

Investigating Determinants for Sustainable Development of Chinese Youth Campus Football: A Scoping Review

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the influencing factors for sustainable development of Chinese youth campus football. The research adopted the scoping review method to search and screen the Chinese core journal literature in China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Wanfang Data and VIP Database from 2016 to 2024. Based on the PRISMA-ScR checklist, 53 articles were finally included for the study. The bibliometric analysis results indicated that the research fervor within this specific field had been showing a declining tendency. Topic clustering identified 5 themes such as innovative practice of sports-education integration, modernization of the governance system, reform and development path, reality dilemma cracking, health promotion and long-term development. The results show that the sustainable development of campus football for Chinese teenagers requires further strengthening the innovative practice of integrating sports and education, standardizing the modern governance system, actively exploring the path of reform and development, improving the allocation of funds and infrastructure, strengthening the collaborative support system among families, schools and communities, and improving the competition system. These provide more continuous impetus for the high-quality development of campus football in China.

Keywords: adolescent; campus football; sustainable development; Influencing factors; scoping review

1. Introduction

For many years, the Chinese government has attached great importance to the development of football and provided strong and continuous support for its development [1]. As the core position of youth football development, campus football can not only enhance youth physique and cultivate teamwork spirit, but also has strategic significance for improving the overall level of football in our country. In recent years, with the strong support of national policies, the development of youth campus football in our country has ushered in unprecedented opportunities. Research shows that the country has successively issued a series of policy documents to promote the development of campus football, the number of students participating in campus football activities has continued to grow, and the social influence of campus football has continued to expand [2]. In addition, the good football cultural atmosphere created by the campus can not only effectively improve students' physical fitness, but also cultivate their teamwork ability and tenacious fighting spirit [3]. The social support system has a significant positive impact on youth football participation, among

which the support of parents, principals and other key subjects can significantly promote youth participation in football activities and provide an important driving force for the development of campus football [4].

However, there are still many structural challenges in the development of youth campus football in our country. Studies show that the shortage of venue resources, the uneven quality of football participation population, and the shortage of professional teachers have seriously restricted the sustainable development of campus football [5]. In addition, the single source of funding and the backwardness of campus football infrastructure have become major bottlenecks hindering the development of youth campus football [6]. In the process of implementing the campus football policy, there are problems such as insufficient authority of the executive body and low execution efficiency, which affect the realization of the expected effect of the policy [7]. The existence of these problems seriously restricts the healthy development of youth campus football. In view of this, it is of great significance to explore the factors affecting the development of youth campus football in depth. This paper will systematically review the relevant literature, sort out the existing research results, analyze the influencing factors, and provide reference for promoting the sustainable development of youth campus football in our country, in order to promote the better development of campus football in our country, cultivate more outstanding football talents, and improve the physical fitness and overall quality of youth.

2. Methods

This scoping review was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) checklist [8–11]. In order to comprehensively sort out the influencing factors of the sustainable development of youth campus football in our country and accurately grasp the research progress in this field in recent years, this study used China National Knowledge Network (CNKI), Wanfang Data and VIP database as the core literature search sources to systematically search the literature of Chinese core academic journals published between 2016 and 2024. In order to ensure the quality of the literature, this study only included academic papers that had undergone peer review, excluding non-research literature such as book reviews and conference reviews. In the specific search process, the primary search was made with campus football, youth football, school sports, and football reform as the core keywords to preliminarily understand the distribution of relevant literature and determine the main research directions and high-frequency keywords in the research field. Next, combining sustainable development, campus football development, football reserve talents, youth physical health and influencing factors, football teachers, football participation, football teaching mode, and football training, the research conducted a hierarchical search. At the same time, in order to avoid missing important literature, the research also conducted a retrospective search of the references of relevant literature to further expand the sources of literature.

In the literature screening stage, this study formulated clear inclusion and exclusion criteria: inclusion criteria included (1) research topics focused on youth campus football; (2) Chinese core journals published between 2016 and 2024; (3) research types were empirical research, theoretical discussion or policy analysis; (4) research content was aimed at practical issues in the development of campus football, such as policy implementation, resource allocation, student participation, etc. Exclusion criteria included (1) non-academic literature, such as coverage, book reviews, conference abstracts, etc.; (2) research on professional football youth training system, adult football events, etc. Content with low relevance to youth campus football was excluded. Preliminary search obtained 1291 articles, and the remaining 505 articles were found after review. According to the title, abstract and keywords of the literature, the full text was carefully read, and the literature with vague concepts and deviated research priorities was excluded. Finally, a total of 53 documents meeting the standards were included, covering policy analysis, practical exploration, theoretical construction and other dimensions, which laid a solid foundation for subsequent literature review and analysis (see Figure 1).

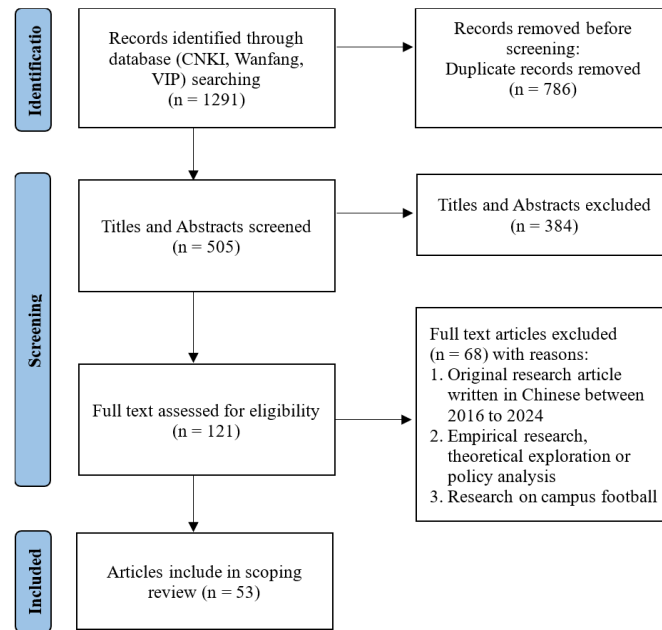


Figure 1. PRISMA ScR flow diagram reporting the search, screening, and study selection process.

3. Results

3.1. Bibliometric Analysis

As shown in Figure 2, citation analysis was carried out on the 53 included papers to understand the change trend of research heat on this topic. From 2016 to 2024, the research heat on this topic showed an overall downward trend. The peak number of papers appeared in 2018, which may be related to the release of important campus football development policies by the state, which aroused the attention of the academic community. By analyzing the papers of active researchers, it was found that Wu [12], Qiu [13] and other scholars have made outstanding achievements in this field. Their research has conducted in-depth discussions on the development direction of campus football from different angles. Further analysis of the journals to which the literature belongs found that the number of publications in sports journals accounts for a relatively large proportion, such as “Sports Culture Guide” and “Journal of Wuhan Institute of Physical Education”, etc., with a total of 38 articles published, accounting for about 71.7%. Based on the above analysis and further literature review, it is found that in the research field of sustainable development of campus football, the key content mainly focuses on the field of sports, focusing on the induction and summary of practical experience and the in-depth refinement of theory. Researchers have deeply excavated the valuable experience of campus football in teaching, training, competition organization and other practical activities, providing a solid theoretical foundation for the sustainable development of campus football.

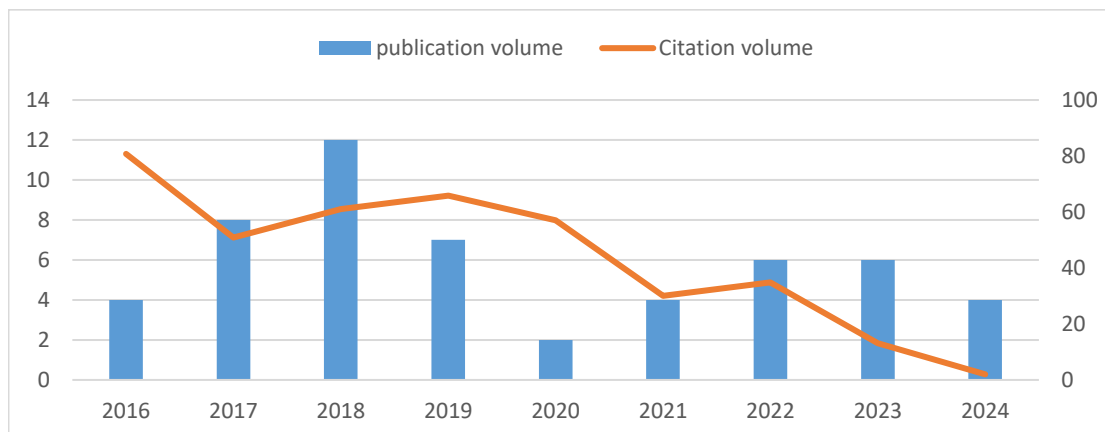


Figure 2. Annual average number of articles and citations.

In terms of theory, the integration of sports and education has been mentioned in many literatures to explore how campus football can achieve the organic combination of physical education and cultural education, and promote the all-round development of students; some studies analyze the relationship between various stakeholders in campus football activities based on stakeholder theory, providing theoretical basis for collaborative governance. However, some studies still lack clear theoretical support, and lack strong theoretical basis in explaining the phenomenon and proposing strategies. In terms of research methods, qualitative research accounts for a large proportion, mainly using case studies, interviews and other methods to deeply explore the reasons and mechanisms behind [14–17]. Quantitative research accounts for a relatively small proportion, and only a small number of studies have quantified the influencing factors through questionnaires and data analytics. For example, some literatures collect data through large-scale questionnaires and use mathematical statistical methods to analyze the impact of social support, student participation and other factors on the development of campus football [4]; there are also studies that use system dynamics to build models and simulate the development system of campus football with the help of actual survey data to quantify the mechanism of action of each factor [18]. Some of the studies used mixed research methods, using quantitative and qualitative means to improve the depth and breadth of the research. First, quantitative analysis was conducted through questionnaires to determine the key factors affecting youth participation in campus football, and then qualitative interviews were conducted on typical cases to gain a deeper understanding of how these factors work in practice, making the research conclusions more convincing [19].

3.2. Thematic Clustering

In order to clarify the core points of literature research, high-frequency word analysis was carried out on 53 literature titles (see Figure 3 for details). The list of literature titles was imported into the R language bibliometrix package for frequency statistics, and then the 20 words with the highest frequency were determined. Considering the literature screening criteria of this study, the words “youth”, “campus”, “football”, “sustainable” and “development” were specially included in the stop-word list in order to present more targeted and valuable analysis results. According to statistics, among the 53 literature titles, the frequency of “Integrated Sport and Education”, “Governance” and “Reform” ranks among the top, which fully highlights the core position of school sports in the theme of campus football research, the integration of sports and education as an important development concept, the reform as a key means to promote development, the training of talents as the core goal, and the teaching and training as the carrier of practice together constitute an important direction of campus football research.



Figure 3. Word Cloud.

This study used LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) topic model to conduct topic clustering analysis of the literature. More specifically, we implemented the LDA algorithm in Python and tuned the topic number K. The results showed that the model is less perplexing and more explanatory when $K \in [4, 7]$; among them, when $K = 5$, the model fitting effect is the best, the topic discrimination is high, and the meaningless topic is the least, thus 5 topics are finally determined. By analyzing the keywords under each topic, five possible topics are summarized, namely innovative practice of sports-education integration, modernization of the governance system, reform and development path, reality dilemma cracking, health promotion and long-term development. For example, under the topic “innovative practice of sports-education integration”, the keywords include integrated sport and education, model, teaching,

course, linkage (see Table 1). These topics reflect the core issues of current research concerns and provide a framework for subsequent in-depth analysis.

Table 1. Topics and Corresponding Keywords.

	Topics	Keywords
Topic 1	Innovative practice of sports-education integration	integrated sport and education, model, teaching, course, linkage
Topic 2	Modernization of the governance system	governance, mechanism, system, innovation, system
Topic 3	Reform and development path	reform, path, optimization, strategy, transformation
Topic 4	Reality dilemma cracking	dilemma, reality, review, appeal, contradiction
Topic 5	Health promotion and long-term development	health, evaluation, training, competition, long-term effectiveness

4. Discussion

4.1. Innovative Practice of Integration of Sports and Education

In the context of deepening the integration of physical education and promoting the all-round development of youth sports, relevant research focuses on the innovation of football education models in school education scenarios, and explores the reconstruction of curriculum systems and multi-party collaboration mechanisms. For example, previous studies have pointed out that curriculum and teaching are the core support for the sustainable development of campus football. In recent years, the reform of physical education curriculum has gradually promoted the popularization of campus football, but there is still room for optimization in teaching methods and curriculum systems [20–22]. The research points out that the implementation of the concept of integration of sports and education has gradually made football courses professional and systematic, but there are still problems of insufficient curriculum arrangement and lagging teacher training in some areas [23].

Meanwhile, the promotion of curriculum models such as “One school, one distinctive feature” and “One school, multiple distinctive features” has provided a new direction for the teaching of campus football [24]. However, in the specific implementation process, there are significant differences in the allocation of curriculum resources in schools in different regions, which restricts the overall effectiveness of curriculum reform [25]. At the same time, the innovation of football teaching mode is of great significance for improving students’ learning interest and practical skills. Studies show that the introduction of sports education mode helps to improve students’ football cognition and practical ability [26]. In addition, the current football teaching still faces the problem of disconnection between theory and practice, and teachers often find it difficult to take into account the individual differences of students in the actual teaching process [16,18]. In the future, it is necessary to further strengthen teacher training, improve the pertinence and effectiveness of football teaching, and promote the sustainable development of the campus football curriculum system [27–29].

4.2. Modernization of the Governance System

By reviewing the literature, previous studies have fully explored the key role of policy support and governance system as influencing the sustainable development of youth campus football. In recent years, national policies have played an important role in promoting the development of campus football. The model of government-led and multi-subject collaborative governance has become a trend [30]. A series of policy documents point out that the development of campus football requires the participation of the government, schools, and social forces [7,31]. However, at this stage, the policy implementation of campus football still faces certain difficulties, such as insufficient coordination between government management agencies, and uneven local implementation in the process of policy implementation [32].

Moreover, in the process of policy implementation, there are certain conflicts between the interests of schools and social institutions, resulting in low efficiency of campus football governance [31]. Previous studies have found that government departments, schools, families, and training institutions have significant conflicts of interest in the practice of activities [32]. In terms of governance system, the multi-center governance model is considered an

important path for the modernization of campus football governance [33]. The researchers analyzed the campus football governance mechanism in our country from four aspects: good governance identification mechanism, execution mechanism, guarantee mechanism and supervision and evaluation mechanism [34–36]. However, the current campus football governance in our country still lacks effective supervision mechanism and long-term incentive mechanism, resulting in low sustainability of policy implementation [12]. In the future, we should further improve the governance structure of campus football and enhance the scientificity of policy implementation to ensure the long-term and stable development of campus football [13,37].

4.3. Reform and Development Path

The reform and development of campus football requires coordinated promotion from many aspects. In terms of reform, it is necessary to promote mechanism innovation and system reform, such as strengthening the multi-departmental collaborative management system, deepening the integration of sports and education, clarifying the responsibilities and rights of both parties, and improving the operation mechanism of football talent training [26,29]. In terms of path selection, the development of campus football can be promoted by strengthening the coordination mechanism, emphasizing popularization and promotion, broadening the channels for talent cultivation, and enhancing supervision and evaluation, etc. A “one-stop” education system connecting primary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools and universities can be constructed to achieve the connection of different cultivation paths [17,27]. In terms of optimization measures, it is necessary to optimize the teaching structure of football classrooms, standardize campus football matches, strengthen the regional coordination of characteristic schools, improve the construction quality of characteristic schools, and improve the allocation of venue facilities and funds [17,38]. In terms of strategy formulation, the principal should upgrade his concept, coordinate the development of football in his school, integrate multiple forces to solve problems, take the initiative to publicize and reverse the concept of parents, and deepen teaching reform according to school conditions; the government should strengthen policy design and guide multiple subjects to cooperate to promote the development of campus football [13,39]. In terms of transformation and development, we can learn from foreign experience, encourage principals to promote educational reform and innovation, encourage parents to actively participate, and promote the transformation of campus football from scale expansion to focus on content and quality improvement [40,41].

4.4. Reality Dilemma Cracking

Adequate resource input is an important guarantee for the sustainable development of campus football. Whether it is the construction of the field, the provision of equipment, or the training of teachers and the organization of events, all require sufficient financial and material support. Research findings show that currently, the financial input for campus football in China relies on government financial support, but the problem of unbalanced fund distribution still exists [38,42,43]. Especially in rural areas, the problems of insufficient football fields and shortage of equipment are more prominent, which has affected the promotion effect of campus football [5,44]. In fact, by introducing social capital, schools can obtain more financial support and improve the level of infrastructure construction [45]. In the future, the structure of capital investment should be further optimized, support for grassroots schools should be strengthened, and the training system for football teachers should be improved to ensure a more balanced resource guarantee for campus football [46]. The research of Li and Liu [46] indicates that the participation of these social organizations has played an important role in aspects such as venue construction, equipment allocation and event organization. However, in the process of practice, the degree of participation of social capital is restricted by many policies and market environments, and a stable support system has not yet been formed [47]. Just as Wu et al.[12] pointed out, the ambiguity of policies and the instability of the market environment have led to certain concerns for social capital when participating in the development of campus football.

Furthermore, football teachers lack professional training, making it difficult to meet the teaching demands [17]. Therefore, the future development of campus football still needs to attach importance to talent cultivation and improve the professional quality and teaching ability of football teachers [48]. Similarly, other social environmental factors

will also directly affect students' willingness to participate in football. Just as Zhang [15] pointed out, the attitude of parents plays a key role in this. Parents still hold the outdated notion that football will inevitably affect their studies. To some extent, this one-sided perception hinders students' active participation in football [4]. In the future, the wide promotion of the home-school co-education model should be strengthened. Parents' recognition of campus football should be enhanced through various means, and the construction of community football culture should be actively promoted [39]. Just as Zhang and Sun [49] suggested, only by forming a good situation of collaborative cooperation among families, schools and communities can a solid foundation be provided for the sustainable development of campus football. Furthermore, the severe absence of community football culture leaves students lacking external environmental support for long-term participation in football outside the campus. Just as Yan et al. [50] emphasized, as an important place for students' daily life, the lack of football culture in the community has a negative impact on students' long-term participation.

4.5. Health Promotion and Long-Term Development

The long-term planning of campus football in our country has been initially established, and it has played an active role in policies, resource allocation and competition system. However, although the long-term development strategy has become systematic, it still faces many challenges in the implementation process, such as imperfect implementation mechanism and inconsistent local development pace [40, 51]. To ensure the sustainable development of campus football, it is necessary to strengthen the optimization of the implementation path. For example, regularly evaluate the development effectiveness of campus football in various places and make dynamic adjustments according to the evaluation results [52]; strengthening the stability of policy implementation and ensuring that campus football development in different regions is in step is also key to improving sustainability [6, 53]. In addition, a sound competition system is the key support for the sustainable development of campus football. In recent years, our country's youth football competition system has been continuously improved, and the connection between campus football and professional football has gradually strengthened [54]. However, the current competition system still has problems such as unclear layering and imperfect competition rules [55, 56]. The experience of foreign youth training systems shows that the establishment of an elite football training system is conducive to improving the quality of talent training [41]. For example, some districts have tried to build a three-way "campus-social-professional" competition system to increase students' chances of participating [57]. In the future, China's campus football competition system should further optimize the hierarchical management, strengthen the linkage with professional football, and improve the competition supervision and evaluation mechanism to promote the sustainable development of campus football [14].

5. Conclusions

This study analyzes the key factors influencing the sustainable development of youth campus football and conducts in-depth discussions from five aspects: integration of sports and education, modern governance system, reform and development, resolution of practical predicaments, health promotion, and long-term planning. The results show that the development of campus football requires further strengthening of policy coordination and improving the stability and pertinence of policy implementation. Optimize the teaching system, construct a scientific curriculum structure and teaching mode, and improve the professional quality of teachers; Promote the integration of multiple resources, improve the allocation of funds and infrastructure, and enhance the efficiency of resource utilization; Enhance social identity and strengthen the collaborative support system among families, schools and communities; Improve the competition system, establish a hierarchical and multi-dimensional event system, and provide a broader development platform for teenagers. In addition, the institutionalization of campus football should be deepened, and a stable development framework should be established to ensure the long-term stable operation of campus football and cultivate more high-level talents for the development of football in our country.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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