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Evolution and Convergence: A Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Sports Education Philosophies in the Modern Times

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Abstract

In the context of intensified globalization, sports education has evolved from a system centered on physical training into an important arena for educational modernization and intercultural dialogue. Existing studies often approach sports education philosophy from static and single-cultural perspectives, paying insufficient attention to how Western sports ideas were selectively introduced, adapted, and reinterpreted within specific non-Western contexts, particularly in China and East Asia. Grounded in the perspectives of Comparative Education and Intercultural Learning, this study adopts a historical and interpretive analytical approach to examine the evolution of modern Chinese sports education philosophy. Focusing on the Late Qing Dynasty and the Early Republican period as a formative stage, the research reconstructs the developmental trajectory of Chinese sports education through an integrated analysis of key educators' writings, educational policies, and institutional practices. The study examines reformers such as Huang Yanpei and Ma Yuehan as representative intellectual agents who mediated between Western concepts—including physical strength, national vitality, and holistic development—and indigenous Chinese educational traditions such as Confucian self-cultivation and rites-and-music education. The findings demonstrate that the modernization of Chinese sports education did not follow a linear path of Westernization. Instead, it unfolded through a process of cultural accommodation, characterized by convergence in educational values alongside differentiated pathways of practice across historical stages. By referencing contemporary sports education reforms in China as reflective cases, this research highlights the ongoing relevance of historically grounded cross-cultural integration and contributes a Chinese perspective to global discussions on sports education modernization.

Keywords: Sports Education Philosophy; Comparative Education; Intercultural Learning; Historical

Analysis; Chinese Practice