

A Survey and the Countermeasures on the Development of Grassroots Football Activities in Shandong Province: A Case Study on the Development of Elementary School Football Activities in Qingdao City

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Abstract

By taking 25 primary schools in Qingdao city as the objects, this thesis investigates the status of elementary school football teachers, school leadership's attention on campus football activities, training and competition expenses, parents' supports on children's involvement in football activities, discusses the problems and factors affecting the development of elementary school campus football activities in Qingdao city, proposes strategies to promote "grassroots football" to enter more campuses and to train a large number of excellent football reserve talents.

Key words: Grassroots football; Qingdao primary school; Current situation; Countermeasure

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of "grassroots football" was originally proposed by France, etc., namely, some non-professional, non-profitable, self-organized football teams get together in order to pursue the happiness of football. On May 15, 2009, China's "Campus Football" and the FIFA "Grassroots Football" program was officially started in Kunming Haigeng training base. This cooperation between FIFA and the Chinese Football Association fully

demonstrates FIFA's full expectation and confidence on the future of Chinese football, whose greater significance is to explore a new training mode to shorten the gap between Chinese football and the advanced level of international football, mine and train the future Chinese football geniuses from primary and secondary school students. "Grassroots football" has become a non-negligible part of the development of Chinese football, and youth campus football is an important part of China's grassroots football (Qiu & Shi, 2012). The Eighteenth National Congress of the CPC put forward the goal of educational modernization, requiring that primary and secondary school students' physique should have been significantly improved in the last three years (2014-2016), which provided "football enters campus" a good opportunity (Wang, 2013). Qingdao city is one of the first group of open coastal cities in China and a key development area of football. Based on the investigation on the development condition of elementary school football activities in Qingdao city, this thesis analyzes the factors affecting or impeding the development of Qingdao city campus football, and puts forward reasonable suggestions to promote the development of campus football in primary and secondary schools nationwide, to build a campus football philosophy in the new era, and to provide a theoretical reference for the training of outstanding Chinese football reserve talents.

1. RESEARCH OBJECTS AND METHODS

This thesis took 25 elementary schools in Shinan District, Shibe District, Sifang District and Licang District, Qingdao city as the research objects, distributed a total of 485 questionnaires, of which 25 were distributed to football coaches and returned, with a return rate of 100%. 24 questionnaires were valid, with a validity rate 96.0%; 300 questionnaires were distributed to students, and 286 were returned, with a return rate of 95.3%.

280 questionnaires were valid, with a validity rate of 93.3%; 160 questionnaires were distributed to parents, and 148 were returned, with a return rate of 92.5%. 146 questionnaires were valid, with a validity rate of 91.25%. SPSS16.0 statistical software has been used for statistics and data processing.

2. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

2.1 Teachers' Basic Information

As can be seen from Table 1, most primary school football teachers in Qingdao city are undergraduates or junior college graduates, in which 14 people are undergraduates, accounting for the highest ratio, and 6 people are junior college graduates, both accounting for 83.3% of the total;

2 people are postgraduates and 2 people are secondary school graduates. 2 people have a primary school senior teacher title, 14 have a primary school intermediate teacher title, and 8 have no professional title, so the number of people with a senior teacher title is less. Among the teachers, 15 have not participated in any training, 6 have participated in a training, only 3 people have participated in 2 trainings, and none had the experience of 3 or more trainings. 17 people are not majored in football, and only 7 people are majored in football. Most of the teachers have not taken any professional football training, so a large number of non-professional teachers may have a great negative impact on pupils' learning football. With the deepening of China's educational reform, the demands on football teachers' overall quality will continue to increase.

Table 1
Basic information of Primary School Football Teachers in Qingdao City

Educational Background	Number of people	Percentage	Positional title	Number of people	Percentage	Number of training	Number of people	Percentage	Major	Number of people	Percentage
Postgraduate	2	8.3%	Primary school special-class teacher	0	0	0	15	62.5%	Football	7	29.2%
Undergraduate	14	58.3%	Primary school senior teacher	2	8.3%	1	6	25.0%	Not football	17	70.8%
Junior college graduate	6	25%	Primary school intermediate teacher	14	58.3%	2	3	12.5%	Not physical education	0	0
Secondary school graduate	2	8.3%	None	8	33.3%	3	0	0			

2.2 Cognition on the Development of Campus Football

2.2.1 School Leaders' Attitudes Toward Campus Football

As can be seen from Table 2, 16 school leaders are "very supportive" and "supportive" to campus football activities, accounting for 66.7% of the total; 5 are "indifferent", accounting for 20.8%. Only 3 are "unsupportive" and "extremely unsupportive", accounting for 12.5% of the

total. This indicates that Qingdao primary school leaders are relatively more supportive to the development of campus football, whether in terms of attitude or supportive means. Most school leaders pay much attention to the development of campus football activities, recognizing that campus football is an important part of school work and an important way to create a characteristic school and display students' spirit.

Table 2
School Leaders' Attitudes on Campus Football

Options	Strongly supportive	Supportive	Indifferent	Unsupportive	Extremely unsupportive	Total
Number of people	10	6	5	3	0	24
Percentage (%)	41.7	25.0	20.8	12.5	0	100

2.2.2 Qingdao City Primary School Football Teachers' Satisfaction on the Job

"Teacher's job satisfaction" is a teacher's overall feeling and opinion about his profession, working condition and

working environment. Teacher's job satisfaction is the cornerstone for the development of campus football and is a future-oriented indicator. Teacher's satisfaction directly affects the implementation of football teaching

and training, affects the quality of school physical education, and is related to the stability and development of PE teachers. From Table 3, it can be seen that a majority of (about 70%) football teachers are moderately satisfied or unsatisfied with their jobs, and the influential factors include welfare, promotion opportunity, a sense of achievement and so on. Because the welfare mainly relies on the income of the regions and schools, teachers' welfare shows significant differences. The survey finds

that, except for the differences due to seniority, job title, position and other personal factors, even within the same area, welfares are different among schools. Primary school teachers also generally feel a lot of pressures. They believe that although the conditions are improved compared to the past, the pressures are also growing, and payment and income are disproportionate. They want to be more recognized by the students and parents.

Table 3
Qingdao City Football Teachers' Satisfaction on the Job

Options	Strongly satisfied	Satisfied	Indifferent	Unsatisfied	Extremely unsatisfied
Number of people	1	5	9	7	
Percentage(%)	4.2	20.8	37.5	29.2	8.3

2.2.3 Qingdao City Pupils' Attention and Interest in Campus Football Activities

Student's motivation, interest and attention on football are significant to promote campus football. As can be seen from Table 4, 55 pupils from 24 primary schools in Qingdao are very concerned about football matches, accounting for 19.6% of the total. 96 pupils are "concerned", accounting for 34.3%. 104 pupils

are "indifferent", reaching 37.1%, and 25 are "seldom concerned" and "not concerned", accounting for only 9.0% of the total. 210 students like football, making up 75.0% of the total. 52 pupils selected "indifferent", accounting for 18.6%; only 18 pupils chose "dislike", making up 6.4% of the total. This indicates that a majority of pupils in Qingdao city love football, and football has a larger space for development in primary school.

Table 4
Qingdao Pupils' Concern Degree of Football Matches

Concern degree of football matches	Number of people	Percentage	Interest in football	Number of people	Percentage
Very concerned	55	19.6%	Love	210	75%
Concerned	96	34.3%	Indifferent	52	18.6%
Indifferent	104	37.1%	Dislike	18	6.4%
Seldom concerned	17	6.1%			
Not concerned	8	2.9%			

2.2.4 Parents' Attitudes Toward the Children's Participation in Football Activities

Parents are the first teachers of the students, and they care about the students all the time, so parents' attitudes toward football activities have a great influence on the students. As can be seen from Table 5, 44.5% of the parents were strongly supportive or supportive for students' participation in campus football activities; 22.6% of the

parents had an indifferent attitude. A small part of parents said they were not supportive or extremely not supportive about the pupils' participation in school football activities, accounting for 28.1% of the total. Generally speaking, the pupils' parents in Qingdao city had a high level of support toward children's participation in school football activities, and most parents could recognize the benefits of participation in football.

Table 5
Parents' Attitudes Toward Their Children's Participation in School Football

Options	Strongly supportive	Supportive	Indifferent	Not supportive	Extremely not supportive	Total
Number of people	24	41	33	27	14	146
Percentage (%)	16.4	28.1	22.6	18.5	9.6	100

2.3 Implementation of Campus Football Activities in Qingdao Elementary Schools

2.3.1 Offering of Football Courses in Qingdao Elementary Schools

After the promulgation of the new curriculum standards, the number of teaching hours of physical education has increased than before. However, the actual teaching hours of football courses were generally less in the middle schools surveyed. As can be seen from Table 6, 13 primary schools surveyed in Qingdao City has offered football courses, 7 schools has offered it as an introductory course, and 4 primary schools did not offer a football course. The

offering of football courses in primary school plays an important role in popularizing football knowledge and skills, and promoting the development of the Sunshine Sports. As the main part of physical education, the content of football course is very rich. Due to the insufficient attention on the curriculum design, primary school football teaching and training should have a higher requirement. The popularity and improvement of football are a pair of contradictions of mutual restraint and mutual promotion. To improve football skills, we should improve football on the basis of popularity, and promote the overall progress on the basis of improvement.

Table 6
Offering of Football Courses in Qingdao City Elementary Schools

Options	Offered	Introductory courses	Not offered	Total
Number of school	13	7	4	24
Percentage (%)	54.2	29.2	16.7	100

2.3.2 The Implementation of Football Extra-Curricular Activities in Qingdao Primary Schools

At present, 20 elementary schools in Qingdao City all carried out football extra-curricular activities every week, including 12 schools which carried out football extra-curricular activities once a week, 7 schools which carried out football extra-curricular activities twice a week, and only 1 school which carried out football extra-curricular activities three times and above per week, accounting for

4.2% of the total. It can be seen that Qingdao City was basically able to integrate extracurricular sports into the overall educational process. In these activities, students participated voluntarily, self-organized, self-trained and self-learned. The teachers played a guiding role to give students more autonomy and freedom to experience life and learn something of interest. This not only enhanced the physical fitness of students, but also trained their abilities of independence and self-management.

Table 7
The Implementation of Football Extra-Curricular Activities in Qingdao Primary Schools Per Week

Options	None	Once	Twice	Three times and above	Total
Number of school	4	12	7	1	24
Percentage (%)	16.7	50.0	29.2	4.2	100

2.3.3 The Implementation of “Campus Football” Contests in Qingdao Primary Schools

At the end of 2009, in the FIFA year-end award ceremony, the Chinese Football Association unexpectedly received the “Football Development Award.” This is because in April 2009, the State General Administration of Sports and the Ministry of Education jointly issued the *Notice to Carry out National Youth Football Activities*, under which the State General Administration of Sports invested a fund of 40 million yuan for the development of campus football. The Chinese Football Association planned to include them into the campus football system, and to establish a four levels’ league system composed of elementary, junior high, senior high and college. Competition is an important way to test the team level and promote team building. As can be seen from Table 8, Qingdao youth football competitions were carried out systematically but not widespread, allowing only the

little players from football club to participate, and the opportunities for primary schools to carry out football games at class or grade levels were less. As a team sport, football competition can not only take physical exercise, but also develop a teamwork spirit in elementary school.

2.3.4 Qingdao City Elementary School Football Field Facilities

As can be seen from Table 9, 24 primary schools in Qingdao City all have football fields, but only 6 primary schools have a standard 11-people football field. The majority of primary schools do not have a standard football field (mini football field), and can only hold a five or seven-people mini football match, accounting for 75% of the total. Insufficient sports funding and less investment inevitably led to the shortage of sports space and facilities, and was not conducive to carrying out primary school football.

Table 8
Qingdao Pupils' Football Competitions

Contest's name	Organizer	Participants
"Pepsi" king of football tournament	State General Administration of Sports, the Chinese Football Association, Qingdao Peoples Sports	4 levels of teams: Elementary, junior high, senior high, college in Qingdao
"Mayor's Cup" football match	Qingdao Football Association	Colleges, primary schools and secondary schools in Qingdao
"Coca-Cola" Cup beach football match	Qingdao Football Association	Free teams in Qingdao
"Jialiang Cup" children's football club tournament	Qingdao Football Association	Children's Football Club
"Pepsi" Qingdao People's fitness futsal tournament	Qingdao Football Association, Qingdao Peoples Sports	Free teams in Qingdao
"KFC" Cup Qingdao children's football classic	Qingdao Sports Bureau, Qingdao Football Association	Middle and primary schools in Qingdao
"Mayor Cup" football match	Qingdao Sports Bureau, District Bureau of Education and Sports	Middle and primary schools in 4 districts of Qingdao
"Sony Football Paradise"	Qingdao Football Control Center, FIFA partner Sony Corporation	Primary schools in Qingdao
Sugar club futsal tournament	Sifang District Bureau of Education and Sports, Qingdao Football Association	Free teams in Qingdao

Table 9
Qingdao City Primary School Football Field Conditions

Field	Number of school	Percentage (%)
A standard football field	6	25.0
Two and more standard football fields	0	0
A small football field	18	75.0
No football field	0	0
Total	24	100

2.4 The Factors Affecting the Development of Qingdao Primary School Football Activities

As can be seen from Table 10, the major factors constraining the development of elementary school football activities in Qingdao City include coaches' moderate professional level, lack of investment, lack of space and facilities, less leadership attention and weak parental support. In addition, low social concern, unimproved competition system, false age and excessive burden on students are also the important factors constraining the development of the elementary school football in Qingdao City.

Unsatisfactory professional level of coaches is a weak link for promoting football activities. PE teachers did not pay attention to the preparation and implementation of planned activities, and used rigid methods and means in training, resulting in students' tiresomeness, bitterness and no experience of the happiness brought by football. In addition, teachers' attitudes were not positive and caring

enough, constraining the further development of football.

Table 10
The Factors Affecting the Development of Qingdao Primary School Football Activities

Options	Number of people	Percentage (%)	Rank
Coaches' moderate professional level	17	70.8	1
Lack of investment	15	62.5	2
Inadequate space and facilities	14	58.3	3
Less leadership attention	11	45.8	4
Weak parental support	10	41.7	5
Low social concern	7	29.2	6
Unimproved competition system	7	29.2	7
False age	5	20.8	8
Excessive burden on students	3	12.5	9

Investment of funding is the foundation and guarantee for school physical education. Since in 2007 *CPC Central Committee and State Council's Opinion on Strengthening Youth Sports to Improve their Physique* was issued¹, physical education in China's primary and secondary schools has made a great progress. However, due to the inadequate attention on school sports and slow development, it still has a gap to people's expectations. This problem will remain for quite a long time. Although

¹ *CPC Central Committee and State Council's Opinion on Strengthening Youth Sports to Improve their Physique* (Zhong Fa [2007] No.7)

the state budget has clearly indicated the amount of sports funding, it has not been fully implemented onto young students, affecting the normal development of all school sports.

Field and equipment are the material guarantees of primary school football, and are the necessary conditions to carry out physical education. The qualities of school fields and facilities have a direct impact on the effectiveness of teaching and students' enthusiasm and interest in football. Small student's area of per capita sports and low facility allocation will affect the normal development of football.

3. COUNTERMEASURES TO CARRY OUT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOOTBALL IN QINGDAO CITY

3.1 Raise Awareness and Increase Funding

It is critical to integrate football development with football education, which is the key to develop football from children, from basis and from grassroots (Sun & Yi, 2016). Creation of a football atmosphere and promotion of youth football is an important way to form a grassroots football culture. Therefore, schools should strengthen exchanges and learning with other football schools and youth football clubs to allow more students to participate in school football. We should improve Qingdao football competitions, so that more students can participate into football, cultivate an interest in football, and fully enjoy the happiness brought by football. School leaders and local departments of sports and education should fully recognize the importance of the popularity of primary school football in cultivating reserve talented football players. We should increase investment in elementary school football and improve the qualities of football fields and facilities. PE teachers and school administrators should play a more important role in guiding students and parents to understand football, and correcting the motivation to send children to participate in campus football.

3.2 Strengthen the Construction of Football Teaching Staff

Football coach team building is one of the keys to improve the skill level of a country's football. We should develop and implement training plans for coaches, and take the strengthening of team building as an important task. On the one hand, we can make full use of network platform and college teachers' resource to establish an integral system of learning and training, organize trainings to primary school football teachers to improve their theoretical level and practical application. On the other hand, football teachers should be good at summing up experiences in teachings and trainings. They should be

evaluated on a regular basis so as to promote continuous learning.

3.3 Strengthen the Construction of Primary School Football Curriculum

Textbook is the carrier of teaching, and its rationality, scientificity, practicality, acceptability, fitness and entertainment plays a crucial role in promoting primary and secondary football. When develop primary school football textbooks, higher authorities of education should fully take into account the subjectivity of students and scientificity of textbooks, design textbooks and carries out football activities in accordance with pupils' psychological and physiological characteristics (Yan, 2002). Football textbook should be consistent with the law of growth of primary school students, and lay stress on the two important features of fitness and entertainment. The primary schools in all districts should adopt a flexible, environment-concerned and individuality-concerned teaching method. If comparatively difficult skills or complicated movements exist in textbook, and students are not able to easily grasp the essentials but can get hurt, the textbook should be deleted. Secondly, according to the characteristics of football teaching, classroom teaching should fully reflect personalized and diversified teaching forms and multilateral interactions between teachers and students. The schools which can afford should organize teaching by means of modern teaching methods. Finally, schools should make full use of football fields and teaching resources to develop extra-curricular football activities, enriching the ways in which students participate in football.

CONCLUSION

The Notice on the Issuance of Chinese Football Reform and Development Overall Plan issued by the State Council in 2015² takes the development of campus football and community football as an important aspect of football reform. The problem of China's grassroots football lies in campus football. Heavy cultural course learning, neglect of physical education in primary and secondary schools are the most direct cause of our failure to truly develop football from children (Xu & Pu, 2014). Football is deeply loved by Qingdao pupils. The pupils are more concerned about football, and most of them are willing to participate in football. The school football culture atmosphere is relatively better, and school leadership is more supportive for carrying out campus football activities. Qingdao primary school football teachers have a younger age structure, and most of them have a bachelor degree, but their professional title structure and overall skill level are not high and need to be improved. We should increase investment in school football teachers, so that more

² *The Notice on the Issuance of Chinese Football Reform and Development Overall Plan* (Guo Ban Fa [2015] No. 11)

high-level coaches and teachers can give instructions in designated schools on a regular basis to improve primary school football teachers' teaching ability and overall professional level. The major factors affecting the development of Qingdao city elementary school football include unsatisfactory overall professional level of coaches, insufficient investment fund, insufficient space, equipment and facilities, less attention from the leadership and low support from parents. The leaders at all levels in Qingdao city should attach importance to carrying out primary school football activities, increase the attention to football, increase the investment to campus football, improve school football field, equipment, facilities, resolve the treatment of teachers and improve football teachers' enthusiasm in training and competition.

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