to promote the sustainable and healthy development of sports, the government should introduce a series of relevant policies and provide the necessary financial subsidies, tax incentives and other incentives to inject strong impetus into the sports industry. Establish and improve the laws and regulations in the field of sports to provide a solid legal guarantee for the standardised and legalised development of the sports industry. Promote the optimisation and upgrading of the structure of the sports industry through policy guidance, encourage sports enterprises to increase investment in research and development, and improve the quality and level of sports products and services. Relevant policies have been introduced to promote the in-depth integration of sports with culture, education, tourism and other industries to create a diversified pattern of sports industry development. Financial subsidies are one of the important means for the government to support the development of sports. The government can give direct financial subsidies to eligible sports enterprises, sports clubs, sports events, etc. through direct subsidies to reduce their operating costs and improve their market competitiveness. Indirect support for the development of sports is provided through the purchase of services and entrustment of operations. For example, the government can purchase public sports services to provide the public with quality sports and fitness facilities and services. Tax concessions are an important policy tool to incentivise the development of sports. The government can grant tax concessions to qualified sports enterprises and sports clubs through tax relief to reduce their tax burden and improve their profitability. Encourage enterprises and individuals to invest in sports, and give certain tax credits to qualified investments, so as to stimulate the enthusiasm of social capital to invest in sports. Taking the successful cases of sports development at home and abroad as an example, we can find that the government's policy support and capital investment play a vital role in the rapid development of sports. For example, some countries have attracted a large amount of social capital to invest in sports through the establishment of sports development funds, the provision of tax relief and other preferential policies, which has promoted the rapid development of the sports industry. At the same time, the government has also provided the public with quality sports and fitness environments and services through the purchase of public sports services and the construction of sports facilities.

In conclusion, the government's policy support and financial investment is an important guarantee for the development of sports. The government should introduce relevant policies and provide incentives such as financial subsidies and tax concessions to give strong impetus to sports. At the same time, the government should also strengthen its supervision and evaluation work to ensure the effective implementation of policies and the rational use of funds. Only in this way can we promote the sustained and healthy development of sports and provide the people with a better sports and fitness environment and services.

Community participation and cooperation mechanisms

In the process of promoting sports, the participation and co-operation of the community, enterprises, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other parties is of vital importance. By building a sound mechanism for community participation and co-operation, a strong synergy can be formed to jointly promote the prosperous development of sports.

As the grass-roots unit of sports development, the community has the advantages of being close to the masses, understanding the needs and being easy to organise. Therefore, communities should be encouraged to take an active part in the planning, construction and management of sports and give full play to their fundamental role in the development of sports.

The government should increase investment in community sports facilities, build and improve various types of sports venues and facilities, and provide a convenient sports and fitness environment for community residents. Encourage communities to organise colourful sports activities and events according to the needs and interests of residents, and stimulate residents' enthusiasm to participate in sports. Strengthen the training and selection of community sports backbones, improve their organisational ability and professionalism, and provide talent protection for the development of community sports. Enterprises play an important role in the development of sports. Through the participation and input of enterprises, they can provide more financial, technical and talent support for sports. Enterprises are encouraged to actively participate in the sponsorship of sports events and activities to provide financial support for the development of sports. Enterprises should make full use of their technical and resource advantages to develop sports products and services that meet market demand and satisfy the diversified sports needs of the people. Enterprises should actively participate in the investment and operation of the sports industry, promote the rapid development of the sports industry and inject new vigour into the sports cause.

Non-governmental organisations play an irreplaceable role in the development of sports. They can make up for the shortcomings of the government and enterprises in the development of sports and provide more public welfare and innovative support for sports. NGOs can organise all kinds of public welfare sports activities and provide disadvantaged groups with opportunities and platforms for sports and fitness. NGOs should actively participate in international and domestic sports and cultural exchanges to promote the dissemination and development of sports culture. NGOs are encouraged to recruit and train sports volunteers to provide strong support for the smooth running of sports events and activities. In order to give full play to the role of the community, enterprises, NGOs and other parties, a perfect cooperation mechanism should be constructed to form a synergy to promote the development of sports. The government should set up a communication platform between the community, enterprises, NGOs and other parties to strengthen information exchange and resource sharing. All parties should work together to formulate co-operation plans based on their own strengths and needs, with clear co-operation objectives and tasks. The government should strengthen the supervision and evaluation of the co-operation projects to ensure their smooth implementation and effectiveness.

All in all, by constructing a sound mechanism for community participation and co-operation, we can give full play to the roles of the community, enterprises, non-governmental organisations and other parties, and form a synergy to promote the prosperous development of sports. This will provide the people with a better sports and fitness environment and services and promote the sustained and healthy development of sports.

Sustainable Development Strategies

While promoting the development of sports, focusing on ecological protection and ensuring the harmonious symbiosis of sports activities and the natural environment in the countryside is the key to achieving the sustainable development of sports. First, planning first, scientific layout in the planning of sports activities and venues, should fully consider the carrying capacity of the rural natural environment and ecological sensitivity, to avoid damage to the natural environment. Through scientific and reasonable planning and layout, to ensure that sports activities and the rural natural environment in harmony, to achieve a harmonious coexistence of man and nature. In the construction process of sports facilities, environmentally friendly materials and green construction technology should be used to reduce the consumption of natural resources and environmental pollution. At the same time, focus on the integration of sports facilities and the natural environment to create a green, ecological and beautiful sports space. When organising sports activities, the principle of ecological priority should be adhered to, avoiding unnecessary damage to the

rural natural environment. For sports activities that may have an environmental impact, an environmental impact assessment should be carried out in advance and corresponding environmental protection measures should be taken to ensure that the activities will not have a negative impact on the natural environment. Actively promote green sports, such as hiking, cycling, camping and other low-carbon and environmentally friendly sports activities, to guide people to develop a healthy and environmentally friendly lifestyle. At the same time, public awareness of environmental protection and sustainable development should be raised through the organisation of green games and other activities, so as to form a favourable atmosphere in which the whole society can pay common attention to and support the sustainable development of sports.

The Government should strengthen its supervision of sports activities and venue construction to ensure that the activities and construction comply with environmental protection regulations and standards. For violations of environmental regulations, penalties should be imposed in accordance with the law and rectification should be supervised to ensure the harmonious coexistence of sports activities and the natural environment in the countryside. In promoting the development of sports, should pay attention to the combination of local economic development, through sports activities to drive the development of rural economy, while focusing on ecological protection, to achieve economic benefits and ecological benefits of a win-win situation. For example, it is possible to rely on the natural resources of the countryside to develop outdoor sports tourism, sports and leisure and other industries, injecting new vitality into the rural economy.

Through organising environmental protection lectures, exhibitions and other activities, public education on environmental protection and sustainable development can be strengthened to raise the public's awareness of environmental protection. At the same time, the public is encouraged to participate in environmental protection actions, such as tree-planting and rubbish classification, to jointly contribute to the protection of the environment and the promotion of the sustainable development of sports.

To sum up, through the implementation of strategies such as planning first, green construction, ecological priority, promoting green sports, strengthening supervision, promoting the combination of local economic development and ecological protection as well as strengthening publicity and education, it is possible to promote the harmonious coexistence of sports activities and the natural environment in the countryside and realise the sustainable development of the sports industry. This will provide the people with a better quality, environmentally friendly sports and fitness environment and services, and promote the coordinated development of sports and the ecological environment.

Monitoring and Evaluation System

In the development of sports, the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of projects is a key link in ensuring the effective implementation of strategies and their timely adjustment and optimisation. Through continuous monitoring and evaluation, problems in project implementation can be identified in a timely manner, the effectiveness of strategies can be assessed, and a scientific basis for decision-making can be provided, thus promoting the sustainable and healthy development of sports.

Define key indicators for monitoring, such as participation, satisfaction, ecological impact, etc., according to the specific objectives of the project or strategy.

According to the progress and actual needs of the project, set a reasonable monitoring cycle to ensure the timeliness and accuracy of the data. Choose appropriate

monitoring methods, such as questionnaires, field visits, data analysis, etc., taking into account the characteristics of the project.

Construct a monitoring network covering the whole process of the project, including data collection, storage, analysis and reporting, to ensure the systematic and complete nature of the monitoring work. Set clear evaluation criteria, including quantitative and qualitative criteria, in accordance with the project objectives, in order to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of the project or strategy. Conduct regular evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of the project or strategy according to the set evaluation cycle to ensure the timeliness and accuracy of the evaluation. Conduct in-depth analysis of the evaluation results to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme or strategy and provide a scientific basis for optimising the strategy. Based on the assessment results, formulate targeted improvement plans, specify the direction, measures and time nodes for improvement, and ensure the continuous optimisation of the strategy. Strengthen communication among the project team, monitoring team and evaluation team to ensure timely transmission and sharing of information. Encourage public feedback on the implementation effect of the project or strategy through public surveys and symposiums to improve the democracy and scientificity of decision-making. Respond to public feedback in a timely manner, explaining the background, objectives and implementation of the project or strategy to enhance public trust and support. To summarise the lessons learnt in the implementation of the project or strategy through monitoring and evaluation, so as to provide reference for future work. Based on the results of monitoring and evaluation, to continuously explore and innovate strategic approaches to improve the effectiveness and relevance of the project or strategy. Through training and education, improve the professionalism and comprehensive ability of the project team, the monitoring team and the evaluation team, so as to provide human resources for the smooth implementation of the project and the continuous optimisation of the strategies.

In conclusion, the construction of a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of projects is a key link in ensuring the sustained and healthy development of sports. Through continuous monitoring and evaluation, problems in project implementation can be discovered in time, the effects of strategies can be assessed, and scientific basis can be provided for decision-making, thus promoting the sustainable and healthy development of sports.

Conclusion

As a powerful social force, sport not only brings vitality and hope to the countryside, but is also an indispensable part of rural revitalisation. Through a series of practical paths such as building diversified sports facilities, enriching the forms of sports activities, fostering the sports industry, and strengthening policy guidance and support, sports have played an irreplaceable role in enhancing the vitality of rural society, promoting the physical and mental health of rural residents, and driving the diversified development of the rural economy. The practical path of sports for rural revitalisation is a road full of challenges and opportunities, which requires us to keep exploring and moving forward. Let's work together to promote the deep integration of sports and rural revitalisation, and contribute to the construction of a beautiful, harmonious and prosperous new picture of the countryside.

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