

# A Qualitative Research on the Winter Sports Body-Building Activities of Chinese Residents from the Perspective of Social Stratification

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## Abstract

Social stratum differences lay behind the winter sports body-building activities of Chinese residents. Guided by social stratification theory, this paper takes heterogeneity research as the paradigm, and carries out in-depth interviews to explore the winter sports body-building behaviors and concepts of Chinese citizens in three classes, namely, middle class (white collar), working class (blue collar), and unemployed (jobless) class. In addition, the authors explored the correlation of participation and experience of each class with economy, education, and society dimensions of snow sports culture. This paper holds that: a. Difference in economic conditions determine the level, scope, and degree of the participation of winter sports; b. The improvement of education level accelerates the socialization progress of participants, but it also increases the differentiation of individual participation and intensifies social stratification; c. The bidding and holding of Beijing Winter Olympics greatly promotes the development of winter sports in China, and forms a feature of "middle-class consumers", while the consumption of the working class and unemployed (jobless) residents is more "rational". The paradigm of social stratification and heterogeneity research helps relevant researchers to break away from the narrow perspective of finding the individual-level causality behind winter sports body-building, laying the basis for social, and sports researchers to recognize and understand the unequal social structure of winter sports participation.

**Keywords:** social stratification; Chinese residents; winter sports body-building; qualitative research

## 1. Introduction

Winter sports (mostly ice and snow programs) are a type of commercial or recreational ice and snow experience activities or games that integrate non-competitive sports with local folk-custom characteristics, and they have certain "intangible heritage" attributes (R. L. Zhang, 2016). Traditionally, winter sports bodybuilding is widely considered as a personal issue related to subjective willingness of individuals. It seems to have little to do with the external environment. Therefore, previous studies mainly try to find the individual-level causality behind winter sports body-building. The research objects are inevitably individual actors. With this fixed thinking mode, researchers search for the reasons of winter sports bodybuilding from individual actors, and overlook the influence of social structure on individual behavior. In other words, the impact of social structure factors on individual winter sports behaviors is overshadowed by that of personal factors, and the social structure factors behind these behaviors are basically not considered by researchers. The neglect of social structure leads to a bias in research conclusions. From a higher level, it is easy to find that the psychological motivations of winter sports participation are mostly shaped by social stratification. The theory of social stratification holds that the society is both real and

objective. The academia, represented by Durkheim and Qu (200); Li (2011) widely agrees that the society, as an external environment, exerts a mandatory influence on individuals. According to Guo (2019), as a kind of personal and social behavior, winter sports body-building is closely related to the development of current society, and is inseparable from economic conditions and living standards, wherein time, money, and social resources and channels are all necessary participation conditions. Since Beijing has successfully bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, more Chinese residents have paid attention to and begun to participate in winter sports body-building programs, which not only shows changes in the lives of modern Chinese residents, but also reflects their pursuit and yearning for a better life. However, in present China, the social and economic resources exhibit unbalanced status, the Chinese residents' economic conditions, living standards, and cultural awareness have all undergone changes. Such trend is growing progressively, and is also reflected in the winter sports body-building behavior of Chinese residents. Then, how to understand the background and concept of this behavior? What are the social factors? How can this behavior be effectively released? Bearing these questions in mind, this paper aims to analyze the influence of social structure factors on

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winter sports participation of Chinese citizens, which is largely overlooked in previous studies. From the angle of social stratification theory and heterogeneity research, the goal is to discover the causality behind winter sports bodybuilding that cannot be revealed from the individual perspective. Besides, firsthand data were collected through in-depth interviews, and used to theoretically analyze how social stratification affects winter sports bodybuilding. On this basis, the authors reflected on the key regions, humanities, and practices in the research of Chinese social structure and its changes.

## 2. Theoretical basis: social stratification

In sociology, social structure is a core concept of sociological theory and analysis, and a hot topic among sociologists (Li, 1997). In the industrial society, the most typical social structure is social hierarchy or social stratification. The term stratification comes from the geological description of the geological structure, and originally refers to the different levels of the geological structure (Peng, 2004). Sociologists discover that the society is fully of unequal relations between humans and groups, which bear resemblance to the orderly yet different layers of geological structure. Borrowing this concept, sociologists developed an important sociology theory: social stratification (Qu & Wang, 2004). This paper introduces the social stratification theory to analyze winter sports bodybuilding, due to the following reasons: (1) Social stratification offers theoretical and realistic descriptions of the unequal social layers, which are universal in the industrial society; (2) China is in a major transition period of the industrial society. In this period, the Chinese society has been seriously stratified, attracting much attention from sociologists; (3) Winter sports bodybuilding is a by-product of social progress. Those participating in winter sports ought to exhibit a similar pattern as the stratified society. For the above reasons, it is theoretically and practically significant to study the winter sports bodybuilding of Chinese citizens from the angle of social stratification theory.

Social stratification exists both in objective facts and people's subjective cognition, it describes the high or low classes of people and the hierarchical structure of different classes. Scholars represented by the American sociologist Hodge and Treiman (1968) use the theory of "status inconsistency" to explain social stratification, that is, according to different social status standards, a same person would have different classes and ranks; education, occupation, income, and other indicators are often used for classification, namely the social stratification. The German sociology Max Weber believes that social stratification

mainly contains three indicators of wealth, power, and prestige; the three indicators are interconnected, but meanwhile can be taken as separate standards for social class division (Zhu & Wang, 2020). After Max Weber, Australian scholar M. Waters proposed 8 indicators of social stratification, including occupation, income level, source of income, education level, lifestyle, religion, political attitude, and values. Then, American sociologist Mills further divided workers into two classes of white-collar class and blue-collar class; and after that, Western society gradually formed a social stratification pattern containing the wealthy class (elite class), middle class (white-collar or private business owner), and lower class (blue-collar workers) (H. Jiang, 2011).

In terms of social differentiation and hierarchical structure, Chinese scholars have also made some useful explorations, and a representative result is the "ten major classes" proposed by scholar Lu (2011) based on western sociological theories; according to factors such as occupation, education, income, cultural concepts, and lifestyle, he divided people into three groups: middle class (white-collar), workers (blue-collar), and unemployed (jobless). The middle class (white-collar) are mostly well-educated (college-level or above), generally, they are mental workers or decision-makers; the workers (blue-collar) usually have received secondary or elementary level education, they are mostly skilled or semi-skilled manual workers; the unemployed (jobless) class generally have a low level of education, this group is mainly consisted of people who are willing to return to families, laid-off workers, people with disabilities, and the elderly. This social stratification method includes not only hard indicators such as income, education, and occupation, but also soft indicators such as attitude, lifestyle, and concept, which can represent the structure, state, and features of social stratification of Chinese residents. The research purpose of this paper is to figure out the ways, methods, and values of Chinese residents' winter sports bodybuilding behavior, and the differentiation mechanism in it, therefore, the above-mentioned social class structure had been adopted in this study.

## 3. Research method: qualitative interview

The previous studies on winter sports bodybuilding of Chinese citizens mostly adopt the quantitative method, and describe the general situation of the behavior and participation of winter sports bodybuilding. The quantitative approach clarifies the basic trend, general law, and development direction of winter sports bodybuilding of Chinese citizens, under specific scenarios and demands. However, this purely statistical strategy cannot fully answer

questions like: What are the sources of the behavior, concept, and idea? The simple data cannot reflect the true thoughts of people, or mirror the exact emotions. In addition, the scenario is lost by abstracting analysis and answers into data. It is impossible to “quantify” the rich and complex emotions, concepts, and ideas of humans.

This research is built on the paradigm of heterogeneity research. The merit of qualitative research lies in the respect of human nature, this method gives factual, vivid, and rich description and explanation of the research materials to present the human nature and objective facts of the research (G. H. Jiang, 2020). Moreover, the authors can access specific and natural situations, rather than manmade test scenarios. Thus, the authors can understand the behavior of subjects through actual communication, and collect sufficient data to study social phenomena in an all-round way (C. Wang, 2017). That is why heterogeneity research is very suitable for our research. To sum up, the qualitative research paradigm had been adopted in this study to restore the real scenarios of Chinese residents' winter sports body-building behaviors, concepts, and ideas in depth. The research data was collected via interviews, and a semi-structured interview pattern was applied so that the words of the interviewees could be heard fully, and details of the interviewees' experience and perspective could be conveyed and retained, and the collected data could fit into the design framework of this research. Moreover, this paper combined taxonomy with comparative studies and formed an integrated analysis framework.

The qualitative interview materials given in this paper are field research results of the writers during December 2020 and January 2021, we randomly interviewed more than 70 winter sports participants from 7 winter sports venues in China, including three top-level ski resorts of Beidahu, Vanke Songhuahu, and Changbaishan (ranked among the top ten ski resorts in China), middle-low level ski resorts Jixue and Mingshan Lvzhou, and free exercise venues (Jilin Beijshan Ice and Snow World, and Jilin National Fitness Center).

The outline of the interviews on Chinese citizens engaging in winter sports bodybuilding focuses on the personal experience of the participants, and surveys their behaviors of winter sports bodybuilding from eight aspects: purpose, space, behavioral concept, experience and feeling, obstacle handling, cognition and evaluation, career, etc. All subjects agreed to be interviewed, and expressed trust of our research team. Hence, the factors contained in the interview are reliable indices.

Before the survey, the interviewees were not determined in advance according to the standards of the three classes, but

selected from different participation spaces. In terms of distribution of different participation spaces, a stratification trend of the participating behaviors and concepts of interviewees is showing objectively, which naturally reflects their classes. Participants of high-end venues are mostly middle-class, their visiting purposes are mainly to take their leisure time, spend holidays, on tour, or sight-seeing, among these visitors, there're enthusiastic skiers from all over China. Participants of middle-end venues are mostly middle-class as well, many of them are residents of Jilin province, and their visiting purposes include body-building, relaxation, and entertainment. Participants of low-end or free venues are mostly retired or unemployed residents, and some are working-class residents; they are mostly residents of Jilin Province or Jilin City, and their main purposes are to improve health, pastime, and recreation. One thing should be pointed out here is that there're some exceptions, such as jobless residents with good family economic conditions would choose high-end venues, but in general, the results can reflect the winter sports body-building spaces, participation behaviors and concepts of Chinese residents of three classes. Limited by the samples, the research results couldn't fully represent the participation situation of residents in various parts of China, but to a certain extent, they could reflect some homogeneous phenomena and laws.

The names of all interviewees were subject to anonymity processing, the first three letters are the codes of the interviewee's name, the numbers are the year, month, and day of the interview, and the letter after the numbers represents the gender of the interviewee (male is M, females is F).

## **4. Overview of the winter sports participation of Chinese residents of each class**

The driving force for Chinese residents to have a growing demand for winter sports comes from three aspects: first, Beijing has bid for hosting the Winter Olympics and government policies are providing strong support for winter sports; second, the high-speed economic development has created a good external environment for winter sports programs; third, the Chinese people's growing yearning for a better life. However, Chinese residents have different requirements, approaches, and performance for winter sports, which has led to the phenomenon of social stratification.

### **4.1 Middle class (white collar)**

Most of the middle-class Chinese residents have received higher education, they admire and have a sense of identity

of the fun and culture of upper-class, and their lifestyles exhibit consumption types such as fashion, brand, culture, taste, leisure, and enjoyment, etc. (H. Zhang, 2018).

First of all, middle-class residents are mostly well-educated and have a good understanding of winter sports, they believe the ice and snow programs are the best choice to relax and entertain in winter and regulate their work and life.

Interviewee (HBH20210102M) said: I work in a college in Zhejiang province, this winter vacation, I brought my family to Beidahu ski resort to enjoy the charm of winter in Northeast China. There are not only professional ski trails and beautiful rime here, but also winter sports programs suitable for kids and elderly, as well as comfortable hot spring facilities, which are all good ways to relax and enjoy leisure time.

Interviewee (WX20210102M) said: I am a private business owner from Changchun. I spend some time to ski every month, and once I ski, I can forget everything about work, which feels really good, and for me this is an effective way to regulate work and life.

From the interview content given above, we can see that interviewees HBH and WX are two middle class residents, they have a great pressure in both their life and work, and their leisure time is rare. They need a good mentality state and life concept to effectively coordinate their life and work, in winter seasons, the winter sports programs have undoubtedly become important options for them to relieve stress. As for residents of southern China, the ice and snow programs are novel and have infinite charm; at the same time, they prefer complete supporting facilities and pay attention to cultural characteristics and individual needs.

Secondly, the middle class generally pay more attention to quality and a good environment, they prefer venues with brands that can provide personalized services, their pursuit of fashion and personal taste is the primary reason.

Interviewee (LXH20210108F) said: my friend has post very cool ski photos on WeChat, so I want to experience it too. She suggested going to a professional ski resort with good facilities and professional coaches, so I came here.

Interviewee (LY20210108F) said: I am very conscious to natural scenery. Ski resorts such as Beidahu and Changbaishan are far away from the city and have very beautiful natural landscapes. After skiing, I can drink coffee and enjoy the pleasant view, which gives me a good mood besides body-building.

Through the survey, we also found that in the We-media era, sharing becomes much more convenient and faster, participating in ice and snow programs has turned into a symbol of economic strength and social status. Some participants have a conspicuous psychology, and their purpose is to gain social recognition through such

conspicuous consumption.

An interviewee from Jiangsu (JJ20210108F) told that: The winter fishing in Chagan Lake live on Tik Tok and Kwai is spectacular. This time I took all my five family members and drove to northeast China, I shared videos and photos of my journey, winter fishing, rime, ski, and food, and my relatives and friends all envy my "happiness" here.

From above interview content we can see that, there is a natural lack of "existential connection" between southerners and "ice and snow". The relationship connecting southerners and snow is a kind of abstract symbols, through network medias, these external symbols (such as dignity, fashion, happiness) are exhibited and become expensive and conspicuous consumption symbols. Of course, the ice and snow culture should be promoted with the help of tourists, cyber celebrities, and other public and social resources.

The survey also revealed that, for some middle class, participating in winter sports is also an important means for them to manage their social network and relationships. A senior executive of a foreign company (LYY20210108M) introduced: friends who come to ski with me are more like-minded, as we ski together our relationship gets closer. Sometimes I bring my customers to ski, and this is very helpful for improving my work performance.

For these middle-class residents, winter sports are no longer just a body-building exercise, but a social channel for making friends through interactive experience and communication.

#### **4.2 Working class (blue collar)**

In terms of the participation of winter sports programs, the working class (blue-collar) shows another different state due to the limitations of economic and social conditions, and living environment. They wish to participate in ice and snow programs, but they are restricted by their working time, labor force, and simple skills, and their working environment and salary level are not ideal, which have resulted in that the social resources they have are relatively limited, and they have the following features:

First, the working-class residents have a good willingness to participate in winter sports activities, but their participation rate is low. Their recognition of the value of ice and snow programs is not different from that of middle-class, but their unsatisfactory working environment, salary, and heavy housework have made them very tired already, thus affecting their participation willingness. Under the pressure of work and life, they are assuming the heavy responsibility of making money to support the family, and this has also restricted their participation rate. Moreover, some of them lack the relevant knowledge and skills, which have hindered their attempt to new things.

Second, reality showed that the lack of spare time is the biggest obstacle. Interviewee (WZ20210116M) said: "as the country is now advocating sports programs on ice and snow, Jilin City has built many skating rinks that are open for free. My kid's school has organized skiing activities in the Vanke Songhuahu ski resort, and the children said it was great fun. I want to participate myself, but I have no fixed spare time, I work on shifts, so I can't have regular rests."

Third, most of programs participated by the working-class residents are free or low-consumption programs. They usually choose charity or public-service winter sports organized by the government, or the cheap "night skiing" open in parks, the programs they participate are most simple and unskilled programs such as "Snow tube" or "self-made sledge". Their consumptions are generally to purchase or rent necessary equipment such as snowboards and snow shoes, most of which are rented. For the working class, expensive equipment such as sleds and snowboards would cost thousands of yuan, obviously this is beyond their finance capacity, and it forms a "restrictive symbol".

According to interviewee (ZXY20210114M): Vanke Songhu ski resort costs more than 300 yuan in 3 hours on the week days, while on Saturdays and Sundays, the spend reaches around 500 yuan, the price is too very. This year, Vanke ski resort opens the "Night skiing" program at a price of a little over 100 yuan, which is a more affordable price.

During field survey, we also found that although some adults came to the ski resorts, they didn't participate in the programs themselves, they just came here to accompany their children.

Interviewee (LXC20210114F) said: the children are tired from going to the school. Now the winter sports programs are vigorously advocated by the government, but skiing is costly. In Jilin City, the Mingshan Lvzhou ski resort is a relatively cheap one, still, its price is 150 yuan/3 hours, I am reluctant to spend money on this.

Interviewee (CZ20210114F) also said: my home is in the Northeast China, there is no need to spend money on ice and snow programs. However, as long as the kids are having fun, I am ok with it. Now the money is too valueless (meaning inflation), and the children's after-school expenses are high, so I need to save money as much as I can.

#### **4.3 Unemployed (jobless) class**

Situations of the consumption of unemployed (jobless) class on winter sports programs are a bit complicated. First, the fast economic development pattern and industrial structure adjustment in China have resulted in a certain number of unemployed people, whose education, culture, and skills are often of low levels, and they generally have a

low acceptance to high, new, and intelligent technologies. Second, some people in this class are family members who choose to return and stay at home due to good family economic conditions, they generally have received good education and most of them are women. Third, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, there's a "temporary" unemployed group, people in this group are mainly engaged in industries such as catering, tourism, education & training, and some used to work abroad. They are well educated and have good skills, they have a certain amount of savings, but most of them are wage-earning class, also, they have certain innovation ability and entrepreneurship. Fourth, some people in this class are retired employees who have no life pressure; therefore, they have different characteristics in terms of the participation of winter sports. As related studies have pointed out, unemployment has both positive and negative effects on people's participation in sports, on the one hand, unemployment gives people more time to do physical exercises, on the other hand, the financial constraints and psychological imbalances will restrict their participation in sports (Xiong, 2012).

Once a person has lost his/her job, it means that he/she has been excluded from the mainstream social life, which will lead to the absence from social activities. As the British sociologist Kelvin once said: unemployment makes people have the feeling of a shake in their social status (Kelvin, 1981). By participating in winter sports activities, they can have the opportunities to expand social connection, improve health, adjust mood, regain self-confidence, and reintegrate into social life.

Interviewee (ZCY20210201M) said: I felt very irritable when I was just out of job, later I joined a staking team, I chatted with my teammates, we communicated about the skating skills, since I had contacted more people, my mood became open and clear, and I felt that I found my position again.

At Vanke Songhuahu ski resort, interviewee (WW20210108M) told us: I am now a stay-at-home mom, so I have a lot of free time, but sometimes I would feel boring, so I have fun with my friends through ice and snow programs, which makes me feel that my life is much more fulfilled.

At the free skating rink in Beishan Park, interviewee (YZL20210205F) said that, due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, his welding work abroad had ceased. Now he spends time playing ice hockey with his friends during daytime, and is waiting for the epidemic to be over before going abroad to work again. At the Beidahu ski resort, another interviewee (QKW20210102F) who worked in the tourism industry also said that he is now unemployed due

to the impact of the epidemic, he felt a little anxious at the beginning, but then he quickly used his own advantages to shoot short videos of winter snow, skiing, and folk-custom, which had attracted many fans and given him a good income.

At the skating rink of the National Fitness Center in Jilin City, a retired old man (SDF20210201F) said that now there is plenty of time for him to enjoy his life, so he had established a figure skating team to exercise body, clear mind, and cultivate sentiment, and now he lives happily every day.

## 5. Reasons for the social stratification of Chinese residents' winter sports

The phenomenon of social stratification is closely related to society, culture, economy, and life, and the winter sports of Chinese residents of different classes, their economic conditions and education levels, and the ice and snow culture in Chinese society, are interconnected and interacted.

### 5.1 Economic condition

As the society is developing and transforming, economic condition has become an intermediary factor of social stratification (S. Z. Zhang & Li, 2015). Since winter sports programs often require high investment in venue construction, equipment maintenance, and coaching, it has a "high consumption" characteristic. Therefore, participants need to have a certain level of economic condition and a willingness to spend money on it, in other words, only with a certain financial ability can they turn the desire of building their body via winter sports into reality, and their economic conditions would determine their ways, methods, and concepts of participation.

An entrepreneur from Liaoning province (HXG20210102M) said: "I like outdoor sports very much; for me, having a good health and a good mood is the first thing for family and work; in winters, ice and snow programs are a good choice."

A winter sports enthusiast from Shanghai (WX20210108F) said: "Jilin City has first-rate ice and snow resources, snow fields, and snow quality conditions. As the news said that the snowfall is very large these days, so I can't help myself but come here at once and satisfy myself for a craving of skiing. I come and stay here for more than half a month in every snow season these years."

A participant from Hangzhou (WY20210108F) said: "I am a cross-country enthusiast. This time I crossed the Changbai Mountain, in farmyard, I can sit on heated brick bed, taste the specialties of forest zone, listen to stories of the old forests, and watch the song-and-dance duet popular

in the Northeast of China, these give me a good experience of the special lifestyle in the ice and snow world, and it is really wonderful."

From the above interview, we can learn that a stable and high income is the key for participants to enjoy the winter sports, the consumption willingness of people in this resident group tends to prefer higher quality services, and is not limited to the experience-based consumption, but is transforming towards the types of normal consumption and enjoyment consumption, which have already become a pursuit of quality life of the middle class.

Although the working class have the participation willingness, their consumption ability is restricted by their economic conditions, so their consumption type belongs to the experience-based consumption. As mentioned above, since they also expect quality consumption, they turn to the "night skiing" for lower charges, in this way, they can both enjoy the quality service and the low spend.

The consumption situations of unemployed (jobless) participants are more complicated, but on the whole, residents of this class like the winter sports out of their interests and hobbies. They do have a certain consumption demand, but due to income reduction, their consumption concept is relatively conservative.

Interviewee (YY20210205F) said: "My husband is the source of family income. The tuition fee of our children, household expenditure, and social contacts all require money, so for winter sports, I still choose to come to the free Beishan Park, after all, the ice resorts are too expensive."

In summary, the unemployed (jobless) residents have no independent source of income, which makes them rely more on the family income, their consumption freedom and social status have weakened gradually, so their consumption ability is directly or indirectly affected by their economic conditions, however, this won't affect their enthusiasm for winter sports, for residents living in northern China, the ice and snow programs come from their spontaneous surviving needs and are their life skills. Moreover, there're a small number of unemployed (jobless) residents with a high family income and they have the financial ability to enjoy the consumption types of normal consumption and enjoyment consumption, but this has a lot to do with the family power they have.

### 5.2 Education level

Cognition level is an important driving force of sports participation, and the education level is a key factor affecting cognition level (Meng, 2015). Therefore, education level has led to individual differences in cognition, motivation, and participation. Family education, school education, and social education together

have determined the education level, which can affect the socialization of the educated (Shu, 2016). Of course, this has also restricted the educated from forming good winter sports habits and awareness, and acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge for participating in winter sports.

Relevant studies have shown that the higher the degree of economic development, the higher the education level; the higher the degree of social development, the more the emphasis on education and the more the investment in education (Xu & Zhou, 2017). Economic development has prompted the middle class to attach more importance to education, especially the investment in the cultural education of their children and the cultivation of the comprehensive quality of their children. They believe that the cultural accumulation and cultivation of the children shouldn't only be reflected in learning, but also in vision. Therefore, the middle class are willing to spend money to send their children to participate in winter sports programs and experience the folk culture, so that the children can train their expertise, hone their will, and increase their knowledge, and these can play a good role in their ice and snow practice.

A parent interviewee (JSH20210108M) said that the unique cold stimulus of ice and snow programs has a unique advantage in tempering the will of children, and this is one of the reasons he let his child participate in winter sports.

And a child interviewee (WCX20210108F) said that she fell in love with skiing under the influence of her father, he taught her the skiing skills, and they come to the ski resort every weekend.

As the first teachers for children, parents are vital for giving life guidance to children. K. Z. Wang et al. (2011) found that, to a certain extent, children's sports attitudes, values, and behavior patterns are consistent with those of their parents. Therefore, family education is the foothold for the prosperity of ice and snow culture, and it restricts and influences the formation of the methods, attitudes, and values of the winter sports activities of the family members. Besides family education, school education also has a significant influence on Chinese residents' cognition of winter sports and their socialization, for example, in order to implement "300 million people's activities on ice and snow", since 2018, Jilin City has gradually promoted winter sports in colleges and universities, high and middle schools, and elementary schools. Major ski resorts in Jilin City gave their full support to this calling, and they have made great contributions in helping students master the basic winter sports skills and knowledge, and popularizing various programs on ice and snow.

At the same time, there're also other professional winter sports training institutions in the society, however, due to

the particularity of ice and snow sports, social institutions charge higher, which has also reflected the middle-class feature of the participants, and this kind of social education has become a new way for the middle class to invest in the cultural education of their children.

A parent interviewee (LKY20210108M) said that, he lets his child to ski to cultivate specialty, he sends his child to Vanke ski resort, where there's professional training of ski skills; he hires private tutor to give one-to-one training, it costs 500 yuan for 1.5 hours, the child likes it and learns well, so he thinks it's worth the money.

However, working-class families often seem powerless to invest in children's winter sports education, or they don't have such a strong will to do that, and the economic condition is the direct limiting factor. The working class pay more attention to the children's performance in cultural courses, and the learning performance is the only thing that can determine whether the children could receive better education or not, in comparison, the skill training of winter sports is optional. Both the reports of American scholar Coleman and British scholar Plowden showed that, compared with school factors, the family education level and cognition dimension are more important in determining the motivation of children's quality education.

According to above analysis, education level is very important for the cultivation of interest in winter sports. Among the three education types, school education has the features of public welfare and fairness, there's no gap between classes in school education, so it is an important link in the construction of a comprehensive and popular ice and snow fitness culture. In addition, the level of family education and social education has a direct impact on children's participation, skill level, and interest in winter sports, which has formed individual differences and social stratification.

### **5.3 The social culture of ice and snow sports**

China is a low-latitude country, so the culture of ice and snow is a bit strange for most Chinese people, only the Northeast, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang can form an ice and snow environment in winter and give people a real feeling of the ice and snow world. For other people living in most areas in China, "ice and snow" is merely a concept or a curiosity. After the Beijing's successful bidding for the hosting of Winter Olympics, under the government's calling of "300 million people's activities on ice and snow", the publicity of "moving and expanding the ice in the north to the south" has produced an effective function and significance of cultural transmission, and this contains the expectation of the top-level design of the country. The *Report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist*

Party of China had clearly stated that it is necessary to "make a good preparation for the Beijing Winter Olympics to show the national image and soft power of China"; then, relevant policies such as the *13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020)* and the *Opinion on Vigorously Developing Winter Sports with the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics as the Opportunity* have been introduced, making the ice and snow sports closer to the lives of the general public.

According to the *White Paper on China's Ice and Snow Industry in 2018*, in China, the winter sports towns are mainly distributed in the Northeast area and Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei regions, and the service they provide is mainly the experience-based ice and snow leisure activities. According to incomplete statistics, 26 characteristic winter sports towns had been built in China in 2017, and by 2020, 40 winter sports towns had been constructed to highlight the image of the "city of ice and snow" (R. Zhang et al., 2020). An interviewee from Sichuan (LY20210205M) said: "the promotions of the Winter Olympics are everywhere on Internet medias, such as "Winter Olympics in Beijing, experience ice and snow in Jilin"; the promotion of characteristic winter sports towns with natural ice and snow resources such as the Vanke Songhuahu ski resort and the Wanda Changbaishan ski resort is particularly attractive to me; I can experience ice and snow programs and appreciate the natural scenery at the same time, this has greatly satisfied my curiosity of snow falling."

The publicity of Winter Olympics, ice and snow tourism, and winter sports towns has given the middle class more channels to get to know the ice and snow culture. A practical value lying in it is how to make use of the natural environment attribute of the popular entertainment of ice and snow culture to attract more middle-class residents' psychological expectations of cultural consumption, thereby increasing consumption of ice and snow culture and stimulating economic development.

In order to make good preparation for the Beijing Winter Olympics and achieve the goal of "300 million people on ice and snow", the General Administration of Sports of China initiated and worked with departments of education, development planning, civil affairs, agriculture to jointly establish mass winter sports coordination organizations at the national, provincial, and municipal levels. Mandatory requirements were issued to formulate work plans and cooperation lists for works such as ice and snow culture and fitness venue construction, event services, job position training, and publicity, etc., so as to ensure the smooth implementation of relevant policies.

A resident interviewee of Jilin City (LSL20210205F) said: the government has built many free skating rinks in the city, and a four-season cross-country skiing field has been

built in the Beishan Park, which is a key national project for the 2022 Winter Olympics. The winter body-building and entertaining facilities are getting better.

A parent interviewee who's in accompany with his child (QT20210205M) introduced: every winter in recent years, my child's school organizes free skiing activities, this year they chose the Vanke Songhuahu ski resort.

Another parent (ZMY20210205M) added: my child's school has established a skating team and informed us that as long as the children sign up, there're professional skating coaches to give free training and they'll have opportunities to participate in competitions.

In summary, under government support, the "class teaching system" of ice and snow culture has been promoted on campus, and great progress has been made in terms of the number of participants in winter sports and the popularization of ice and snow culture, which has greatly promoted the popularization of ice and snow culture among residents of all classes. However, among these classes, the differences in economic and cognitive levels have resulted in participation imbalance, only those with good conditions in every aspect can transform from experience to a normal state.

## 6. Conclusion

At present, China has entered a well-off society in an all-round way, Chinese people are yearning for a better life, and their consumption pattern is transforming from material enjoyment to participation and experience, in this context, winter sports programs have become an important lifestyle. Although winter sports have been highly praised in all classes of Chinese residents, set identity aside, personal interest is the biggest drive, and they are not closely related to class and identity, but closely related to participation methods and forms.

First, differences in economic conditions determine the level, scope, and degree of participation, and have formed a multi-level development pattern containing natural needs, fashion needs, and identity recognition, etc.

Second, the continuous improvement of education level has accelerated the socialization progress of winter sports, but the education level and background determine different participation attitudes and concepts, which further resulted in differentiation of individual participation and intensified the social stratification.

Third, Beijing's successful bidding for Winter Olympics has greatly promoted the development of winter sports in China, forming a typical symbol, that is, the consumers generally have the middle-class characteristics. The consumption of working class is more "rational", and the unemployed (jobless) class have similar features.



In short, at this stage, the stratification of Chinese citizens' winter sports bodybuilding is the combined results of the social structure, the lack of winter sports resources, and the uneven distribution of these resources. The problem should be solved according to specific conditions. Social stratification is and will be an important perspective for the research of the unequal social structure of winter sports bodybuilding. This research perspective discloses a number of realistic problems worthy of further research: the vogue of winter sports in middle class; how to mobilize the middle class and reshape their participation in winter sports, such as to ease and eliminate the social inequality...

Solving these problems help to build a harmonious society. In future, the authors will strive to realize the social equality of winter sports bodybuilding among Chinese citizens by changing the participation of different classes.

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