

THE INTEGRATION OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN ELDERLY SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN GUANGZHOU: A MULTI-PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This study investigates the role of sports activities in promoting cultural integration and identity construction among elderly individuals in Guangzhou, a multicultural urban center. It examines how traditional practices like tai chi and lion dance coexist and blend with modern activities such as yoga and Zumba, fostering social cohesion, preserving cultural heritage, and supporting individual identity transformation. Findings highlight the interplay between cultural adaptation and sports as a medium for intergenerational and cross-cultural engagement. The study also provides actionable strategies for community initiatives and policy development to enhance elderly participation in culturally integrated sports.

Keywords: Cultural integration; Elderly sports; Identity construction; Traditional sports; Multicultural urban context

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Significance

Guangzhou, a dynamic metropolis in southern China, is undergoing rapid demographic changes, with an aging population growing in parallel to increasing cultural diversification. By 2023, the elderly population (60 years and older) in Guangzhou surpassed 20% of the total population, reflecting broader demographic shifts observed in China and other aging societies. Alongside this aging trend, the city is becoming increasingly multicultural due to extensive migration, both domestic and international, driven by globalization. These demographic and cultural transformations pose both opportunities and challenges, particularly for social cohesion and the well-being of the elderly [1].

Sports activities among the elderly are emerging as a key tool not only for promoting physical health but also for fostering social integration. As elderly people participate in culturally diverse sports activities, they have the opportunity to engage with different cultural groups, thereby enhancing social ties and reinforcing community cohesion. In this context, elderly sports activities do more than maintain physical fitness—they act as platforms for cultural exchange and identity formation. These activities are particularly significant in cities like Guangzhou, where local and external cultures converge, providing unique insights into how elderly individuals navigate and negotiate their cultural identities [2]. This study is thus important for understanding how elderly sports contribute to social harmony, enrich the lives of older adults, and advance theoretical research on cultural integration and identity construction.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The primary aim of this research is to explore how elderly individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds experience cultural integration and identity construction through participation in sports activities. By examining how these activities serve as spaces of cultural interaction, this research aims to provide new insights into the blending of local and external cultures within the realm of elderly sports. The key research questions include:

1.2.1 How do local and external cultures influence elderly individuals' choices of sports?

This question aims to explore how cultural background influences the types of sports elderly individuals are drawn to. Given the local popularity of traditional Chinese sports such as tai chi and lion dance, and the increasing involvement of elderly people in foreign sports like yoga and square dancing [3], this question will help understand the interplay between these different cultural influences.

1.2.2 What mechanisms facilitate the blending of these cultural elements in elderly sports activities?

This question investigates the processes through which cultural elements are integrated into elderly sports activities. How are traditional sports adapted or modified in response to the presence of foreign influences? Are these adaptations part of a broader trend of cultural fusion within urban settings? [4].

1.2.3 How does the interplay of local and external cultures impact personal and collective identity in elderly sports participation?

The third question delves into the implications of cultural interaction within elderly sports activities for personal and collective identity. Studies have suggested that sports provide a framework for identity formation, where individuals construct their self-concept through participation in shared group activities [5]. This question will explore how elderly participants develop both individual and group identities through their engagement with culturally integrated sports. These research questions aim to illuminate how sports can serve as vehicles for cultural integration and identity

construction, fostering a sense of belonging and personal empowerment in a rapidly changing society.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Current Research on Elderly Sports Activities

Global studies on elderly sports activities underscore the diversity of activities that cater to older adults, ranging from traditional physical exercises to modern fitness trends. Elderly sports have been studied for their health benefits, both physical and mental. Common activities include tai chi, yoga, Nordic walking, and swimming, which are known for enhancing mobility, cognitive function, and general well-being. In particular, tai chi is highly revered in Chinese culture for its ability to blend physical movement with mindfulness, fostering both physical and emotional health. Tai chi has been shown to reduce symptoms of chronic conditions such as arthritis and improve balance and flexibility among elderly practitioners.

In China, sports like tai chi and square dancing are embedded in the cultural fabric of urban life. Square dancing, for instance, has gained significant popularity, especially among elderly women, offering both physical exercise and a sense of social community. This growing interest in traditional Chinese activities contrasts with the increasing acceptance and practice of foreign sports. Activities such as yoga and aerobic exercises are becoming more integrated into the daily routines of elderly populations in cities like Guangzhou [6]. However, the integration of these diverse cultural practices remains under-explored, particularly in urban contexts where multiple cultural influences converge. In this regard, there is a need to examine how elderly sports activities serve as sites of cultural blending, and how they shape participants' identities in multicultural urban settings.

Despite the increasing attention to elderly sports activities, there is a significant gap in understanding how these activities serve as sites of cultural integration. Research has largely focused on the individual health benefits of these activities, with less attention paid to the social and cultural dimensions of elderly sports, particularly in cities with diverse populations. This study addresses this gap by focusing on Guangzhou, an urban center that exemplifies the intersection of local traditions and foreign cultural influences.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations: Cultural Integration and Identity

Theories of cultural integration and identity construction provide useful frameworks for analyzing how elderly individuals engage with sports activities in multicultural contexts. Berry's acculturation model identifies four main strategies for individuals adapting to a new culture: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. These strategies are particularly relevant in the context of elderly sports, where individuals may either adopt local practices, maintain their original cultural activities, or combine the two. For example, elderly individuals who have migrated to Guangzhou from other parts of China or abroad may choose to either fully assimilate into the local sports culture or seek integration by adapting traditional practices to incorporate elements of their home cultures.

Tajfel's social identity theory further helps explain how participation in group sports fosters collective identity. According to this theory, individuals derive a significant part of their identity from the groups to which they belong. Through sports, elderly participants form strong bonds with others, whether they share a common cultural background or not. Sports such as tai chi or square dancing offer opportunities for elderly individuals to identify with a group that transcends individual differences and creates a sense of unity and belonging [7]. Furthermore, the hybridization of sports practices, where local and external cultural elements are combined, serves to create inclusive environments where shared identities can flourish.

In the case of elderly sports, these theories suggest that cultural integration is a dynamic process that may vary depending on the individual's level of engagement with local or external cultural practices. These interactions contribute to the ongoing construction of personal and collective identities, with sports serving as both a means of personal empowerment and a vehicle for cultural exchange.

2.3 Research Gaps and Insights

Despite the wealth of literature on elderly sports, there is still a significant gap in research on how elderly individuals navigate cultural diversity through participation in sports activities. Most studies focus on the health benefits of elderly sports but do not address the complex ways in which cultural integration takes place through these activities. Moreover, little is known about how elderly individuals from different cultural backgrounds come to view and construct their identities through participation in sports that blend local and foreign cultural elements[8].

This research seeks to fill these gaps by exploring how elderly participants in Guangzhou experience cultural integration and identity construction through their involvement in culturally integrated sports. Given the multicultural nature of Guangzhou, this study offers a unique opportunity to examine the role of sports in bridging cultural divides, promoting social cohesion, and supporting personal empowerment for the elderly. Through this investigation, the study will provide valuable insights into the potential of elderly sports to foster cultural integration and facilitate the development of new, hybrid forms of cultural expression.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Rationale for Qualitative Methods

This study employs qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and participant observation, to capture the subjective experiences of elderly participants. These methods are particularly effective for exploring the nuances of cultural integration and identity construction.

3.2 Sampling and Participant Selection

Participants were selected from various districts in Guangzhou, including traditional neighborhoods like Liwan, modern urban areas like Tianhe, and culturally diverse communities like Yuexiu. The sample includes elderly individuals engaged in both local and foreign sports activities, ensuring a broad representation of cultural backgrounds.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observation conducted over six months. Interview questions focused on participants' motivations, experiences, and perceptions of cultural integration. Observations were conducted at public parks, community centers, and sports clubs to capture real-time interactions and dynamics.

3.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis and case study methods were used to analyze the data. Themes such as cultural adaptation, identity transformation, and community building were identified, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

4 THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF ELDERLY SPORTS IN GUANGZHOU

4.1 Preservation and Development of Traditional Sports

Traditional sports, such as tai chi and lion dance, continue to play a significant role in the physical, social, and cultural lives of Guangzhou's elderly population. These practices not only contribute to physical health but are also essential for preserving Cantonese cultural heritage, providing a sense of continuity and community among the elderly.

4.1.1 Case 1: *Tai chi in liwan's cultural park*

In Liwan's Cultural Park, elderly residents gather each morning to practice tai chi, under the guidance of Mr. Chen, a 68-year-old retired teacher. For him, tai chi is more than just a form of exercise—it is a spiritual practice deeply connected to Cantonese culture. The participants blend local music into their tai chi routines, which enriches the practice with cultural resonance and creates a unique experience that reflects the local identity. This merging of traditional exercises with music highlights the significant role of cultural continuity in elderly sports [9].

4.1.2 Case 2: *The lion dance in Guangzhou's elderly communities*

Lion dance, another traditional Chinese practice, has found its place among Guangzhou's elderly. In districts like Haizhu and Yuexiu, elderly participants take part in regular lion dance practice sessions that not only serve as exercise but also foster intergenerational connections. Older participants often mentor younger dancers, ensuring that the traditions of the lion dance are passed down. As with tai chi, the lion dance incorporates Cantonese music, emphasizing both physical movement and the preservation of local cultural heritage [10].

4.1.3 Case 3: *Traditional martial arts as cultural preservation*

In Guangzhou, many elderly individuals continue to practice traditional martial arts, such as Wing Chun and Hung Gar, as part of their daily routines. These martial arts are not only seen as methods for maintaining physical fitness but also as a way to keep alive the city's martial heritage. Groups in districts like Baiyun and Tianhe offer martial arts classes tailored for older adults, combining slow, deliberate movements with principles of health and spirituality. These classes have become popular among retirees who are eager to pass on the art to future generations [11].

4.2 Introduction and Popularity of Foreign Sports

In addition to traditional Chinese sports, foreign sports like yoga and square dancing have become increasingly popular among Guangzhou's elderly population. These activities, while originally from different cultural backgrounds, have been adapted to fit the local context. The fusion of global sports with local elements not only promotes physical health but also encourages cross-cultural exchange and social cohesion.

4.2.1 Case 1: *Yoga with a cantonese twist*

In Tianhe District, Mrs. Zhang, a 62-year-old yoga enthusiast, organizes weekly yoga sessions that combine traditional yoga poses with Cantonese opera music. This creative fusion has attracted a wide range of elderly participants, many of whom are new to yoga. By blending the calming effects of yoga with the emotional depth of Cantonese opera, Mrs. Zhang has made yoga more accessible and culturally resonant for the elderly community. This innovative approach bridges the gap between global and local cultural practices.

4.2.2 Case 2: *Square dancing with local music*

Square dancing, a popular activity among elderly people in many parts of the world, has gained significant traction in Guangzhou. Groups of elderly dancers gather in public parks and community centers, where they incorporate Cantonese songs and traditional rhythms into their routines. The music adds a local flavor to the otherwise global square dancing format, creating a culturally unique experience. This adaptation demonstrates how foreign sports can be reimagined in a way that aligns with local cultural values [12].

4.2.3 Case 3: The rise of Zumba for seniors

Zumba, a modern fitness craze, has also found its place among elderly residents in Guangzhou. In districts like Haizhu and Baiyun, Zumba classes designed for seniors combine Latin-inspired dance moves with aerobic exercise. These classes incorporate Cantonese pop music, further localizing the experience for the elderly participants. The high-energy and upbeat nature of Zumba provides an engaging alternative to more traditional forms of exercise, appealing particularly to younger elderly individuals .

5 MANIFESTATIONS OF CULTURAL INTEGRATION IN ELDERLY SPORTS

The integration of cultural values and sports formats is evident in the way traditional and foreign sports have merged, creating a dynamic environment where different cultural elements coexist. This integration not only enriches the sports experience but also reflects the broader cultural exchange taking place within Guangzhou's elderly communities.

5.1 Innovative Blending of Sports Formats

Cultural integration is evident in the innovative blending of traditional and contemporary sports. By combining elements from different sports formats, sports instructors in Guangzhou are able to cater to the diverse preferences and fitness needs of elderly participants. This hybridization reflects the broader trend of globalization and local adaptation, as elderly sports continue to evolve.

5.1.1 Case 1: Aerobic Tai Chi

In the Yuexiu District, an aerobic tai chi class blends the traditional, slow movements of tai chi with the fast-paced rhythm of aerobic exercises. The integration of aerobic routines into tai chi allows elderly participants to engage in a more vigorous workout while still maintaining the balance and mindfulness that tai chi provides. This hybrid class has become increasingly popular among elderly participants who are seeking both physical fitness and mental relaxation.

5.1.2 Case 2: Aerobic lion dance

As mentioned earlier, the concept of aerobic lion dance in Yuexiu combines the traditional lion dance with modern aerobic elements, such as Zumba. This innovative class appeals to a broader demographic, including those who are less familiar with traditional lion dance movements but are drawn to the fitness benefits of aerobic exercises. This hybrid format fosters an inclusive environment that attracts elderly participants from diverse backgrounds [13].

5.1.3 Case 3: Martial arts and fitness fusion

Many martial arts classes in Guangzhou have integrated fitness elements such as aerobic exercises, strengthening routines, and stretching into traditional martial arts practice. This innovative approach ensures that participants can enjoy the cultural aspects of martial arts while reaping the benefits of modern fitness trends. Classes, such as those offered in Baiyun District, attract a younger elderly demographic who might not otherwise engage with traditional martial arts.

5.2 Interplay of Cultural Values

The blending of sports formats is not the only manifestation of cultural integration in elderly sports. There is also a significant interplay of cultural values, such as cooperation, competition, and socialization, in the sports practices adopted by elderly people in Guangzhou.

5.2.1 Case 1: Tai Chi as a social practice

For many elderly people, tai chi is not only about physical exercise but also about fostering a sense of community. Groups of elderly participants often meet in parks for group practice, where socialization becomes an integral part of the experience. The emphasis on harmony and balance in tai chi reflects traditional Chinese cultural values, but the group dynamics encourage cooperation and mutual support, which are central to both local and global social norms [14].

5.2.2 Case 2: Square dance as self-expression

In contrast to the calmness of tai chi, square dancing emphasizes sociability, self-expression, and enjoyment. The competitive yet cooperative nature of square dancing groups creates an environment where elderly participants not only stay physically active but also express their individuality through dance. Square dancing, popularized by Western culture, has found a unique expression in Guangzhou, where it emphasizes not just fitness but the joy of communal participation.

5.2.3 Case 3: Yoga and mindfulness

Yoga, which is known for promoting mindfulness and self-awareness, has been adapted for elderly participants in Guangzhou. While yoga's roots lie in Indian traditions, its incorporation into the elderly sports landscape in Guangzhou emphasizes the value of mental wellness and stress reduction. Yoga groups often meet in tranquil, natural settings, and the practice focuses on breathing techniques and body awareness, which appeals to both global and local cultural values of health.

6 IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND ELDERLY SPORTS PARTICIPATION

6.1 Transformation and Reconstruction of Individual Identity

Sports participation offers elderly individuals the opportunity to redefine their roles and capabilities, fostering personal growth and transformation. For example, within the context of the tai chi community, Ms. Li, a retired woman, shared her experience of finding a new social role through her involvement in tai chi. Initially joining as a participant, she eventually became a team coach. This progression not only boosted her self-confidence but also led to greater recognition from her family and the local community. The shift from being an ordinary participant to a leader in the group exemplifies how elderly individuals can reshape their identity and gain a sense of purpose through sports activities. This transformation highlights the role of sports in helping the elderly maintain social relevance and improve their self-esteem, as well as how engaging in a community-based practice contributes to a positive reconstruction of one's social identity.

Research shows that such experiences are not unique, with elderly participants often reporting a renewed sense of confidence and purpose after taking on leadership roles in group sports activities. The practice of tai chi, with its emphasis on balance and mindfulness, serves as an ideal space for elderly individuals to cultivate a deeper connection with themselves and others. As they progress in their training, they internalize the values of discipline, leadership, and social contribution, further reinforcing their redefined identities.

6.2. Formation and Strengthening of Group Identity

Beyond individual identity, elderly sports activities also play a significant role in the formation and reinforcement of group identity. Participation in collective sports fosters a strong sense of belonging, as elderly individuals bond over shared goals and experiences. A prime example can be found in the practice of square yoga in Guangzhou, where participants come together not only for exercise but also to create a sense of community. Mr. Chen, a member of a local square yoga group, remarked that, while he previously rarely interacted with individuals from outside his local area, he now shares a strong connection with people from diverse backgrounds, including migrant workers and even foreign residents. This collective identity is strengthened through their shared practice, where mutual respect and friendship are cultivated through regular participation.

The significance of group identity is evident in how elderly participants often describe their sports teams or groups as "second families." This concept is common in activities like square dancing and yoga, where the elderly find not only physical exercise but also emotional support and a sense of community. By participating in these activities, elderly individuals forge strong, supportive relationships that transcend cultural and geographical boundaries, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity. These bonds contribute to a collective identity where members view themselves as part of something larger than themselves, which is particularly important in times of social and demographic changes.

7 ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCING FACTORS

The identity construction of elderly individuals through sports is influenced by a range of factors, including cultural background, personal experiences, and the specific characteristics of the sports activities themselves. The interaction between these factors determines how effectively elderly individuals can integrate into new social settings and redefine their identities.

Cultural influences, for instance, play a key role in shaping which sports activities elderly individuals choose to engage in and how they adapt these activities to suit their needs. In multicultural environments like Guangzhou, where local traditions coexist with global influences, elderly people may feel encouraged to merge practices like tai chi with foreign sports such as yoga or aerobic exercises, creating new forms of hybrid activities that reflect both personal and collective identities.

Personal factors, such as previous sports experience, physical ability, and social support systems, also impact how elderly individuals experience sports and form identities [15]. Those with prior experience in physical activities are more likely to take leadership roles, while others may participate initially as a means of socializing or maintaining physical health. The availability of social support, whether from family members, friends, or community organizations, is another significant factor that influences how elderly individuals engage in and benefit from sports activities.

Moreover, the inclusiveness of the sports activity itself plays a role in determining whether elderly individuals feel a sense of belonging. Activities that emphasize cooperation and collective participation—like group tai chi or square yoga—are particularly effective at promoting strong social bonds and group identity. These factors combine to create an environment where elderly individuals can redefine their social roles, build new connections, and strengthen their personal and collective identities.

8 STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of sports in fostering cultural integration and identity construction among elderly individuals in Guangzhou. To address the challenges identified in previous sections and to optimize the benefits of elderly sports participation, several strategies and recommendations for both community organizations and governmental authorities are proposed. These strategies aim to enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of elderly

sports activities, ensure the well-being of elderly participants, and promote a deeper sense of cultural integration.

8.1 Community and Organizational Strategies

Effective community and organizational strategies are essential in facilitating cultural exchange, promoting inclusivity, and providing elderly individuals with opportunities to strengthen both personal and collective identities. The following strategies are suggested:

8.1.1 Organize multicultural sports festivals to encourage interaction and understanding

One of the most effective ways to enhance cultural integration in elderly sports is through the organization of multicultural sports festivals. These festivals could feature a variety of traditional sports from different cultural backgrounds, as well as modern sports activities adapted for elderly participants. Such events not only promote physical health but also offer opportunities for cultural exchange, where participants can share their respective traditions and learn from one another. For example, a festival that combines Chinese traditions such as tai chi or dragon boat racing with global sports like yoga or Nordic walking could facilitate mutual understanding and respect among elderly individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Research supports the positive impact of multicultural festivals in promoting social cohesion and cultural awareness (Wang, 2018). By creating spaces where elderly individuals from various cultural backgrounds come together, these events can reduce cultural barriers, foster new friendships, and enhance collective identity. Furthermore, the inclusion of both local and migrant elderly participants in these events would help integrate different generations and cultural groups within the broader community, enhancing the overall social fabric.

8.1.2 Provide training for community leaders to facilitate cultural integration in sports activities

Community leaders, such as those managing local sports clubs or senior centers, play a crucial role in creating inclusive environments for elderly sports participation. To effectively manage the integration of various cultural influences in sports activities, it is vital that community leaders receive training in cultural competence and inclusive sports management. This training could cover topics such as recognizing cultural sensitivities, designing culturally adaptive sports programs, and fostering cross-cultural communication.

Several studies highlight the importance of community leadership in facilitating the integration of elderly individuals from diverse backgrounds into sports activities. When community leaders are equipped with the necessary skills to understand and respect cultural differences, they can create environments where all participants feel welcome and supported. In particular, community leaders can ensure that sports activities are culturally relevant and adaptable, thus encouraging greater participation from elderly individuals with varying cultural identities.

8.1.3 Promote intergenerational participation in sports activities

Intergenerational programs, where elderly individuals engage in sports activities alongside younger participants, can also foster cultural integration and strengthen social cohesion. Elderly individuals can learn from younger generations, while young people can benefit from the wisdom and experience of the elderly. Intergenerational sports programs, such as combined youth and elderly yoga or tai chi classes, can also serve as a bridge between different cultural groups within the community. The interaction between generations and cultures promotes a sense of collective identity and fosters social inclusion.

8.2 Government Policy Recommendations

Government support plays an essential role in enabling elderly sports participation and fostering cultural integration. The following policy recommendations aim to ensure that the necessary infrastructure, funding, and regulations are in place to support elderly sports activities in a multicultural context:

8.2.1 Increase funding for elderly sports facilities and programs

To promote widespread participation in elderly sports activities, particularly those that encourage cultural integration, the government should increase funding for elderly sports facilities and programs. This funding should be directed toward the creation of well-equipped, accessible spaces for elderly individuals to engage in physical activities. These facilities should be designed to accommodate the diverse needs of elderly individuals, including those with limited mobility or those who may be unfamiliar with certain sports.

Studies have shown that access to appropriate sports facilities and programs significantly enhances elderly individuals' participation in sports and contributes to improved physical and mental health. By increasing government investment in elderly sports infrastructure, the government can ensure that elderly individuals have access to safe, inclusive, and culturally sensitive spaces to engage in physical activities. Moreover, this investment would help alleviate the social isolation often experienced by elderly individuals, providing them with the resources needed to actively engage with their communities.

8.2.2 Develop policies that encourage cultural diversity and inclusivity in sports

The government should develop policies that explicitly encourage the integration of cultural diversity in elderly sports activities. These policies could mandate that sports programs and events be designed to accommodate cultural diversity, ensuring that sports activities are inclusive of various ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups. For instance, local governments could offer grants or incentives to community centers that create culturally inclusive sports programs that blend traditional and global sports.

Research supports the positive impact of government policies on cultural integration in sports. Policies that promote

diversity have been shown to encourage the participation of marginalized groups, such as elderly migrants, in sports activities. Additionally, government policies that support the training of instructors in cultural competence can ensure that sports programs are sensitive to the needs of different cultural groups, thus promoting inclusivity and reducing cultural barriers in elderly sports participation.

8.2.3 Implement targeted health programs for elderly migrants

In multicultural urban centers like Guangzhou, elderly migrants may face particular challenges in accessing sports and health programs due to language barriers, cultural differences, and social isolation. The government can address this by implementing targeted health programs aimed at elderly migrants, offering bilingual services and culturally adapted programs. These programs should focus on integrating sports with health education, ensuring that elderly migrants are equipped with the knowledge and resources to engage in regular physical activity.

Research has shown that elderly migrants often experience challenges in accessing mainstream sports programs, which can lead to physical and mental health deterioration. By creating policies that provide tailored sports and health programs for elderly migrants, the government can ensure that these individuals are included in the broader social and cultural fabric, fostering greater community cohesion and improving overall well-being.

8.2.4 Encourage collaboration between public and private sectors

To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of elderly sports programs, collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential. Public policies should encourage private enterprises to invest in elderly sports programs by offering tax incentives or public-private partnership opportunities. Such collaboration can enhance the quality of sports programs available to elderly individuals, create innovative solutions to cultural integration challenges, and ensure the long-term sustainability of these initiatives.

Collaborative efforts between public agencies, private enterprises, and community organizations have been shown to improve the quality and accessibility of elderly sports programs, making them more adaptable to the needs of diverse cultural groups. By fostering collaboration, the government can maximize the impact of its policies and ensure that elderly sports activities are not only inclusive but also sustainable over time.

9 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

9.1 Key Findings

This study reveals that elderly sports activities in Guangzhou serve as a dynamic platform for cultural integration and identity construction. Through innovative sports formats and shared experiences, participants build both individual and collective identities, fostering social cohesion.

9.2 Innovations and Limitations

The study's innovations include its focus on Guangzhou's unique cultural context and its use of qualitative methods to capture in-depth experiences. However, limitations such as a restricted sample size and geographic scope highlight the need for broader, longitudinal studies.

9.3 Future Research Directions

Future research could explore cross-regional comparisons, long-term impacts of cultural integration in sports, and the role of digital platforms in facilitating elderly participation in diverse sports activities.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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