

## Original Paper

# Research on the Promotion Mechanism of Sports Participation in Children and Adolescents Based on Social Cognitive Theory

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### Abstract

*This study aims to explore the promotion mechanism of children and adolescents' sports participation, based on social cognitive theory. By analyzing the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the internal mechanisms of children and adolescents' participation in sports, and provide theoretical support for promoting their physical and mental health development. The study adopted various research methods, including literature review, expert interviews, observation, and teaching experiments, to systematically analyze the elements and promotion mechanisms of children and adolescents' participation in sports. The research results show that social cognitive theory plays a crucial role in interpreting children and adolescents' sports participation behavior, cognitive processes, and emotional experiences. In terms of practice, research has proposed multiple strategies, including innovating the teaching mode of physical education for children and adolescents, integrating sports training camps with social cognitive theory, and designing intervention programs for children and adolescents in sports participation based on social cognitive theory. Future research directions include providing diverse role models, encouraging diverse ways of social participation, and establishing a positive sense of social identity to further promote the practice and development of sports participation among children and adolescents.*

### Keywords

*Social cognitive theory, Sports participation of children and adolescents, Promotion mechanism*

## 1. Research Background

Contemporary China regards sports and health as an important component of its overall development strategy, as reflected in policy documents such as the "Healthy China 2030" Plan Outline and the "Notice of the State Council on Issuing the National Fitness Plan (2021-2025)". These policy documents focus on physical health intervention plans, especially targeting key populations such as

children, adolescents, and women, to promote their participation in sports and promote the development of national fitness. These policy developments are based on a profound understanding of social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the impact of the social environment on individual cognition and behavior, particularly on children and adolescents. Design a physical health intervention plan for key populations, focusing on establishing a multi-level support system, including families, schools, and communities. The participation and guidance of parents, the demonstration of teachers and the design of school curriculum, as well as the utilization of community organized sports activities and social media platforms, all aim to promote active sports participation of children and adolescents through the shaping of social environment and role construction. The introduction of these policies not only supports the cause of national fitness, but also provides practical cases and policy support for the academic community, emphasizing the understanding of social cognitive theory and calling for deepening research on this theory to promote the participation of children and adolescents in sports in a more systematic and scientific way, laying a solid foundation for their physical and mental health and comprehensive development.

## **2. Analysis of Theoretical Basis**

Social cognitive theory and emotional socialization theory play a crucial role in studying the participation of children and adolescents in sports. Social cognitive theory emphasizes that individuals form self-identity and identity through observation and participation in social interactions, especially in the field of sports, where individual sports identity is shaped through participation in sports experiences. Social interaction is crucial for shaping individual cognition and identity in team collaboration and socialization. The theory of emotional socialization highlights the importance of emotions in sports. Individuals acquire emotional knowledge and experience through social interaction, which affects their emotional experiences and attitudes towards sports. The emotional support and guidance from family, peers, and coaches are crucial for the emotional experience of children and adolescents in sports. Understanding these theories helps to gain a deeper understanding of the sports participation behavior, cognition, and emotional experiences of children and adolescents, providing a theoretical basis for targeted support and intervention measures. Applying these theories to sports activities can better promote the active participation and development of children and adolescents in sports.

## **3. Analysis of the Elements of Children and Adolescents Sports Participation from the Perspective of Social Cognitive Theory**

### *3.1 Identity Construction and Sports Identity Identification*

The identity construction and motor identity recognition of children and adolescents is a complex process influenced by social cognitive theory. The formation of this identity is not only influenced by the external environment, but also closely related to the individual's internal cognitive processing. Social cognitive theory suggests that individuals shape their self-identity and identity through

observation and participation in social interactions, especially in the field of sports. The social interaction, teamwork, and individual performance experienced in sports activities all affect children and adolescents' perception of their own sports abilities and identity. Deep interviews and focus group discussions are qualitative research methods to explore this process, helping to understand individuals' cognitive and emotional experiences during exercise. When analyzing individual role cognition and self positioning in sports teams and competitions, applying the perspective of social cognitive theory can understand individuals learning and developing through observing and imitating the behavior of others, and apply these cognitive processes to the field of sports. Pay attention to the roles that individuals play in the team and their impact on self-identity, and deeply analyze the shaping effect of social interaction on individual cognition and identity. By examining individual experiences in team collaboration and personal performance, understand how they shape their perception of their own athletic abilities and identity. Through these studies, we can comprehensively understand how children and adolescents shape their sports identity through exercise experience.

### *3.2 Emotional Socialization and Sports Emotional Experience*

Emotions play a crucial role in sports, and the theory of emotional socialization provides an important perspective for explaining individual sports emotional experiences. Social cognitive theory suggests that individuals can acquire rich emotional knowledge and experience in their interactions with society. Children and adolescents acquire emotional knowledge and expressions related to sports through interactions with family, peers, coaches, and other social members in sports participation, which directly affects their emotional experience of sports. Research should delve into the shaping effect of social context on emotional experiences and its expression and regulatory mechanisms. By understanding the process of emotional socialization, theoretical guidance and practical support can be provided for promoting positive exercise experiences in children and adolescents. In depth interviews and emotional logging can explore the emotional knowledge, experiences, and specific manifestations that children and adolescents acquire during exercise. Using emotional scales and psychological measurement tools, quantitatively evaluate the degree of influence, expression patterns, and potential impact on exercise behavior of emotional experiences in different social contexts. Thoroughly analyze the emotional communication patterns and regulatory mechanisms of children and adolescents in social environments such as families, schools, and sports teams, and reveal the role of emotional socialization in shaping the emotional experience of sports. This comprehensive analysis will provide a theoretical basis for a deeper understanding of the emotional experience and emotional socialization process of children and adolescents during exercise.

### *3.3 Social Norms and Manipulation of Sports Behavior*

Social cognitive theory highlights the significant impact of social environment on individual cognitive and behavioral development, especially in terms of motor behavior manipulation. Children and adolescents often consider the impact of social norms, expectations of others, and social rewards and punishments on their behavior when participating in sports activities. The social norms and behavioral

manipulation mechanisms in families, schools, and social environments have a profound impact on them. Research should delve into the constraining and shaping effects of social norms on children and adolescents' motor behavior, as well as individuals' cognition and response to social norms in different social contexts. By observing individual sports behavior and attitudes in different social contexts, as well as exploring the constraining and guiding effects of social norms on their behavior, we can deeply analyze the interaction between sports behavior and social norms. Using questionnaire surveys and behavioral experiments, quantitatively analyze the degree and ways in which social factors such as family, school, and social networks affect the manipulation of motor behavior in children and adolescents, as well as individuals' cognition and response to social norms. In addition, we will delve into the impact pathways of social norms on sports behavior decision-making, including cognitive processing and behavioral response mechanisms, as well as the actual effects and limitations of sports behavior manipulation. This comprehensive research method will help to reveal the underlying mechanisms by which social norms affect the motor behavior of children and adolescents.

#### *3.4 Character Model and Movement Behavior Simulation*

Individuals learn and adapt to the social environment by observing and imitating the behavior of others (Zhang & Huang, 2021). In the field of sports, children and adolescents often selectively imitate role models that are considered trustworthy and respected. These role models include social members such as family members, coaches, and peers. An in-depth analysis of the impact mechanism of different role models on the motor behavior of children and adolescents, exploring the cognitive processing and behavioral choices of individuals in the process of imitating motor behavior, can provide theoretical support and practical guidance for promoting positive motor behavior. Through in-depth interviews and behavioral observations, understand the behaviors and attitudes of children and adolescents selectively imitating different role models during exercise, as well as the motivations and results of imitating behaviors. At the same time, questionnaire surveys and field observations are used to quantitatively analyze the degree and manner of the impact of role models on sports behavior imitation, as well as the social expectations and personal demands considered by individuals in the imitation process. In addition, explore the impact mechanism of role models on motor behavior imitation, including cognitive processing and behavior selection processes, as well as the impact of imitation behavior on individual motor performance and self-awareness. This comprehensive research method will contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanism of role models in simulating motor behavior in children and adolescents.

#### *3.5 Group Dynamics and Sports Socialization*

In the field of sports, the sports social behavior of children and adolescents is not only influenced by internal factors, but also constrained by group dynamics and social interaction. Collaboration and interaction within a sports team, communication within social circles, and socio-cultural influences all directly affect an individual's sports social behavior. An in-depth analysis of the impact mechanisms of these factors on the motor social behavior of children and adolescents can better understand the social

behavior patterns and motivational mechanisms of individuals in different social contexts. The study of the relationship between group dynamics and sports social behavior not only reveals the essence of sports social behavior, but also provides theoretical basis and practical guidance for promoting its positive performance. Using social network analysis methods, we will delve into the identity construction and social patterns of children and adolescents in sports social networks, as well as the impact mechanism of group dynamics on sports social behavior. Using qualitative and quantitative research methods, explore the impact patterns and pathways of sports teams, social circles, and social culture on sports social behavior. By analyzing the group dynamics and social interaction patterns of sports social behavior, this study reveals the social behavior patterns and dynamic mechanisms of individuals in different social contexts, as well as the actual manifestations and influencing factors of sports social behavior. This comprehensive research method will deepen the understanding of the shaping effect of group dynamics on the motor social behavior of children and adolescents.

### *3.6 Social Support and Expectations for Sports Achievement*

Individuals often receive various forms of social support in the social environment, which has a significant impact on their expectations of athletic achievement. In the field of sports, the achievement expectations of children and adolescents are influenced by both internal and external factors, with social support playing a crucial role. Different forms of support from family, coaches, and peers enhance an individual's expectations and confidence in athletic achievement, promoting their level of athletic performance. A thorough study of the relationship between social support and sports achievement expectations can help reveal its mechanism of action during the exercise process, providing theoretical and practical support for promoting positive sports behavior and achievement in children and adolescents. Through in-depth interviews and observations, understand the shaping and influencing pathways of different forms of social support on sports achievement expectations, as well as individual cognition and reactions to them. Using questionnaire surveys and field observations, quantitatively analyze the ways and degrees in which social support from family, coaches, and peers affects sports achievement expectations, as well as the association between social support and sports achievement expectations. Further explore the long-term impact of social support on individual motor behavior and psychological state, as well as how to enhance positive motor behavior and achievement levels in children and adolescents through social support. This comprehensive research method will contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanism by which social support shapes the expectations of children and adolescents for sports achievement.

## **4. The Integration and Application of Social Cognitive Theory and Sports Participation Practice for Children and Adolescents**

### *4.1 Innovation of Physical Education Teaching Model for Children and Adolescents and Integration of Social Cognitive Theory*

The integration of innovative teaching models and social cognitive theory has brought a new paradigm

to physical education teaching for children and adolescents. This model emphasizes the participation and interaction of students. Teachers are no longer traditional knowledge imparters, but guides and motivators, encouraging students to explore independently, cooperate in teams, and stimulate learning interest and potential. In addition, combining social cognitive theory, educators can use principles such as observational learning and role construction to design social and interactive teaching activities, stimulating students' interest and motivation in learning. The innovative teaching model also focuses on cultivating students' comprehensive literacy and abilities, not limited to skill training, but through diverse teaching methods such as gamified teaching and project-based learning, promoting students' creativity, collaborative spirit, and leadership ability, and achieving comprehensive development. Therefore, the innovation of physical education teaching mode for children and adolescents and the integration of social cognitive theory aim to provide richer and more effective physical education for children and adolescents, promote their physical and mental health and comprehensive development.

#### *4.2 Integration of Sports Training Camps for Children and Adolescents with Social Cognitive Theory*

As a specialized sports participation platform, children and adolescents sports training camps bear the responsibility of cultivating future sports talents and promoting the healthy development of children and adolescents. In this environment, social cognitive theory provides an important theoretical framework that guides coaches in their teaching and management strategies. Firstly, coaches can apply the principles of observational learning in social cognitive theory to teach skills and tactical knowledge through demonstration and imitation, enhance athletes' understanding and mastery of skills, and promote self-development in practice. Secondly, social cognitive theory emphasizes the shaping effect of social interaction on cognition and behavior. Therefore, in training camps, coaches can create a positive team atmosphere and stimulate athletes' spirit of cooperation and competitiveness through team cooperation training, situational simulation, and other methods. Finally, social cognitive theory also emphasizes the impact of role construction on individual identity and behavior. In training camps, coaches can motivate athletes to invest and take responsibility in sports by clarifying and shaping their roles, such as leaders and captains. In summary, the children and adolescents sports training camp integrates social cognitive theory, providing support for cultivating children and adolescents athletes with more comprehensive development, self-confidence, and leadership.

#### *4.3 Integration of Physical Fitness Assessment for Children and Adolescents with Social Cognitive Theory*

Integrating social cognitive theory with physical fitness assessment to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the physical abilities and behavioral characteristics of children and adolescents. Consider the impact of social environment on individual cognition and behavior, and provide a more in-depth evaluation perspective. By observing the principles of learning and imitation, evaluate the degree to which children and adolescents imitate exemplary behavior, and then evaluate their motor skills and behavioral characteristics. At the same time, the evaluation process needs to consider the individual's level of identification with social norms and role expectations, as well as their performance

in different roles. This comprehensive consideration helps evaluators to comprehensively understand the exercise behavior and social interaction of children and adolescents, providing them with more scientific and targeted guidance and support. By integrating social cognitive theory, evaluators can gain a deeper understanding of the behavior and cognitive characteristics of children and adolescent athletes, providing a more scientific and comprehensive basis for their physical fitness evaluation, and promoting the development of children and adolescent sports (Liu, 2021).

#### *4.4 Application of Interdisciplinary Research and Social Cognitive Theory in Sports Participation of Children and Adolescents*

Interdisciplinary research combines social cognitive theory with interdisciplinary knowledge such as psychology, sociology, and sports science, which helps to explore its application in the participation of children and adolescents in sports. From a psychological perspective, social cognitive theory emphasizes the social and interactive nature of individual cognition. Therefore, psychological research can explore the cognitive processing patterns and behavioral choices in children and adolescents' sports participation, as well as the impact of social interaction on their sports identity and behavior. From a sociological perspective, social cognitive theory emphasizes the shaping of individual cognition and behavior by the social environment. Therefore, sociological research can explore the social interaction patterns and support systems in children and adolescents' sports participation, as well as the influence of social norms on their sports behavior. From the perspective of sports science, social cognitive theory emphasizes the influence of role construction and imitation learning. Therefore, sports science research can explore the role identification and imitation behavior of children and adolescent athletes, as well as the influence of role models on their sports performance and self-development.

#### *4.5 Design of Intervention Program for Children and Adolescents Sports Participation Based on Social Cognitive Theory*

The design of intervention plans for children and adolescents in sports participation based on social cognitive theory should fully integrate theoretical frameworks and empirical research results, in order to effectively approach the characteristics and social environment of children and adolescents. Firstly, targeted intervention measures should be taken to address the problems and obstacles that children and adolescents face in participating in sports, such as lack of interest and self-confidence. Establishing a social support system among families, teachers, and peers aims to assist children and adolescents in overcoming various obstacles to participating in sports, thereby enhancing their enthusiasm and willingness to participate. Secondly, using the principles of role construction and imitation learning, design diverse courses and activities aimed at stimulating children and adolescents' interest and enthusiasm in sports. By setting positive examples and guidance, help them establish a correct attitude towards sports participation and cultivate healthy sports behavior habits (Zhu, 2018). Finally, we should actively promote social interaction and teamwork among children and adolescents to create a positive social environment. By organizing various team cooperation activities and collective training, we aim to cultivate the spirit of cooperation and team awareness among children and adolescents,

thereby enhancing their enthusiasm and sense of belonging in sports participation.

## **5. Practice and Prospect of Children, Children, and Adolescents Participating in Sports under the Guidance of Social Cognitive Theory**

### *5.1 Provide Diverse Role Models*

It is crucial to provide diverse role models in the participation of children and adolescents in sports practice. Different types of role models can stimulate the learning motivation and interest of children and adolescents, promoting their comprehensive development in the field of sports. By guiding children and adolescents to choose suitable role models and providing them with corresponding learning and imitation opportunities, their physical and mental health and literacy can be effectively cultivated. This diversified role model not only includes athletes or coaches, but also various roles such as sports psychologists and sports managers, providing children and adolescents with broader development space and choices.

### *5.2 Encourage Diversified Ways of Social Participation*

Encouraging diverse forms of social participation is essential in the practice of sports participation for children and adolescents. Different types of sports activities and participation methods can meet the different needs and interests of children and adolescents, promoting their comprehensive development. By providing a variety of sports activity choices and participation opportunities, children and adolescents can be stimulated to participate enthusiastically, cultivate their teamwork spirit and sense of social responsibility. This diversified way of participation not only includes individual and team sports, but also various forms of leisure sports and community activities, providing children and adolescents with broader sports experiences and growth opportunities.

### *5.3 Establishing a Positive Sense of Social Identity*

It is very important to establish a positive sense of social identity in the practice of children and adolescents participating in sports. By creating a positive social identity environment, children and adolescents can enhance their sense of identification and belonging to sports activities, promote their active participation and sustainable development. Providing support and encouragement to children and adolescents, advocating respect and tolerance, can help them establish healthy self-awareness and social relationships, thereby achieving comprehensive development of physical and mental health. In this process, families, schools, communities, and sports organizations all play important roles in creating a positive and healthy sports environment, providing strong support for the growth and development of children and adolescents.

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