Research on the Value of Fencing from Olympic Perspective

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Abstract. Fencing originated from Europe in the Middle Ages, which was the product of different factors' interaction in ancient society. Since the modern Olympic Games, fencing has exerted a far-reaching influence on all aspects of society. This paper studies the value of fencing from the Olympic perspective. The value of fencing is mainly manifested in four aspects: the competitive value of fencing, the educational value of fencing, the cultural value of fencing and the economic value of fencing. These four aspects are interconnected to each other, interdependent on each other and interacting with each other. The purpose of this study is to further popularize fencing and promote its development.

Overview of the Value of Fencing

Fencing is a traditional sport event that has undergone thousands of years of historical evolution. With the continuous development of society, fencing has gradually marched from Europe to the world. The International Fencing Federation has also developed from nine Member States to a large organization with 149 Member States. Modern fencing is a traditional event of the Olympic Games, which has been listed as a formal event since the first Olympic Games in 1896. Since the modern Olympic Games, foil, sabre and epee have all been the official events of the Olympic Games. Chinese fencing began in 1955 when Soviet expert Khrushcheva opened a fencing course at the Beijing Institute of Physical Education (now Beijing Sports University). Since its introduction, fencing in China has developed for more than sixty years. With the continuous efforts of several generations, fencing in China has been gradually expanding, has broken Asian records and sets sights on the world level. It has made brilliant achievements and has become a potential gold-winning event in China's Olympic Games. Olympism is the soul of the modern Olympic Games, is a self-challenging spirit of “faster, stronger, higher”, inspiring people to have a healthy physique, optimistic spirit, love and pursuit of a better life through self-exercise, self-participation. The core idea of the Olympic Games is to promote people’s integrated and harmonious development, which means it can help people to achieve the goal of balanced development concerning people’s physique, spirit and will qualities through sports activities. Fencing, as a traditional event of the Olympic Games, with its long historical and cultural connotation and profound humanistic spirit, has important competitive value, educational value, cultural value and economic value, which has a special value and broad development potential in today's rapidly developing society.

Analysis on the Value of Fencing

Competitive Value of Fencing

“Value” was originally the concept of classical economics, and then was introduced into the field of philosophy and culturology; for human beings, only things of value to human beings and human society are meaningful. Li Keerete (1863-1936) holds that "value makes the world meaningful". Value is the category of the relationship between subject and object. The world is composed of
subject (man), object and value. Human culture is the sum of material wealth (material value) and spiritual wealth (spiritual value)[1]. The value of fencing embodies the relationship whether fencing the object with a special attribute can meet the needs of the subject. Value consists of some attribute and performance of the object, the needs and interests of the subject. According to this, the competitive value of fencing can be divided into two aspects: the objective value of fencing and the tool value of fencing.

**Objective Value of Fencing.** Competitive sports play an important role in the activities of realizing the free value of the subject, which constantly adapt to the nature as well as transform the nature in the human beings’ developing process, and constantly pursue new breakthroughs and new achievements. Fencers challenge themselves and transcend the limits. Under certain circumstances and conditions, they change the external necessity into the internal necessity, and the external discipline into self-discipline, so that competitive sports have the objective value of realizing the ultimate needs of the subject. Fencing, with subjects’ special physical activities and subjects' comparison, plays a special role in realizing the subject’s life value: it confirms the value of life existence in the activities where fencers have reached the limit of physical movement ability; it manifests the value of life continuity in the competition between subjects; it experiences the value of life transcendency in the process of satisfying subject’s spiritual need. Fencing has the value of promoting human beings’ integrated development, whose development goal is the physical and spiritual development of human beings, whose development scale is based on the standard that the society should obtain the perfect life performance, whose development motive comes from the competition needs of people’s comparing with each other[2].

People are at the center of value and participation. In social practice, people satisfy people's emotional needs, people's social needs, people's survival needs and people's development needs through fencing this object, which reflects the goal of people's continuous pursuit of freedom and comprehensive development.

**Instrumental Value of Fencing.** The instrumental value of fencing, generally speaking, refers to the direct objective effect of sports on people and society. To be more precise, it is a specific (affirmative and negative) relationship between the object of sports and the needs of the subject (man and society). Materialistic dialectics holds that nothing exists in isolation and is in contact with other things. The essence is relationship. Any attribute of anything can be attributed to a certain relationship. If it does not matter, there is no attribute. The value attribute is one attribute of the object, but it does not depend only on the object, but occurs in the process of the object’s relationship with the subject. Without the need of the subject, there will be no value attribute. Human being's practice transforms the object and the subject itself, creates new needs, thus creates and constantly transforms the value relationship between the object and the subject. The value attribute of the object, as a special relation to the subject, is created by human being's practice on the basis of the object's inherent attribute. Therefore, value depends not only on the structure of the object itself, but also on the activity of the subject. Due to the material unity of man and the world, the object has many possibilities to meet human being's needs, but this possibility alone cannot be realized as value. It is a continuous historical process to transform these possibilities into real values. Therefore, the value attributes of the object always have the nature of social history, and are always inseparable from the needs and purposeful practical activities of the subject[3]. The instrumental value of fencing refers to that human being as the subject applying fencing the object to meet people's needs in social activities, which is mainly shown in the following three aspects: (1) Politics guidance and controls the development of fencing, and fencing in turn has a dynamic impact on politics. Fencing can enhance the understanding between people of different races, reduce and eliminate the gap between countries and peoples, promote friendship and diplomatic work, improve and promote relations between countries, thus promoting world peace and development. (2) The rapid development of fencing industry has greatly promoted the social and economic development, and has become a new driving force to promote national economic growth. (3) Fencing is also a kind of sports culture, which is constantly creating culture, enriching culture and promoting the development of culture.
Educational Value of Fencing

The educational value of fencing for individuals is mainly reflected in the following two aspects: (1) It is the self-educational value of competitive sports for athletes themselves. (2) It is the educational value of competitive sports for spectators. For athletes, who are the main subject of competitive sports, will achieve self-improvement and development in the process of the immersive competition; for spectators, who are the audience of competitive sports, will be naturally influenced and edified in the process of watching sports competitions[4]. The Combination of sports and education can better promote people's comprehensive development and build a peaceful and beautiful society, which is not only the fundamental way of sports development, but also the fundamental way to implement Olympism. From the development history of fencing in Europe, fencing became one of the earliest events in the modern Olympic Games. The sport of fencing is integrated with western culture and education, is in line with the Olympic spirit, and is also a philosophy of life that promotes the comprehensive and balanced development of the physique, will and spirit of sportsmen. Fencing has sprung up in school sports and mass sports in China. It has great educational value to fencers and spectators' physical and mental development of.

Self-Educational Value of Fencing to Athletes Themselves. The educational value of fencing to the athletes' themselves is mainly manifested in the following two aspects: (1) Fencing was a compulsory course for European knights in the Middle Ages. It was once an aristocratic sport, which can be appreciated from European culture that fencing design is a combination of wisdom, courage and manners. When fencers wear black helmet and white fencing clothes, hold the sword standing proudly, a noble and confident temperament gives off from the inside out, which makes the trainer changed from the internal temperament, make the trainer's posture more elegant, make the trainer's temperament more noble. (2) More importantly, it can effectively improve people's concentration. The fencing athletes' emotions and self-control will have a direct impact on the outcome of the game. If it is difficult for both sides to win the same victory in the aspects of techniques and tactics, then in order to defeat the other side and win, one must have a strong ability of self-control and emotional adjustment. No matter what kind of emergency happens on the court, the first thing for the fencers is to control the mood with peace and cope with it freely. The fencer shouldn’t be timid when faced with a strong opponent, shouldn’t take it lightly when faced with a weak opponent. Arena is battlefield, and the fencer should face different situations with the most positive and stable attitude at any time. The cultivation of athletes' self-control ability is conducive to the adjustment and control of their mentality in the competition, so as to defeat their opponents and win.

Therefore, fencing is not only a kind of physical fitness and self-defense skills of sports event, it also trains the demeanor, temperament, self-cultivation and concentration of fencers, also can cultivate fencers' positive confidence and volitional characteristics to overcome all difficulties, is also a comprehensive sport of "wisdom + courage + skills + internal training".

Educational Value of Fencing to Spectators. The educational value of fencing to the spectators is manifested in the following two aspects: (1) The fencing movement is changeable and intense, for it has the dynamic beauty of artistic gymnastics, figure skating and other events, as well as the strength beauty of sanda, boxing and other events. In the modern society with more and more competition and pressure, fencing competition is an opportunity for spectators to release and vent themselves to achieve a deep psychological pleasure; what’s more it is an aesthetic education for the spectators to understand, experience and feel the beauty of fencing. (2) The struggle and combat of the fencers will be shown in front of spectators through a series of broadcast pictures. Every fierce confrontation and every wonderful match reflect the fencers’ struggle spirit. The competitiveness that fencers cultivate in their daily training and display in competitions will subtly inspire and educate every spectator. People, while touched by the tenacious fighting spirit of fencers, tend to associate it with themselves, regret the concessions they made when facing difficulties and setbacks, will strengthen their convictions and start all over again.
Cultural Value of Fencing

Culture is the blood and spiritual home of a nation. Sports records the culture of human body from ancient to modern times. It is the crystallization of human being’s practice and emotion in the process of social and historical development. It is a special cultural phenomenon of human beings. Fencing, as one of the traditional sports of the Olympic Games, contains the elements of communication and competition. With its unique cultural charm and cultural value, fencing has gotten more and more involved into people’s life and learning more and more. According to Marxist values, cultural value is the objective relationship between man and culture, which is based on whether the function of the object (culture) on the subject (person) conforms to the structure, scale and needs of the subject (person). If it conforms to the standard, it is the positive value, but if it does not conform to the standard, it is the negative value; it is the neutral value between the above two value. Value represents a special relationship between subject and object. It is not purely subjective or objective[5].

The cultural value of fencing is embodied in the following two aspects: (1) From the micro point of view, it can free the spectators from the tense work, meet the spectators’ spectating and spiritual needs, and improve people’s life quality. It can also cultivate fencing participants’ positive confidence to make them learn from and communicate with each other in physical confrontation, strengthen the emotional exchanges among participants to further promote cultural exchanges, economic ties and world peace between regions and countries. (2) From a macroscopic point of view, it can promote the development of social economy, highlight the comprehensive strength of social groups and the country. The development of fencing is an important way to transmit the function of fencing cultural value, which in turn promotes the modernization of urban sports in China, and has made outstanding contributions to mass sports, school sports, competitive sports, sports industry and so on. People pay more and more attention to the cultural value of fencing, which will not only certainly promote the development of fencing in China, but also play a huge role in enriching material and spiritual civilization in China as well as promoting harmonious development of society.

Economic Value of Fencing

The fundamental driving force of social development is the development of national economy. As an important component of economic development, sports economy plays an important role in national economy. From a macroscopic point of view, sports economy is the basic force of national economic development, and the development of national economy is the necessary prerequisite for the development of sports economy. From the microcosmic point of view, economic development promotes the development of the sports industry, but also improves people’s consumption in sports activities[6]. The development of sports promotes the upgrade of people’s consumption, and promotes the production and circulation of relevant sports industry material. Holding large-scale sports events can not only bring economic benefits, but also promote the development of related sports industry. Fencing industry is an important part of the sports industry, which includes foil, epee and sabre as the core part, providing related products and services to the public, covering a series of economic activities such as fencing training, fencing competitions and performances, fencing fitness leisure and fencing equipment and so on.

In recent years, China’s fencing industry has been developing rapidly. (1) The industrial foundation is becoming more and more solid, and the scale of fencing clubs and tournaments continues to expand. There are 373 fencing clubs, training centers and school teams registered nationwide, and more than 100,000 people participate in fencing. (2) The fencing industrial system is gradually completed, based on fencing training, have formed an integrated development industrial system including the performance and entertainment fencing competitions, construction of fencing clubs and venues, manufacturing and marketing of fencing equipment. (3) The fencing industry level has been continuous improving, which realized the coordinated development of competitive sports and sports industry. On the one hand, the competitive level of fencing and the achievements of Olympic fencing have been significantly improved, which has consolidated people’s cognitive
foundation of fencing; on the other hand, compared with football, basketball, marathon and other mass events, fencing has a relatively small mass base but a relatively high market value, thus plays an active role in optimizing China's economic structure and upgrading people's sports consumption.

Although fencing participants do not directly participate in material production, do not produce social material products, fencing participants who have received physical education obtain physical fitness, learn fencing related knowledge, acquire a variety of physical skills, which can make fencing participants benefit from these significantly thus to enhance social labor productivity. The economic benefits which are made by fencing’s indirectly effect on material production process can not be underestimated objectively. Developing fencing industry is an important measure to develop sports industry and promote sports consumption, is of great significance to build a well-off society, to realize consumption upgrading and to promote the integrated and coordinated development of economy and society.

**Conclusion and Suggestions**

**Conclusion**

(1) Fencing attracts a large number of people with its unique style and charm, which plays an important role in promoting the development of people’s physique, body shape and psychological quality. Its various competitive and economic values, as well as the prominent educational function, and the deep potential cultural value, are profoundly affecting fencing participants and the whole society.

(2) The competitive value of fencing is divided into the objective value of fencing and the instrumental value of fencing. Objective value means that fencers prove the value of life existence in the activities of reaching the limit of physical movement ability, express the value of life continuity in the competition among subjects, and experience the value beyond life in the process of meeting the spiritual needs of human beings. Instrumental value refers to that people use fencing the object to meet people’s political, cultural and economic needs in social activities.

(3) The educational value of fencing is divided into the self-educational value to the athletes themselves and the educational value to the spectators. The self-educational value of fencing to athletes is that it can cultivate the fencer's graceful posture, self-confidence, noble temperament, bravery, tenacity and willpower to overcome difficulties and hardships. The educational value of fencing to spectators refers to the fencing competition is an opportunity for spectators to release and vent, is an aesthetic education, so that they fully understand, experience and feel the beauty of fencing. On the other hand, the fencers’ indomitable fighting spirit in sports competitions can inspire, motivate and educate every spectator.

(4) The cultural value of fencing can meet spectators’ viewing and spiritual needs, enrich the material and spiritual civilization of the society, and promote the society's harmonious development.

(5) The economic value of fencing can make fencing participants benefit obviously, improve social labor productivity, can also develop sports industry and promote sports consumption, which is of great significance for building a well-off society, realizing consumption upgrading and promoting the coordinated development of economy and society.

**Suggestion**

With the new era, fencing has ushered in important development opportunities. All favorable policies also provide a good opportunity and external environment for fencing to reach a new stage and seek new development. The first thing to do is that the scale of folk fencing clubs should be further expanded on the national system basis. Competitive fencing is the leader of development. National teams compete for gold and silver medals in international competitions, which will naturally lead to the vigorous development of public fencing. At the same time, the extensive development of popular fencing should be popularized, cultivate more reserve talents for
competitive fencing, cultivate more followers and followers, introduce more social resources, and open up a broader space for development.

References