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Development of Management Guidelines to Promote Taiji Rouliqiu Clubs in Pingxiang City, Jiangxi Province, the People's Republic of China

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Taiichi softball has gained increasing attention in the Pingxiang city club, across China; however, in Jiangxi province, its development is constrained by inconsistent management practices, limited resources, and the absence of structured operational guidelines. Strengthening club management is essential for ensuring sustainable growth, increased participation among middle-aged women, and improved sport quality. This study aimed to develop comprehensive management guidelines to promote the Taiji softball club in Pingxiang City, Jiangxi province, based on established management theories.

Methodology: A mixed-methods design was adopted. Quantitative data were collected from 291 middle-aged women in 6 communities in Ping Xiang city through a validated questionnaire (IOC = 1.00). Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with seven experts and a focus group discussion with seven specialists, followed by final verification using the connoisseurship technique. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.

Results: The current management situation was rated high in planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Based on the findings, 36 management guidelines were developed: 8 for planning, 8 for organizing, 8 for leading, and 8 for controlling. Experts confirmed that the guidelines are feasible, relevant, and suitable for strengthening rugby club operations in secondary schools.

Conclusion: The finalized guidelines provide a clear, evidence-based framework to support the sustainable development of Taichi ball clubs in Jiangxi Province. These guidelines can also serve as a model for other regions seeking to improve community-sport program management.

Keywords: Management Guidelines; Taiji Rouliqiu Club; Community Sports Management; Middle-aged Women; Sport Promotion

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Introduction

Taiji softball, a modern traditional sport developed in Beijing in the early 1990s, has become an important component of China's community fitness movement due to its accessibility, cultural heritage, and health benefits, particularly for middle-aged and older adults (Su, 2016; Zheng, 2006). Aligned with national policies such as Healthy China 2030 and the National Fitness Plan (2021–2025), Taiji softball has been increasingly promoted as a community-based physical activity that supports public health, active aging, and social cohesion (General Administration of Sport of China [GASC], 2021). Despite its recognized value, the development and management of community Taiji softball clubs in Pingxiang City, Jiangxi Province**,** remain insufficiently structured and lack systematic governance frameworks.

Existing community softball clubs in Pingxiang typically operate through informal arrangements without standardized planning or long-term development strategies. Many clubs depend heavily on volunteer-led initiatives, resulting in inconsistent instructional quality, limited administrative capacity, and unstable organizational structures (Li & Wang, 2023). Additionally, coordination between municipal sports authorities, local community centers, and club leaders remains weak, restricting access to resources, facilities, and professional training. These systemic limitations hinder the sustainable development of Taiji softball and reduce its potential contribution to community health promotion (Yang & Fu, 2020).

Furthermore, most Taichi softball clubs do not employ structured monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess training quality, participant progress, or organizational performance. Without systematic oversight, clubs struggle to maintain high standards of instruction, ensure member retention, and align activities with policy objectives under the National Fitness Plan (An et al., 2022). These challenges highlight the urgent need for a scientifically grounded management guideline that integrates planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (POLC) functions. The POLC framework has been widely recognized as an effective model for enhancing efficiency, leadership, and accountability within sport organizations (Koontz & Weihrich, 2010; LibreTexts, 2024).

Given the rapid increase in the elderly population in Jiangxi Province and the rising demand for community-based physical activity programs, the absence of standardized management practices limits the capacity of Taichi softball clubs to serve residents effectively (Liu, 2022). Developing a comprehensive management guideline tailored to the sociocultural and administrative context of Pingxiang City is therefore essential. Such a guideline would strengthen operational structures, support leadership development, optimize training systems, and enhance the long-term sustainability of Taichi softball clubs.

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This study is significant because it directly supports national priorities for public health and community sports under Healthy China 2030. It also contributes theoretically by applying the POLC management framework originally conceptualized by Fayol (1949) to a traditional Chinese sport within a contemporary community setting. Practically, the study will provide a clear and actionable model that can be implemented by sport administrators, club managers, and Taichi softball instructors in Pingxiang. The results will further serve as a replicable framework for other regions in China seeking to promote traditional sports through structured, effective community management (Philosophy of Management of Henri Fayol, 2022).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to develop evidence-based management guidelines to promote Taichi softball clubs in Pingxiang city in Jiangxi Province, and (2) to confirm the feasibility and applicability of these guidelines through expert evaluation. The ultimate goal is to enhance the quality and sustainability of the Taichi softball club and contribute to national sport development objectives.

Objectives

1. To develop management guidelines to promote the Taichi softball club in Pingxiang city, Jiangxi province, the People's Republic of China

2. To confirm the management guideline to promote the Taichi softball club in Pingxiang city, Jiangxi province, the People's Republic of China

Literature Review

1. Middle School Rugby Education Practice

Taiji softball has developed from an emerging folk activity into a systematically practiced community sport due to its low-impact movement, cultural symbolism, and suitability for middle-aged and older adults (Su, 2016; Zheng, 2006). Studies emphasize that Taiji softball contributes to improvements in balance, coordination, flexibility, and overall well-being by combining principles of Taiji with racket-based movement patterns, making it an effective activity for promoting health at the community level (Yuan, 2020). Research further highlights that the sport aligns with national policy directives, especially Healthy China 2030 and the National Fitness Plan, which aim to expand traditional sports and promote lifelong physical activity at the grassroots level (General Administration of Sport of China [GASC], 2021).

2. Taichi softball Club Management and Policy making Based on POLC Theory

Evidence from organizational and community-sports literature indicates that Taiji softball clubs serve as essential units for sustaining participation and delivering structured programs. However, many clubs, including those in Pingxiang City, face challenges such as unclear

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administrative systems, fragmented leadership, inadequate instructor training, and limited coordination with local sport authorities (Li & Wang, 2023; Yang & Fu, 2020). These management gaps reduce efficiency and hinder long-term sustainability. Literature on sport governance also suggests that adopting formal management models, particularly the POLC framework (Planning, Organizing, Leading, and Controlling), can significantly enhance operational effectiveness in community sport organizations (Koontz & Weihrich, 2010; LibreTexts, 2024). Note an absence of standardized guidelines, performance monitoring tools, and evaluation mechanisms for Taiji softball clubs. This leads to variations in program quality and unequal access to participation opportunities, which is especially problematic in small and medium-sized cities like Pingxiang (An et al., 2022). Research on aging and public health underscores growing community demand for safe, accessible physical activities and identifies Taiji softball as a promising intervention for promoting active aging, social connection, and quality of life among older adults (Liu, 2022). Collectively, the literature concludes that without a structured management system, Taiji softball clubs may be unable to adapt to rising community needs. Therefore, developing comprehensive management guidelines tailored to Pingxiang's sociocultural and administrative context is essential for ensuring standardized club operations and sustainable development.

3. Model Building Methods and POLC Theory

Developing a management model for Piangxing City Taichi softball club requires integrating theoretical foundations with empirical data. Effective sport management models must reflect organizational logic while responding to local conditions such as club resources, stakeholder expectations, and regional development priorities (Burton & Peachey, 2014). Model construction typically begins with a comprehensive literature review, followed by empirical inquiry through questionnaires, expert interviews, and focus group discussions. These methods provide essential insights into existing barriers, resource gaps, and operational needs (Eime et al., 2013). The POLC framework provides a systematic basis for structuring model components: planning (goal setting, resource analysis), organizing (roles, structures, partnerships), leading (motivation and culture-building), and controlling (evaluation, safety, quality assurance). Final model validation commonly involves expert review, iterative refinement, and alignment with established management and sport standards (Burton & Peachey, 2014).

Through this structured, evidence-based methodology, the resulting Thichi softball management model becomes practical, adaptable, and suitable for guiding sustainable Thichi softball development in Pingxiang city.

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Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is structured into three interconnected components: Input, Process, and Output. This framework integrates theoretical foundations, contextual analysis, and methodological approaches to develop management guidelines for promoting rugby clubs in secondary schools in Shandong Province.

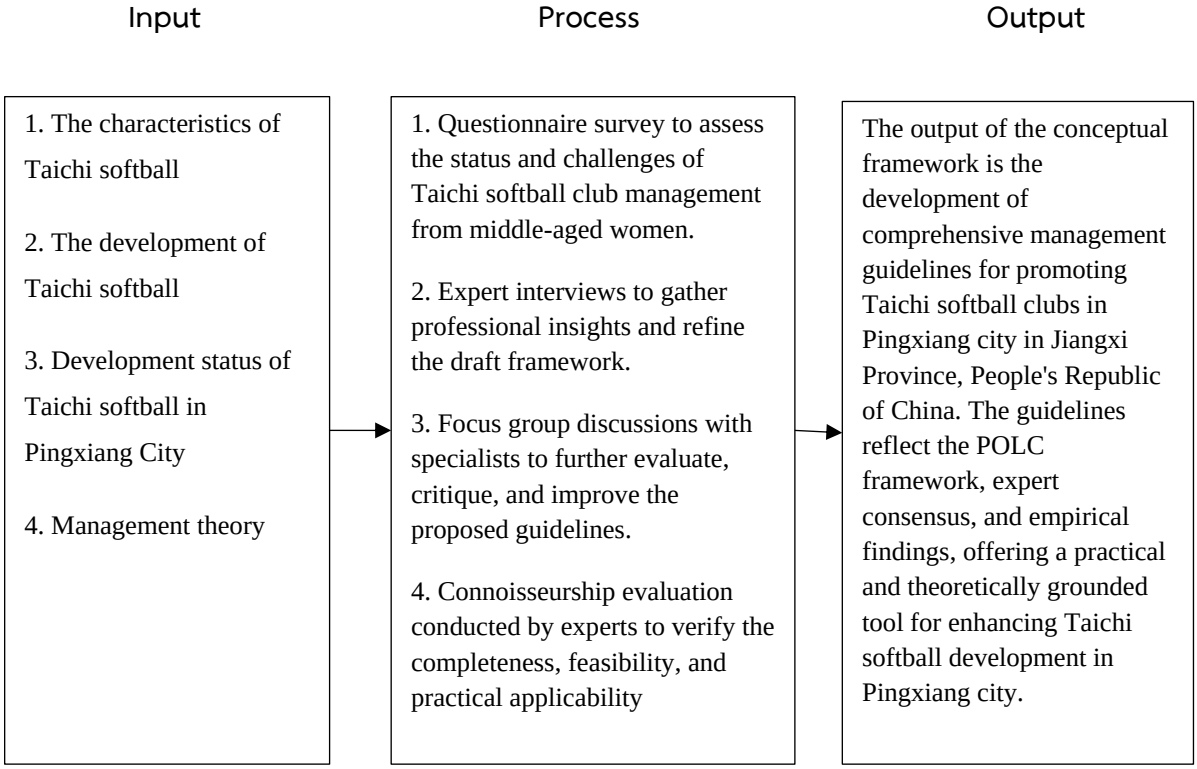


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of members of Taichi Softball clubs in 6 communities in Ping Xiang city in Jiangxi Province, including 1206 middle-aged women enrolled in Taichi Softball clubs during the 2024 academic year. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table at a 95% confidence level, resulting in 291 middle-aged women selected as the study sample. Simple random sampling was used independently for middle-aged women in each Taichi Softball club to ensure representativeness and minimize selection bias.

Experts for Instrument Validation

A panel of five experts, two secondary school principals, one senior physical education teacher, and two rugby coaches or club managers, evaluated the questionnaire and interview

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guide using the Index of Item–Objective Congruence (IOC). All experts possessed at least twelve years of professional experience in education, sports management, or rugby coaching. Their assessments ensured clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives, leading to refinements before field application.

Qualitative Interview Experts

For qualitative data collection, five additional experts (Two Taichi Softball coaches, two community managers, and one Taichi Softball training participant) participated in semi-structured interviews. Their insights into Taichi Softball club development in Pingxiang City contributed directly to identifying key components for constructing management guidelines.

Research Instruments

Four research instruments were developed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data for this study. Each instrument was created from a review of relevant literature and refined through expert validation to ensure content validity and alignment with the research objectives: 1. Questionnaires for Teachers and Students 2. Semi-Structured Interview Guide 3. Focus Group Discussion Outline 4. Connoisseurship Evaluation Form.

Data Collection

A mixed-methods approach was adopted. Quantitative data were collected through online questionnaires distributed to 291 middle-aged women participants via the Wenjuanxing platform. Qualitative data were gathered through five expert interviews, followed by a focus group discussion with seven experts, who refined the draft guidelines. Finally, seven experts conducted a connoisseurship evaluation to confirm the accuracy, feasibility, and practical relevance of the finalized management guidelines.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (SD), interpreted according to Likert-scale criteria based on Best and Kahn (1998). Qualitative data from interviews, focus group discussions, and connoisseurship evaluations were analyzed through content analysis, which identified recurring themes and synthesized expert recommendations. This integrated analytical approach ensured a rigorous foundation for developing and validating the management guidelines.

Results

This research aimed to develop and confirm management guidelines for promoting Taichi softball clubs in Pingxiang city in Jiangxi Province, the People's Republic of China. The results are presented in five parts: Part 1: Personal Data of Respondents, Part 2: Expert Interviews and IOC

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Validation, Part 3: Development of Draft Guidelines, Part 4: Suitability and Feasibility Assessment, and Part 5: Finalized Management Guidelines.

Part 1: Personal Data of Respondents

A total of 291respondents participated in the quantitative survey, consisting of middle-aged women from six clubs in Pingxiang city. Age-wise, the largest proportion of respondents were middle-aged women 50-59 years (49.84%), middle-aged women 40-49 years (39.51%), and 60 years and up (10.65%). This indicates that middle-aged women are increasingly embracing Taichi softball not only for fitness but also as part of a healthy lifestyle. Reflects the inclusive potential of these activities. In terms of income, most participants reported middle-income levels, particularly in the 6001–8000 RMB range. This suggests that Taichi softball clubs are generally accessible to working-class and moderately affluent individuals, which aligns with the public service nature of community-based sports programs.

The educational background of participants was relatively low, with more than half holding a Secondary school diploma and a significant portion currently pursuing a master's degree.

This reflects a well-informed group with the capacity to appreciate the cultural and health value of traditional physical practices. As for Taichi softball training experience, most respondents had practiced for 1-3 years or more, indicating a strong level of commitment and long-term engagement. This long-term practice base provides a stable foundation for clubs to develop systematic training, promote continuity, and identify potential trainers from within the community.

. **Part 2: Expert Interviews and IOC Validation**

Semi-structured interview items were developed based on the POLC management framework: Planning, Organizing, Leading, and Controlling. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire and interview guide were reviewed by five experts in educational administration, physical education, and rugby coaching using the Index of Item–Objective Congruence (IOC), with all items achieving acceptable IOC scores (≥ 1.00).

Following the validation process, five experts, including two Taichi Softball coaches, two community managers, and one Taichi Softball training participant, were interviewed. Thematic analysis revealed several key issues affecting rugby club development: In *Planning*, experts emphasized the need for participatory planning and data-driven strategies that align with the health, social, and cultural needs of middle-aged women. In *Organizing,* they noted the importance of transparent resource allocation, equitable access to facilities, and decentralized management to empower local sub-clubs. For *leading,* experts highlighted that leaders should adopt participative and motivational approaches, focusing on empathy, inspiration, and community cohesion rather than authority. In *Controlling,* they stressed the need for digitalized evaluation systems, transparent reporting, and feedback integration to ensure continuous

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improvement. Overall, the experts concurred that promoting inclusiveness, accountability, and long-term sustainability is essential to strengthening Taichi Softball club management and community development.

Part 3: Development of Draft Guidelines

Using data from the literature review, questionnaire findings, and expert interviews, draft management guidelines were created according to the POLC framework: **Planning** – incorporates stakeholder feedback and community needs, which is essential for guiding Taiji Rouliqiu development in Pingxiang. Planning must align with local health and cultural goals while defining measurable indicators and sustainable budget strategies. Collaboration with health bureaus and sports authorities ensures policy support and long-term program viability. **Organizing** – requires a clear organizational structure, transparent resource management, and digital systems to support efficient operations. Collaboration with local authorities and universities, along with mentorship and inclusive participation, strengthens community engagement. Continuous leadership and management training is essential for sustaining effective club governance. **Leading** – requires a participative, supportive environment that promotes motivation, empowerment, and positive role modeling. Continuous training in emotional intelligence, communication, and group facilitation strengthens leader–member relationships and enhances teamwork. Recognition systems and peer mentoring further encourage engagement and help develop new community leaders. **Controlling** – a structured monitoring and evaluation system supported by digital tracking tools and standardized assessment criteria. Regular internal and external reviews, combined with transparent reporting and feedback mechanisms, ensure continuous improvement and accountability. Incorporating self-evaluation and safety audits further strengthens program quality and member well-being.

Part 4: Suitability and Feasibility Assessment

A focus group of seven experts, including Taichi softball coaches, the head of Taichi softball training, the community head, and Taichi softball training participants, reviewed the draft guidelines. All participants had at least ten years of relevant professional experience. The experts affirmed that the guidelines were appropriate, feasible, and relevant to the context of Pingxiang city in Jiangxi Province. Key recommendations included: emphasize establishing a structured, participatory management system that integrates strategic planning, inclusive organizational practices, and inspirational leadership to support women's engagement in Taiji Rouliqiu. Strengthening cooperation between clubs, local authorities, and health agencies is essential for resource sharing and sustainable development. Digital tools, transparent reporting, and standardized monitoring mechanisms ensure accountability and continuous quality improvement.

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Comprehensive training for coaches, administrators, and emerging community leaders further enhances long-term club effectiveness and community impact.

Part 5: Finalized Management Guidelines

After final validation through connoisseurship evaluation by seven senior experts, the management guidelines were finalized as follows: **Planning** – incorporating stakeholder feedback and community needs is essential for guiding Taiji Rouliqiu development in Pingxiang. Planning must align with local health and cultural goals while defining measurable indicators and sustainable budget strategies. Collaboration with health bureaus and sports authorities ensures policy support and long-term program viability. **Organizing** – requires a clear organizational structure, transparent resource management, and digital systems to support efficient operations. Collaboration with local authorities and universities, along with mentorship and inclusive participation, strengthens community engagement. Continuous leadership and management training is essential for sustaining effective club governance. **Leading** – requires a participative, supportive environment that promotes motivation, empowerment, and positive role modeling. Continuous training in emotional intelligence, communication, and group facilitation strengthens leader–member relationships and enhances teamwork. Recognition systems and peer mentoring further encourage engagement and help develop new community leaders. **Controlling** – a structured monitoring and evaluation system supported by digital tracking tools and standardized assessment criteria. Regular internal and external reviews, combined with transparent reporting and feedback mechanisms, ensure continuous improvement and accountability. Incorporating self-evaluation and safety audits further strengthens program quality and member well-being.

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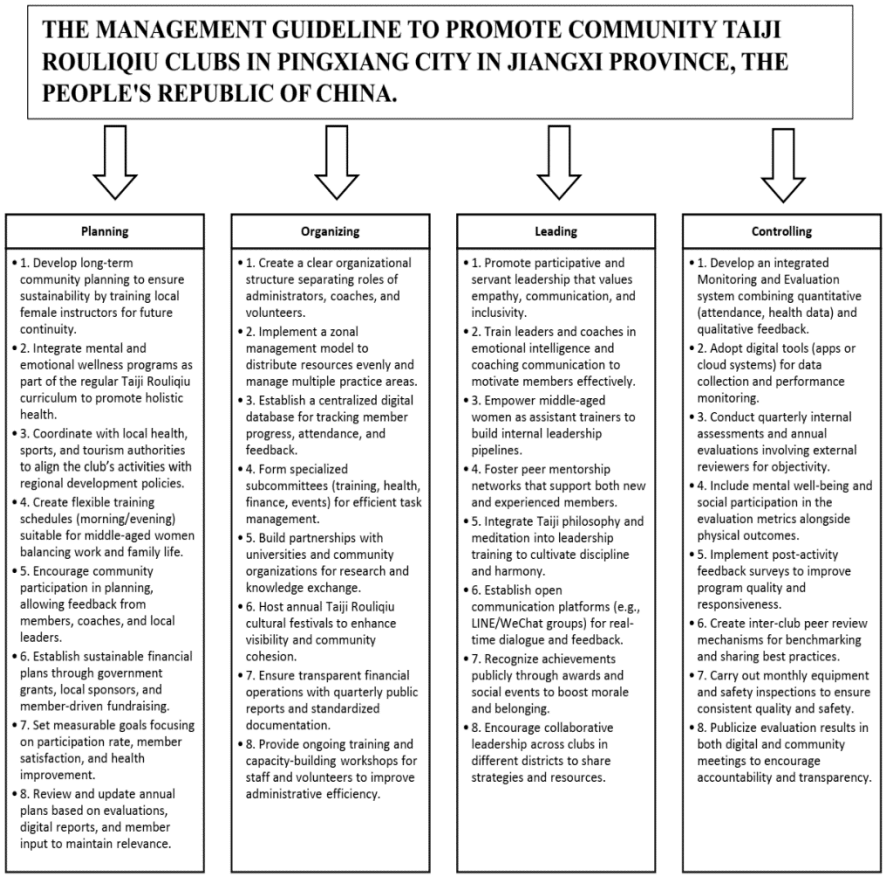


Figure 2 Management Guidelines for Promoting Taichi softball Clubs in Pingxiang city in Jiangxi Province

Discussion

1. Planning

The research findings highlight that effective planning in community Taichi softball clubs must integrate long-term vision, health-oriented strategies, and community collaboration. These findings are consistent with the perspective of Burton and Peachey (2014), who highlighted that effective sport development requires systematic management structures and policy alignment that are responsive to local contexts. The planning framework proposed in this study—emphasizing collaboration with local health and tourism agencies, sustainable financial planning, and flexible program schedules for women aged 40–60—directly responds to structural and managerial gaps identified in prior research. Similarly, Eime et al. (2013) emphasized that planning approaches grounded in community participation enhance individual motivation and sustained engagement, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of community-based sport and health initiatives. The integration of measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within this study's

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planning framework corresponds to Robbins and Coulter's (2022) notion that planning enhances organizational adaptability and goal achievement. Furthermore, Consistent with the current study, Sport Management: Principles and applications emphasize that effective community sport planning must be culturally responsive and aligned with local social contexts. Building on this perspective, the present study extends existing knowledge by integrating strategic planning principles with cultural sensitivity, thereby promoting both wellness and long-term sustainability in community sport management, particularly in the context of Taiji softball (Hoye et al., 2018).

2. Organizing

The organizing component reflects the establishment of structured systems that improve coordination and efficiency. The experts recommended clear role definitions, subcommittees, and digitalized administration, consistent with Koontz and Weihrich's (2010) principle of coordination and division of labor. This finding resonates with Su (2016), who found that the sustainable development of Taichi softball requires standardized organizational systems and collaboration between public agencies and community groups. Moreover, the introduction of digital management systems mirrors Yuan (2020), who highlighted that MOOCs and digital learning expand access to Taichi softball instruction and enhance monitoring efficiency. These digital practices also echo global trends in community sports. As demonstrated by OECD (2019), the use of digital information systems enhances participation tracking, data accessibility, and transparency, thereby supporting more effective monitoring and accountability in organizational and community-based programs.

3. Leading

The leadership findings emphasize participatory and empathetic approaches that encourage inclusivity and empowerment among middle-aged women. This perspective aligns with Goleman (2017), who defined emotional intelligence as a core element of effective leadership. The study's emphasis on servant leadership and motivation through Taiji philosophy parallels Hoye et al. (2018), who discussed participative governance as a foundation for sustainable community sports organizations. Additionally, Zhou (2006) argued that leadership in Taichi softball extends beyond authority, incorporating moral and philosophical dimensions. This research supports that view, proposing leadership rooted in cultural wisdom and mindfulness. The empowerment of women as assistant trainers also reflects This finding is consistent with Goleman (2017), who emphasized that participatory and emotionally intelligent leadership empowers individuals, thereby strengthening self-efficacy and engagement in community health promotion efforts.

4. Controlling

The control mechanisms outlined in the management guideline combine digital evaluation, member feedback, and safety assessments. This reflects Koontz and O'Donnell's (1976) concept

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of control as a continuous improvement process. Burton & Peachey (2014 also emphasized establishing national performance systems for Taichi softball, an objective that this study operationalizes at the community level through structured monitoring and reporting. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative evaluation indicators reflects Deming's (1986) total quality management principles, ensuring ongoing feedback for adaptive improvement. Furthermore, the study supports OECD (2019), which found that technology-based evaluation enhances accountability and evidence-based decision-making.

Overall, the findings align with national and international evidence indicating that successful community sport development requires strategic planning, organizational coordination, leadership enhancement, and systematic control mechanisms. The management guidelines developed in this study address each of these dimensions and were validated by experts as feasible and appropriate for promoting Taichi softball clubs in Pingxiang City. These guidelines provide a structured pathway for expanding, strengthening, and sustaining Taichi softball participation within China's evolving community sport and public health framework.

Recommendation

1. Strengthen Strategic and Culturally Responsive Planning. It is recommended that Taichi softball clubs in Pingxiang adopt long-term strategic plans that integrate community participation, cultural values, and health-promotion goals. Clubs should collaborate closely with local health bureaus, community committees, and tourism departments to ensure sustainable program development, resource availability, and alignment with municipal policies supporting active aging and traditional sports.

2. Enhance Organizational Capacity and Leadership Development. Taichi softball clubs should establish clear organizational structures, improve management competency, and invest in continuous leadership training for coaches, administrators, and community volunteers. Developing peer-mentoring systems, empowering women leaders, and implementing transparent operational procedures will strengthen club governance and support long-term growth and member engagement.

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