

Sports Education and Nationalism in China: The Case of Table Tennis

by

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Statement of Originality

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between sports education and nationalism through the in-depth examination of table tennis as a representative sport in China. The following two questions guided this research. First, how does sports education contribute to the nationalist sentiment of China? Second, are there any differences in the degree of nationalism among amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches, the three important constituents in China's sports education? The thesis considers the influence of the Whole Nation System and organizational mechanism of table tennis association or club. It discusses the impact sports education has on national identity and national pride. Using table tennis as a case study, through a combination of questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews, the thesis investigates amateur athletes from university students, professional athletes from city, provincial and national teams, and coaches from amateur and professional teams in order to study how they contribute to the national sporting success. In the main, this thesis shows that high levels of nationalism occur among all table tennis players and coaches, and that the younger the players are when they begin table tennis training, the more patriotic they tend to be. This suggests that sports can promote nationalist sentiment by way of heightening the general understanding of table tennis. The three groups, however, have their respective roles under the Whole Nation System. First, amateur athletes are the main beneficiaries and their level of nationalism is the highest among the three groups. For the large part since the government has provided them with abundant resources and exchange opportunities to study table tennis, they are therefore inclined to be more positive. Second, professional athletes are largely innocent participants who have been profoundly influenced by the Whole Nation System. These athletes who started playing table tennis at an early age and participated in a

number of match types would know more “inside stories”, and be more skeptical of the system. This results in a lower sense of nationalism toward table tennis. Third, coaches are intermediaries of the Whole Nation System, in charge of carrying out the national policies and instructors of amateur athletes and professional athletes. Although they are mostly ambivalent about which system is better, it is not easy to change this system. This research shows that although table tennis is a dominant sport in China, with China holding world domination, there are adverse effects of the Whole Nation System, which are also relevant to other national sports of China. This points to the imperatives of reforming the Whole Nation System especially toward introducing more transparency and accountability, and elements of professionalization. Rather than shifting to a totally different system, introducing sports clubs or associations would be a possible direction in the short term, before more competitive market-oriented elements could be incorporated in the longer-term future.

Keywords: sport, sports education, nationalism, table tennis, the Whole Nation System

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List of Abbreviations

CTTA	Chinese Table Tennis Association
EDUHK	The Education University of Hong Kong
EIS	Ethnic Identity Scales
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ITTF	International Table Tennis Federation
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
SDT	Self-Determination Theory

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Brief Introduction

This thesis examines the relationship between sports education and nationalism in China by specifically focusing on table tennis. Sports have an important impact on human beings and are closely correlated to politics. As Horne et al. (1999) recount, “sports (and play) involve rules and regulations which are derived in some way from the ‘real world’”. Sports provide politically usable resources and endorse nation-building and international image-shaping. They are closely intertwined with nationalism; one’s devotion to and vigorous support for one’s country. For example, when audiences cheer for their favourite athletes or when a nation’s flag is raised as a symbol of victory, nationalism arises as an expression of national identity and consciousness (Law, 2014). Studies have examined the relationship between sports and national identity (Allison, 2000; Bairner, 2008; Cronin, 1999; Mertin, 2007; Rowe, McKay & Miller, 1998). However, although the importance of sports to nationalism has been highlighted repeatedly over time, there have been few empirical studies on it. Further, the role of sports education in the development of nationalism and the mechanisms underpinning these two closely related socio-political concepts have rarely been studied in a systematic or empirical way. This study argues that sports education in China ignites nationalism. It could be said that sports education and nationalism have a reciprocal effect, not just that sports education enhances nationalism, but also nationalism fosters the development of sports education. I can acknowledge that sport education and nationalist sentiment being connected

to each other is indeed reality, but this is my Doctor of Education research, and I do not have the sufficient base to analyze all the compact relationships between the variables. The research time, data, and work are limited, and so on. My study has primarily focused on sports education's contribution to the direction of nationalist sentiment. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to empirically explore the relationship between sports and nationalism in China and the role of sports education in the development of nationalism through a case study of table tennis. Also, this research shows that although table tennis is a dominant sport in China, with China holding world domination, there are adverse effects of the Whole Nation System, which are also relevant to other national sports of China. This points to the imperatives of reforming the Whole Nation System especially toward introducing more transparency and accountability and elements of professionalization.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 An overview of Chinese sports and nationalism

Early in the 20th century, the first seeds of a dream were sown, in which the Chinese people hoped to build a powerful nation in the arena of the Olympic Games. The people asked: 'When will China send a competent player to participate in the Olympic Games? When will China send a competent team to participate in the Olympic Games? When will China be able to host the Olympic Games?'

Hoberman (1984) put forward a response: 'Sports nationalism is not simply "a kind" of

phenomenon. On the contrary, it is a complex social political reaction, which deals with all kinds of challenges which occur in different fields. If we want to better understand it, we must observe different national texts about sport's nationalism. However, the values of national identity and the power of patriotism were the intentional offspring of the Beijing Olympic Games. More Chinese joined up for sports activities after the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008. Such a service system for national physical fitness is an effective carrier to promote both the urban and rural construction for physical fitness nation-wide. Adopting the original philosophy of the Olympics, the 'Humanistic Olympics' became the core ideal of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. It proposed to combine the Olympic spirit with the cultural essence of China's past 5,000 years, and to showcase the Olympic Games with the humanistic theme of "Harmony, Communication and Development," so as to promote world peace. With the goal of friendship and progress, throughout the preparation of the Beijing Olympic Games, the concept of the Humanistic Olympics was an ever-present theme and actual operation of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. This in turn has become a unique Olympic heritage, which will have a far-reaching impact on the future development of China's cities. To understand this, we must create a real and specific interpretation of nationalism from a Sinicized context. We must undertake a complete and systematic analysis of nationalism in the context of Chinese thought, social trends and social movements. We must also find a future path for cultural dialogue about sports between China and the West.

Over the past 100 years, the Chinese dream of reviving a powerful nation has never been ever-present. It has accompanied the establishment of a nation, the rebirth of a national culture and the rise and fall of nationalism. In the history of modern nationalism, Liang Qichao, a pioneer of theory, and Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Chinese nation state, are both

well-known. In contrast, Zhang Bopu, an education and sports pioneer, is rarely mentioned. Despite this, sportsmen have contributed their blood, sweat, youth and lives to forging ‘the sports power dream’, which has constantly arisen on the international stage of the Olympic Games. In 1928, Song Ruhai, the leader of the Huazhong Sports Association, attended the Olympic Games as an observer. In the following Olympics in 1932, Liu Changchun, the first Chinese athlete to formally participate in an Olympic Games, went to the games alone. In 1948, the 14th Olympic Games were held in London, England, thirty-three male athletes were dispatched to compete in basketball, football, track and field, swimming and cycling. A sports group was organised by the army of the Republic of China. In 1952, the national flag of the People’s Republic of China was flown for the first time at the Olympic Games in Helsinki. In 1984, Xu Haifeng, won the first gold medal for China in the Olympic Games held in Los Angeles. In this way, the Olympic Games have become a means of inspiring a national spirit, awakening a national consciousness, maintaining national emotion and enhancing the nation’s soft power.

Yu Yingshi (2002) once said, ‘Nationalism has been one of the biggest driving forces in China for the past 100 years. Whether a political force succeeds or not depends on how it accesses the national sentiment. If a political force is supported by nationalism, it will succeed, and vice versa.’ The founding of the new Chinese state in 1949 marked the realisation of independence for the nation, which had been oppressed by imperialism for more than 100 years. It was the end of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and it completed the historical task of building a modern nation state. For the more than 60 years since then, the new Chinese dream of becoming independent, strong and prosperous is being achieved step by step. China has evolved from being ‘the sick man of East Asia’ to a major

sporting power. The Beijing Olympic Games ended its humiliation and fulfilled a century-old dream. During the 60 years in which sports have developed in the new China, Chinese nationalism has been closely linked with Chinese sports. Now China has achieved the dignity and national confidence of a big country, supported by national self-esteem.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in some Western countries, there has been suspicion or even resentment of China's rise in the Olympic arena. This kind of vision can easily remind us of the situation in the 1960s and 1970s when Westerners questioned the 'red state machine' of the Soviet Union and East Germany. Susan Brownell, an American expert on Chinese sports, observed:

When the Olympic slogan 'one world, one dream' was released, the Olympic movement had entered a universal important moment. Perhaps it is also a time to celebrate the global culture of the 21st century. However, in the eyes of some Western politicians, media, human rights organisations and even the general-public, there is always hostility to the success of China's bid.

After two rounds of attacks on China based on threat theory and containment theory, it is not difficult to predict that a third wave of attacks is bound to occur based on 'China's new nationalism'. Liu Peng (2009) summarised the past 60 years of sports in China in the preface to his article (*Sports in New China*), tracing China's transformation from 'the sick man of East Asia' to a major sporting country:

The development of sports undertaking has not only embodied the glorious histories and great achievements of our country's socialist modernisation drive, but also wonderfully represented the Chinese nation's struggle to be strong and achieve a great

rejuvenation.

There have been many national heroes and role models in the modern history of Chinese sports. These include Rong Guotuan and Xu Haifeng, Chinese women volleyball players, Yao Ming and Liu Xiang from the Athens Olympics, Li Na at the French Open; Zhu Jianhua from the Los Angeles Olympic Games, Liu Xiang from the Beijing and London games and the Chinese men's football team that has beaten Japan and South Korea for the past 20 years. Sporting achievements have become one of the Chinese expectations and has a major impact on the entire Chinese nation.

1.2.2 The honour of table tennis in Guangdong province

Although Guangdong has not produced any top performing teams in Chinese competitions, it does represent the national development strategy and success of the sport, politically and economically. The Guangdong table tennis athletes have had excellent achievements, not just in China but throughout the world.

(1) Table tennis in Guangdong Province has a long history and culture.

Culture is the crystallization of reality and abstraction in the course of human historical development, and an important component of a country or region's soft power and comprehensive competitiveness. Guangdong's table tennis culture has profound cultural connotations. Liang Zhuohui, the first coach of China's table tennis team, Jiang Yongning, the first Chinese to defeat the world champion in the competition, and Rong Guotuan, the first Chinese world champion, are all Cantonese nationals. They start from Guangdong and then write brilliantly for our country and even the world's table tennis sport. It has left behind a

rich culture of table tennis. Table tennis is a sport invented by the British. In the 1930s and 1940s, table tennis technology was introduced into China as a recreational activity from two channels: first, through Japan to Shanghai and other big cities in China; second, through Hong Kong to Guangdong. In particular, Rong Guotuan returned from Hong Kong to Zhongshan City, bringing the world's advanced table tennis technology and culture to Guangdong, and then from Guangdong to the world; finally winning the world championship. From that moment on, table tennis slowly developed into China's "national ball", and as a "prophet" of Guangdong Province began its own way to become a strong province of table tennis, there have been many Guangdong table tennis world champions: Rong Guotuan, Qiao Hong, Lin Zhigang, Ma Lin, Zhang Chao, Liu Shiwen, and Fan Zhendong. In particular, the top players of the Chinese National Team, such as Fan Zhendong and Liu Shiwen, are all Cantonese nationals. Such a history and achievements have undoubtedly made Guangdong the most influential province for table tennis in China.

(2) Table tennis in Guangdong Province has superior policy support and organizational structure.

Since the 17th National Congress of the CPC, the Central Committee has placed cultural construction in an unprecedentedly important position. In 2003, the Guangdong Provincial Committee and the provincial government promulgated the Outline of the Planning for the Construction of a Cultural Province in Guangdong Province (2003-2010), which proposed the construction of a cultural province. Among them, it is clearly put forward that sports culture is the sum of the material, system and spiritual culture of human sports. Guangdong should be built into a major province of sports culture. Over the past 16 years, Guangdong has continuously promulgated relevant policies and regulations, and has formed a complete

policy system to fully support the development of sports. As a strong sport in Guangdong, table tennis is a collection of "thousands of favorites in one". Its organizational structure is the soundest and its results the most remarkable. As a government functional department, "Guangdong Table Tennis and Badminton Management Center" is the competent authority of table tennis. It has completed the establishment and operation of 21 prefecture-level cities throughout the whole province. Guangdong Table Tennis Association has completed the construction of four-level organizational structure of provinces, cities, counties and towns. With a complete policy system and organizational structure, Guangdong table tennis activities are in the forefront of the country in terms of material support, personnel training, talent transfer, Event Hosting and so on, and has become the major and most powerful province of table tennis in the country.

(3) Table Tennis in Guangdong Province has the most active commercialized sports market.

So-called sports commercialization refers to a development model of sports, which takes the enjoyment and stimulation brought by the entertainment and competitiveness of sports itself as the main products, takes a mature business model as the main means of operation, and balances all aspects of interest to achieve the goal of mutual benefit and reciprocity. At the frontier of China's reform and opening up, Guangdong Province is the most market-oriented city in China. It is also the most open city with the most complete acceptance of Western concepts in the vicinity of Hong Kong and Macao. Therefore, as a strong table tennis province, Guangdong has become the most commercialized city of table tennis in China; 21 cities in Guangdong Province have their own brand of table tennis matches. For example, Guangzhou has held 11 consecutive "Mayor's Cup" mass table tennis matches, and the sponsors are Guangzhou's "Times Real Estate" Development Limited Company. Every table tennis club in Guangdong Province also hold various business competitions from time to

time. The most famous table tennis club in Guangzhou, "Big World" holds a game every week, attracting many table tennis fans to participate.

To count the most attractive and influential table tennis business competitions, it must be the "12 strongest people on the surface" through to the World Table Tennis Championships. On March 1, 2019, the "12 strongest people on the ground" direct competition, co-sponsored by China Table Tennis Association, Shenzhen Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism and Sports Bureau and Tencent Sports, opened in Shenzhen. 12 men and 12 women of China's table tennis team gathered at Baoan Stadium to compete for the qualifications of the World Table Tennis Championship through Budapest. At the same time, the results of this direct competition will also be an important basis for the athletes to compete to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Guangdong table tennis players have been triumphant and this section introduces two of the most famous ones. The first is Ma Lin, 'Mr World Cup'. He is the only male player ever to win Olympic gold in singles, doubles and team table tennis competitions. He holds a professional record of five major titles (four World Cups and one Olympic Gold). In China, Ma is famous for his dedication to training. In his early days, he was renowned for wearing down the soles of his shoes in just three hours. He has won four World Cup trophies (2000, 2003, 2004, 2006), more than any other player in history. Since retiring in December 2013, Ma has served as the head coach of the Guangdong provincial table tennis team.

The second player is Liu Shiwen, who recently won the team competition with her compatriots, Li Xiaoxia and Dingning, at the 2016 Rio Olympics. Born in Liaoning Province, Liu began her table tennis career in Guangdong when she was only seven years old. She was four times World Cup champion, three times World Tour Grand Finals champion and four times Asian Cup champion. From early 2012 to late 2016, Liu consistently ranked No. 1 or No. 2 in the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Women's World ranking (with no lower rank than 3rd). She also earned an undergraduate business administration degree from the South China University of Technology.

This indicates that Guangdong is one of the strong provinces of table tennis in China. Also, the table tennis market is prosperous in Guangdong. There are many difference kinds of national commercial table tennis competitions are often held in Guangdong. Furthermore, I retired from the Guangdong provincial team and I understand this region. Therefore I based my research in Guangdong.

1.2.3 Three recent events

Table tennis is regarded as a national sport in China. Chinese people have complex feelings about it and attach great importance to its development. However, many controversial events surrounding table tennis have recently occurred. Regarding the “Three recent events”, the thesis considers the influence of social context and organizational mechanisms (table tennis association or club). Under the Whole Nation System, it discusses the impact of national sentiment (such as national identity and national pride) on which sports education has. The first event involved Kong Linghui, a famous table tennis star and former head coach of the Chinese women's table tennis team. In May 2017, the foreign media reported that Kong was

accused of gambling in Singapore, when he was sued by a casino in a Hong Kong court to recover a \$375 thousand dollar gambling debt. The Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) immediately terminated Kong Linghui as a coach and returned him to mainland China for investigation. The spokesperson for the general administration of sports in China made it very clear: ‘Kong Linghui, as a party member cadre and a state official, must strictly abide by the party discipline and the law of the state; as a famous athlete and coach, he should pay more attention to his social image and social influence and take the lead in observing discipline and law. Showing no tolerance for any similar behaviour, the general administration issued the statement, that Kong Linghui violated sports’ regulations and will be punished further if he goes to a casino again.

The second event concerned Liu Guoliang, a famous table tennis player and national team coach. In June 2017, the CTТА reformed the management structure of the national table tennis team, eliminating the positions of general coach and head coach. These were replaced by two national team coaches, one for men and one for women. Their focus was to be on competitive training and team management. Due to the restructuring, Liu Guoliang, the former general coach, was reappointed as the vice chairman of the CTТА. For the national table tennis association, a ‘flat management mode’ ensures that ordinary coaches have limited power to administer their teams but more power over training business. This is in order to control any individual independent power which might influence the development of sports teams. Control over the individual team’s management belongs to the senior members of the general administration. After this, Liu Guoliang, who had been the first Chinese grand slam table tennis winner, led the national team against Japan, winning all of the championships. Nonetheless, the people associated this event with the Kong Linghui scandal mentioned

above, resulting in overwhelming online opposition. Liu's change in position affected the hearts of millions of fans.

The third event also involved Liu Guoliang. Unexpectedly, the events of 2017 continued to simmer. On 23 June 2017, a Chinese table tennis tournament was held in Chengdu. Chengdu is viewed as 'the' place for Chinese athletes to demonstrate their abilities. Thus, it was unusual for leading players, such as Ma Long, Zhang Jike, Xu Xin and Fan Zhendong, to withdraw from the competition in unison. Due to the withdrawals, the Japanese team, which was the arch-rival of the Chinese team, won easily. Although such an action contradicted sportsmanship, hundreds of millions of netizens gave the 'thumbs up' online to express their views of the event. Later the same night, the Chinese players who had withdrawn from the competition updated a message on their personal microblogs: 'At this moment, we are not interested in fighting. We all miss you Liu Guoliang'. They wanted Liu Guoliang back as the general coach of the national team, however as of 2018 he became the chairman of the CTTA.

Throughout its history, Chinese table tennis has rarely disappointed the Chinese people. Thus, in every competition, Chinese spectators watch the performances of each player with confidence. Using the 'Kong Linghui Scandal', the 'Liu Guoliang Affair' and the 'National Table Tennis Professional Athletes Collective Withdrawal' to introduce the subject, this thesis considers the influence of social context and organisational mechanisms, and discusses the impact of sports education on national sentiment (such as national identity and national pride). Presenting table tennis as a case study and relying on mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative analyses), it investigates amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches to determine how sporting success and diplomatic relations are influenced. When President Xi

Jinping discussed the new idea of ‘Ping-pong Nationalism’ in episode six of ‘Great Power Politics’ (Yang, 2017), explaining how table tennis influences patriotic political education, he said:

Table tennis is much smaller than rugby, but it is of great importance in China–US relations. Table tennis made the big ball run and the big ball referred to the Earth. Because of table tennis, China–US relations at that time stepped onto a new stage. Therefore, we hope teenagers between our two countries strengthen communication and develop friendships through this diplomatic table tennis spirit. We welcome everyone to come and have a look at China to learn more about China!

‘Ping-pong Nationalism’ is the inheritance of Chinese diplomacy, strengthening the national emotions of teenagers and helping people from other countries learn more about China. Importantly, it also explains the practical guiding significance of table tennis and the future expectations for how it can promote nationalism through sports education.

1.3 Purpose of the study

Today, fierce international competition based on national strength includes not only economic, scientific, technological and national defence elements, but cultural strength and national spirit. The spirit of Chinese sport can enhance the cohesion of nationalism, which is not only an important component of comprehensive national strength, but also a spiritual force with the potential for future development. The spirit of Chinese sport has not only evolved over time, and contains critical elements of reform and innovation, but also embodies the national spirit with patriotism at its core.

Contemporary domestic research on the relationship between nationalism and Chinese sports has primarily focused on modern sports. It has explored such aspects as the relationship between nationalism and the Olympics, sports and diplomacy, and Chinese nationalism and national traditional sports. However, only a few general monographic studies have been published. Thus, even though the close relationship between Chinese nationalism and sports have generally been recognised, a systematic, in-depth analysis and discussion of the relationship between the two has been lacking. Further, research has focused on how sports play a role in international relations, while national spirit has rarely been examined in the context of the development of Chinese sports from the perspective of Chinese nationalism. Although many studies have investigated international confrontations and the sports culture of Chinese nationalism in competitive sports, the influence of nationalism on domestic (especially contemporary) mass sports, the sports' system and the Chinese people's concept of sports has almost never been discussed.

The overall purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the relationship between sports education and nationalism among amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches to determine the mechanisms linking these variables. Specifically, the thesis seeks to explore the manner in which sports education influences the propagation and spread of nationalism. The case study focuses on the development of table tennis in Guangdong. Although Guangdong does not boast the top performing teams in Chinese competitions, it does represent the national development strategy and success of the sport, both politically and economically. Previous studies have left gaps in these aspects, so to bridge these gaps, this thesis reveals the positive effects of sports education on the performance of the subjects herein.

1.4 Research questions

In China, table tennis is regarded as the ‘national sport’ as the Chinese people have a special preference for it. Words such as ‘sweep’ and ‘monopolise’ frequently appear in descriptions of Chinese table tennis events, and few Western faces appear on the podium at world championships. China’s strong sweep of the sport and Asia’s comprehensive monopoly have left a gap in the development of table tennis events. Even if Western countries invest human, material and financial resources to train excellent athletes, they cannot compete with Chinese players on the international stage. Hence, many countries have ceased their investment in table tennis events. International table tennis coverage has also diminished, and the development of table tennis has encountered a stall. As Sharara said, it has been the pride of China to monopolise table tennis, but it has been an embarrassment for the rest of the world. After the 2012 London Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) formally proposed that table tennis be among the sports considered for replacement by more ‘current’ sports in the 2020 games. However, table tennis survived and will be present in the Tokyo Olympics.

As the core country behind the development of table tennis, China has both the responsibility and obligation to explore its cultural meanings to continue the vitality of the sport and its cultural expression. Although there have been many studies on the core technology of table tennis, the nurturing of table tennis talent and the methods of table tennis training, there has been little research on the structure and spirit. To further develop and promote table tennis, explore the educational overtones of its events and realise the influence of sports education on nationalism, it is essential to combine sports education and the spirit of nationalism. The following research questions frame the study:

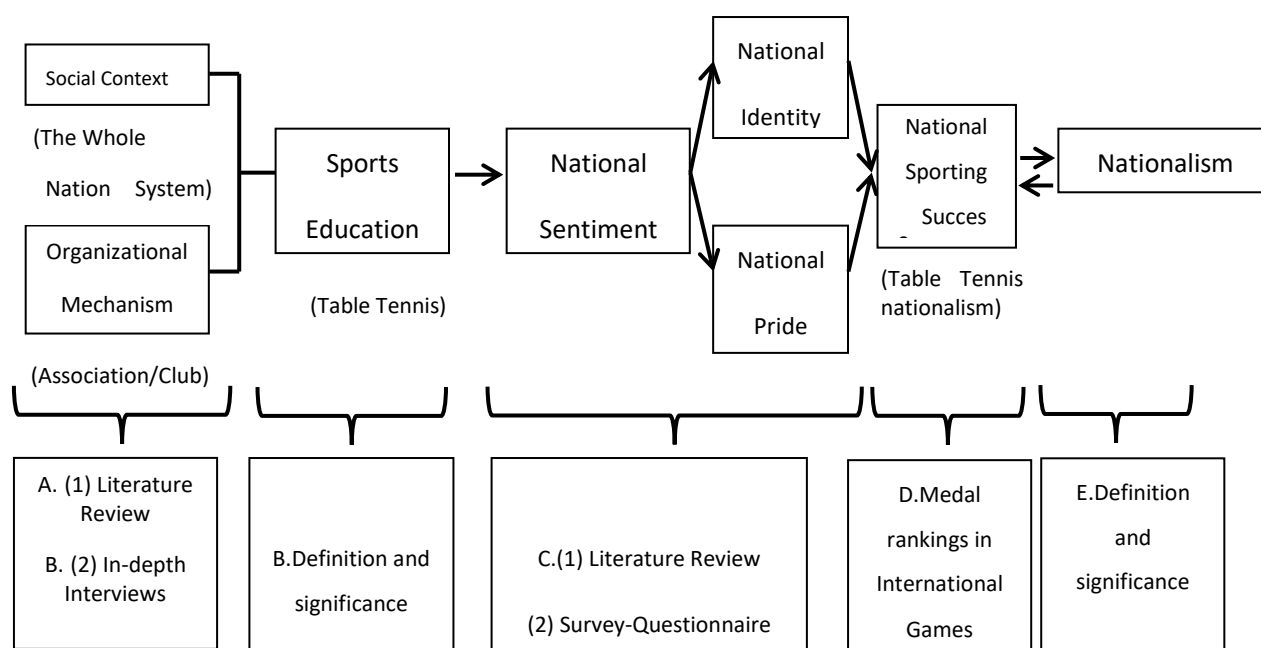
1. How does sports education contribute to nationalist sentiment?
2. Are there differences in the degree of nationalism among amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches in table tennis, the three important constituents in China's sports education?

Question 2 is an elaboration of Question 1. Research on the three categories of sports figures can clarify the complementary effects of physical education and nationalist education on table tennis. Owing to these three types of sports figures being the main participants in the sport, their thorough study can provide a complete picture of how sports education and nationalism are closely intertwined. In recent decades, China as a nation has achieved excellent results in table tennis. Under the 'Whole Nation System', table tennis training and education at each team level (district, city, provincial and national) have been designed to incorporate nationalist education. As a table tennis athlete, I have personal experience with the Whole Nation System, therefore this research is conducted from an insider's perspective. The combination of physical education and nationalism in table tennis is explored to determine the reasons certain things happen. If the relevant influencing factors can be identified, the advantages carried forward and the insufficiencies overcome, it will be more conducive to promoting table tennis and enhancing national sentiment. The implications of this research are not limited to table tennis. Other sports may also enhance national sentiment, thus this thesis lays the foundation for the future study of other sports.

1.5 Theoretical framework

The research was carried out using a combined survey methodology of quantitative and qualitative approaches to conduct a series of empirical studies on the nationalist model and its evaluation. Chart 1 shows the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Chart 1: Theoretical Framework



In regards to “Liu Guoliang’s and Kong Linghui’s Scandalous Affair” and “National Professional Table Tennis Athletes Collective Withdrawal” as the introductory subjects, the thesis considers the influence of social context and organizational mechanisms (table tennis association or club). It discusses the impact of national sentiment (such as national identity and national pride) and sports education has throughout the whole national system. What is more, using table tennis as a case, through quantitative analysis (questionnaires) and qualitative analysis (in-depth interviews), we investigate amateur athletes (university

students), professional athletes (city, provincial and national professional athletes) and coaches (amateur and professional) to study how national sporting successes and diplomatic relations by persons, organizations and nations influences and promotes youth patriotism and national emotion. For illustration, the mutual effect among organization support, national honor and personal growth, the mutual and promotional effect of nationalism on which table tennis has, the education tools of inspiration, or the cultivation of nationalism or patriotism. “Pingpong Nationalism” not only bequeaths great power diplomacy, strengthens the national emotion of teenagers and allows people from other countries to know more about China, but also explains the practical guiding significance and future expectations of how table tennis in sports education contributes to nationalism.

1.6 Significance of the study

1.6.1 Current status of nationalism and sports education in China

The promotion of sports education has had a positive effect on nationalism. The propagation of nationalism has not only been influenced by political and economic factors, but by growth on a global scale and the development of sports. Nonetheless, there has been a lack of empirical research on these topics in China. The demand for further research can be justified by the effect of sports education on student learning and control over the teaching-learning process in the sports context. In addition, there are ambiguities and gaps at the citizenship education level in China. This thesis defines them, having conducted surveys to understand the correlation between national identity and sports education. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches can provide a complete overview of sports education’s impact. Finally,

to reach an entirely comprehensive understanding of the relationship between sports education and nationalism, it is necessary to conduct research that further explores this issue.

1.6.2 Significance of table tennis in China

Table tennis is the national sport of China. It was in this sport that Chinese athletes won the first international sports award for the country. This has played an important role in the complex sports history of China.

The development of table tennis in China has taken place within a special historical and cultural framework. In 1904, Japan introduced table tennis to China (Xinhuan News), however China's political instability had hindered development of the sport. After the PRC was established in 1949, importance was gradually allocated to table tennis. Under governmental supervision, the popularity of the sport increased (Li & Xiao, 2012). China took part in the 20th world championships in 1953 and the 23rd world championships in 1956. Although its athletes were relatively weak in the competition, they were able to sustain significant progress in the early stages. In 1959, the Chinese table tennis player Rong Guotuan won the first world championship for China. Since then, China has achieved perpetual success in this field and has consistently won first place in the three largest table tennis tournaments worldwide (Xie, 2004). Earning such honours has allowed table tennis players to achieve a privileged status among the Chinese people and table tennis to become the country's national game.

The second reason table tennis has become the national sport of China is that it is accessible

to ordinary people who love to play. Table tennis has few environmental limitations, and people can participate in the sport regardless of their age, gender, nationality or external conditions. Playing table tennis satisfies the nation's desire for exercise, and when China's economy was poor, it was affordable.

The third reason table tennis is China's national sport is the important role it has played in diplomacy. In 1971, the Chinese table tennis team participated in the 31st World Table Tennis Championships held in Nagoya, Japan. At that time, the relationship between China and the United States was becoming amicable. During the competition, the athletes of both countries befriended one another, leading to the visit of US President Richard Nixon to China. Thereafter, the United States table tennis delegation visited China and played a friendly match in Beijing. This match had a significant political influence and opened the door to a diplomatic breakthrough between the Chinese and American people. Ever since, the event has been referred to as 'Ping-pong Diplomacy'. Such a background sustains nationalism among table tennis athletes and inspires them to achieve greater success. Table tennis for the Chinese people therefore fosters the spirit of nationalism.

1.7 Ethics

Ethical and moral considerations have become an essential element of educational research. Ethical concerns must be considered at every stage (Basit, 2010), and in keeping with this the thesis has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Education University of Hong Kong. The research consent form explains that the participants are given the option to join the study. Their choices are respected and the participants are only invited to join the study if they are so willing. Their private information is strictly protected.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter examines how sports mix with nationalism on many levels. It first deals with the socio-political context of sports and the organisational mechanism of table tennis in China. Then it explores the concept of nationalism and its relationship to sports. To be specific, the dimensions of nationalism, including national identity and national pride, are discussed. Finally, the chapter further elaborates the relationship between nationalism and sports education.

2.1 Nationalism

‘Nationalism’ is derived from the Latin word ‘patria’, which originates from another Latin word, ‘pater’, meaning ‘father’ (Dietz, 1989). Since the 17th century, the word ‘nationalism’ has had political connotations, even though the word has developed different meanings in various historical contexts (McLean, 2003). In modern society, nationalism can be understood as the identity of a group in terms of its physical or cultural context. As such, nationalism is an emotion or an emotional ideology deeply rooted in a community. It is manifested by social idioms and principles that work to protect a nation’s institutions and ambitions for political power (Gellner & Breuilly, 2008). Although traditional concepts imply that nationalism is a ‘collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit’ (Hechter, 2000, p. 323), the nation-state is central to the emergence of nationalism. Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger or satisfaction aroused by national development (Gellner, 1983). However, since the development of nationalism is closely tied to the individual nation, geographical, cultural and political contexts are critical and relevant to the discussion. Greenfeld (1992) argued that nationalism can be defined as the deep feelings formed when different groups are isolated from others within the territory of the

motherland for thousands of years. These profound feeling towards one's motherland are shaped over time. Mitter (2005) explained that nationalism is a deep love for the national language, culture, customs and values developed throughout history, primarily to protect the interests of the nation. From the perspective of ethics, nationalism is a kind of social thought, based on a common moral psychology, emotion, character and national consciousness. By protecting, enhancing, criticising and reconsidering the common moral values, and shaping the spirit, morality, equality, independence, unity, self-determination and prosperity, a nation can be realised (Wang, 2007).

(1) The levels of nationalism.

In general, for the classification of nationalism, the most famous is the Hans Kohn Dichotomy. Generally speaking, Kohn believes that nationalism can be divided into two regions, one is Western, the other is Eastern. Nationalism in the West is primitive nationalism and originated from indigenous ideas. It is based on the enlightenment movement of the 18th century in knowledge. Its form is the rational union of citizens within the scope of common law and common territory. It emphasizes rationality and individual freedom. It is future-oriented and forward-looking. Its essence is universalism. It aims at the unity of the world. Therefore, nationalism in the West is a political phenomenon, which precedes or at least synchronizes with nation building. Eastern nationalism emphasizes irrational romanticism and collective power. Formally, the foundation of eastern nationalism is the belief in the common culture and the origin of ethnic groups. It often emphasizes fictional heroes and a mysterious past, and looks backwards. Its legitimacy does not lie in emphasizing the combination of future rationality and individual freedom, but in the common culture and ethnic origins of the past. Therefore, from the perspective of Eastern-style nationalism, the

nation is an organic, complete and transcendental entirety. Group membership is based on descent, and group members have been branded with a permanent national brand since birth.

In the classical writers' expositions on nationalism, Lenin's exposition is more comprehensive and balanced than that of Marx and Engels, who are more concerned about nationalism at the world level and Stalin at the domestic level in order to achieve "human liberation" in the world. Generally speaking, Lenin's exposition of nationalism is embodied in three levels:

The world level, the basis of which is the world revolution in the general sense and the fundamental goal of "human emancipation", which is conducive to the people's adherence to the Marxist concept of history, the historical materialism concept of social development, and the second is the country.

The international level, it mainly deals with the nationalism of oppressed and oppressed nationalities in the imperialist era and the nationalism of large and small nationalities, including the consideration of nationalism in dealing with international relations, which enlightens the people to correctly understand the existence of nationalism and its powerful forces in contemporary times, and in international relations.

The domestic level, the issue of "two nationalities" (nationalism of oppressive nations and nationalism of oppressed nations) has become a major concern, which is conducive to maintaining national unity, social stability and national progress. These three levels present a close logical relationship between the world, the international and the domestic. They are interrelated and mutually contrasting. They present Lenin's political views and strategic

orientation on nationalism in a more three-dimensional way.

In the light of this research, nationalism originating in Western Europe has had a profound impact on the Olympic Movement, and the two have always maintained a symbiotic interdependence in the process of interactive evolution. The coexistence of nationalism's "deconstruction" and "construction" of the Olympic Movement constitutes not only the political basis for the nation-state to participate in the Olympic Movement, but also the intervention force to impact the Olympic Movement. In the era of globalization, in order to realize the ideal of peaceful internationalism, sports still has to face the modern turn of nationalism. In the interactive evolution of sports and nationalism, efforts should be made to realize their own ideals, and the interaction between sports and Chinese nationalism should be viewed scientifically.

(2) Nationalism is of certain importance.

Democracy is a theory about nation-state, so it has a great influence on the modern world. With the emergence of the nation-state, nationalism, as the basis of its ideology, has also been developed, and patriotism has evolved into loyalty to the nation-state. Democracy is used as a reference framework and criterion for measuring and evaluating people and policies. It is a major form of self-identity, so it can unite people or differentiate them. Nationalism requires people to identify with the interests of their ethnic groups and support the creation of a nation, that is, a nation-state, to safeguard these interests. Since the French Revolution, nationalism has become more and more prevalent. The left-wing advocates it as a tool to improve the welfare of citizens, while the right-wing advocates unity and stability. With the end of the

cold war, many people who were controlled by the Soviet Union in the past rose to declare their right to national self-determination. At the same time, however, the Western European and North American countries have taken steps towards an international alliance, and the Islamic world is also manipulating the concept of a large, Pan-Islamic country. Although democracy can have a positive impact, its narrow vision heralds the danger of conflict over precious resources.

Nationalism is the oldest of all ideologies and is undoubtedly the most lethal. The importance of this concept in contemporary politics cannot be overstated. At the end of the past two hundred years, nationalism has been the most powerful political idea. It has a great impact on everyone in modern society. Policies pursued in the name of the State will be commended, but the same action may be condemned if it resorts to other reasons. In the name of the country, millions of people have been sacrificed and killed, properties destroyed and resources plundered. Nevertheless, individuals are sublimated on the basis of nation-state and make great contributions to human nature. The powerful power of nationalism makes it dominate almost every other ideological system. In fact, only anarchism denies the state, and only some extreme anarchists deny the state completely. In all other ideologies, the state occupies a place, and in some claims, the state occupies a dominant position.

The reason nationalism has established a modern state system is that nationalism inspires a sense of belonging to national nature, creates a cultural situation, makes strangers who have never known each other feel connected, and transforms passive subjects who belong to the people under the state into active citizens. Huang Yaozong said, "The most powerful force of

nationalism lies in its ability to mobilize society. It can organize the political movement of modernity and all kinds of social movements with political power as their appeal.

Nationalism is established through an historical process and is developed and strengthened over time. It also entails the love of and loyalty to the motherland and its people, which is more important than anything else. Nationalism can apply to a series of actions that protects the interests of the people and the motherland. The next section describes two of the most important components of nationalism: national identity and national pride.

2.1.1 National identity

2.1.1.1 Definition of national identity

National identity implies a sense of belonging to one state or one nation, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture, language and politics. As Derrida (1992, p. 129) claimed, ‘All identities can possibly exist with their differences. There is no culture or cultural identity which does not have its “other” of the “self”.’ The building of an identity is an inclusive process in which the common values of the insiders are internalised. Identity implies both uniqueness and sameness. Martin (1995) found that identity could not be defined in isolation. In his words, ‘the only way to circumscribe an identity is by contrasting it against other identities.’ The process of identification is multi-dimensional and dynamic. By necessity, it represents a plurality of people, groups and social confrontations.

National identity can be viewed as the process of social cohesion. It has typically been

defined using a framework that assesses how members of a nation understand its values and norms. Belonging to a country has a sufficient impact on whether other identities are adopted or weakened, such as religious, ethnic and class identities. Social and cultural identities can be categorised into two groups: ‘granted’ and ‘gained’ (Yurdusev, 1997). Although family, ethnic group, society, community, nation and civilisation can be understood as ‘granted’ identities, national identity is ‘gained’ along with the intervention of the modern state (Hobsbawm, 1991).

National identity can also be understood from a geographical perspective. Landscapes play a powerful role in its imaginative construction. They carry the values that individuals and groups ascribe to them to maintain their particular visions of national identity. Bender (1998) found that regardless of how people consider the landscape, ‘identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, local or nation-state’. Within a landscape, there is a shared language, history, culture, historical memories and a common economic system (Smith, 1995). There is a close relationship between individuals and the nation. Loyalty can be a good way to unite a diverse society and improve the national identity by building trust and understanding. Social solidarity is necessary to a nation state. When people feel a common connection with a country they will become involved in its social activities (Spinner-Halev, 2008).

Defining national identity is not easy. It is not only an emotional concept, but an inter-related relationship between social and political movements. Smith (1991) suggested that national

identity is one of many identities an individual carries: ‘human beings have multiple collective identifications, whose scope and intensity will vary with time and place. He summed up the definition of national identity by dividing it into four elements. First, national identity fosters the entire process of forming and maintaining the nation. Second, language symbolises the nation and its role. Third, national identity includes the cultural beliefs of the nation and the realisation of its people’s national aspirations; Fourth, it is a social and political movement that helps people achieve the goals of the nation. As such, national identity inspires stronger and more durable loyalty than other collective identities.

2.1.1.2. Multi-dimensional structure of national identity

Within theoretical frameworks supported by empirical studies, scholars have proposed different dimensions of national identity. According to Phinney (1992), perhaps one of the most phenomenal researchers in this field, there are four dimensions to ethnic/national identity: i) self-identification, or the cognitive recognition of one's own national identity; ii) ethnic identity achievement, or the process in which individuals explore their own national identity; iii) ethnic behaviour, or participation in the affairs of the nation; and iv) a sense of belonging, or an individual’s positive attachment to his/her own ethnic group. A scale was created as a tool to operationally measure attachment to national identity, enabling quantitative research on this matter. Later researchers such as Lee and Yoo (2004) have proven it to be effective. The measurement was further developed by Qin (2005) into the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS) to study the ethnic identity of teenagers in China. In this thesis, part of the questionnaire was adopted from Qin’s EIS, and tailor-made to suit the purpose of this research.

2.1.2 National pride

2.1.2.1 Definition of national pride

National pride is the emotional attachment to one's own country. It is related to national identity but the two concepts are different. It has been argued that national pride is the result of national identity. National identity highlights the normative aspects of membership, whereas national pride is rooted in emotion. National pride is associated with happiness, which represents one's sense of belonging to the state and one's satisfaction with it. National pride can be regarded as 'the positive affect that the public feels towards their country as a result of their national identity. It is both the pride or sense of esteem that a person has for their nation and the pride or self-esteem that a person derives from one's national identity' (Hjerm, 1998; Smith & Lars, 2001). As such, for individuals, national pride represents a sense of belonging that is more important than mere economic or political interests (Ezell, Seeleib-Kaiser, & Tiryakian, 2003). National pride is linked to a sense of consciousness. It influences the way we perceive the world and how we experience feelings and emotions.

How is national pride engendered? It has been argued that national pride within a community of citizens is connected to the ethnic conception of national identity and civic participation. Civic partnership focuses on imagined relationships through the shared acceptance of political promotions and norms. National pride is thus primarily based on the nature of individuals that impose very rigid boundaries for group membership. Pride in the national group promotes participation through feelings of trust, which in turn encourages collective behaviour. Citizens are proud of their nation, even though bad things happen, as long as they

perceive that the nation has core principles and values. This type of national pride is sometimes called patriotism. It is based on positive feelings for the culture and traditions of the nation. Patriotism is purportedly linked to nationalism, and national pride can represent citizens' beliefs about their nation.

Patriotism is widely understood to be the 'degree of love for and pride in one's nation' (Kosterman and Feshbach 1989). Patriotism and national pride are based on positive feelings for a nation's accomplishments, development and good performance in all aspects (Druckman, 1994; Spano, 2001). Many researchers have tried to distinguish patriotism from national identity by differentiating patriotism from nationality. Nationality is 'our connection with the race' that is 'merely natural or physical', whereas patriotism is the consciousness of the moral obligation we have to the political community (Acton, 1972). In this sense, nationalism is considered to be more unifying in terms of cultural background, including language and tradition. Patriotism relates to the love of a nation's values and beliefs. Similar to patriotism, national pride sometimes reflects genuine self-esteem characterised by confidence and productivity when national success is demonstrated. It has been suggested that for individuals whose group membership is an important contributor to their self-identity, the perceived behavioural norms of the group are positively related to their behavioural intentions, and eventually to their actual behaviour (Loew, 2004).

2.1.2.2 Operational measurements of national pride

National pride has mainly been empirically investigated by scholars in the fields of psychology (Hjerm, 1998; Liu, Lai, Yu & Chen, 2014) and political science. For example,

Evans and Kelley (2002) explored how national pride varied in 24 developed countries in terms of science, economy, arts, literature and sports. The most commonly used measurements of national pride, however, have been the scales developed by Smith and Kim (2006). These include the General National Pride Scale and the Domain Specific National Pride Scale. The General National Pride Scale measures an individual's positive attitude towards the country and his or her nationalist tendencies. In Smith and Kim's study, the participants were required to assess the level of consent for each project. The responses were rated on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very much disagree) to 5 (very much agree). The higher the score, the stronger the national pride. The National Pride Scale for Specific Areas measures an individual's pride in the country's achievements in 9 specific areas. These areas are political influence, economic achievement, social security system, scientific and technological achievements, sporting achievements, literary achievements, military strength, history and fair treatment of different social groups. The scale uses 4 points, ranging from 4 (very proud) to 1 (not proud at all). Researchers have found that by measuring an individual's attitude towards the country's achievement in a specific field, it is easier to avoid individual nationalism and blind patriotism than it is when measuring an individual's general national pride. National pride varies among different countries. Older populations and males from certain countries have also demonstrated higher national pride. In this thesis, the same scale will be adopted based on its social-political context to study national pride in China, especially in the sports field. This will enrich the data from empirical studies on national pride.

2.1.2.3 The difference between national identity and national pride

In this thesis, nationalism encompasses national identity and national pride. However, there are some differences between the two. National identity could be seen as an awareness of

affiliation with the nation that gives people a sense of who they are in relation to others, or infuses them with a sense of purpose that makes them feel at home (Keane, 1994). National identity is an individual thing, and can thus vary between individuals of the same nation (Gellner, 1983; Keane, 1994; MacCormick, 1996). Despite individual differences, people also think similarly regarding what makes them members of a nation. A strong civic national identity is clearly associated with a decreased risk of being xenophobic, and hence supports a division of the ethnic and the civic, while favouring the latter. National identity is a connection between the individual and the nation-state, but other factors are also important, e.g. nationalism and national pride. In the former case, national identity is understood to be something established by legitimate membership in a constituted political state; members of the nation are understood first and foremost through their political identities as citizens. In the latter case, national identity is defined on the basis of some cultural or ethnic criteria distinct from, and arguably prior to, political citizenship.

National pride, or individual sentiments of pride directed towards the nation-state, should not be confused with nationalism (cf. Kedourie, 1993; Smith, 1994). Billig (1995) rightly argues against the common distinction between nationalism and patriotism, which gives nationalism negative connotations. National pride involves the individual's sentiments towards the nation-state, whereas nationalism operates on different levels, combining an ideology of unity amongst the members of a society and individual sentiments.

Two things separate the two concepts. First, national pride is not an ideology. Nationalism as a sentiment cannot be considered a clear-cut ideology; however, the ethnic foundations upon which it rests are based on a nationalist understanding of the nation. This is not the case with national pride, which is not coloured by ideology to the same extent. Secondly, negative

connotations of nationalism separate the two concepts (Keane 1994). These connotations arise from its base in the ideology of unity in a society. By stating that national pride does not automatically imply negative connotations, we do not make the mistake criticized by Billig (1995). We do not presuppose that national pride has clear-cut positive connotations; the positive or negative sides of national pride are instead dependent on the diversity of factors upon which they are based. These all-encompassing factors can be divided into political and nation-cultural national pride. This division comes close to Smith's (1991) division of national identity into civic and ethnic, but does not cover all aspects of the notions. Political national pride is understood to be the civic side of a society, its political institutions, economy and social security system. Nation-cultural national pride refers to the people within a certain society, their history, cultural practices and achievements.

2.2 Patriotism and nationalism in China

2.2.1 Definition of patriotism

Patriotism is generally framed within a historical context. Its implications vary based on the historical period in which it exists. To date, there has been no common definition of patriotism in academic circles. From the perspective of political science, it is defined as a political emotion or principle. From the epistemological point of view, it is a process ranging from patriotic emotions to ideas and behavioural patterns, advancing from shallow to deep, and low to high. From the value theory perspective, it is viewed as a two-way integration and display of the relationship between subject and object, based on certain material and psychological factors (Fu, 2004). Above all, patriotism is essentially an ethical category, embodied in the correct moral understanding of the motherland and solid moral sentiments. It is based on the firm moral belief in rejuvenating the country by strengthening the cultivation

of patriotism and the noble moral feelings accompanying patriotism. Patriots resolutely defend the territorial integrity of the motherland and its sovereignty, and the highest interests of the entire nation. They bravely undertake the historical mission and assume moral responsibility for revitalising the nation, dedicating and even sacrificing their lives for its prosperity and development. As a moral category, patriotism is the unity of moral consciousness, moral relationships and moral practices.

2.2.2 Relationship between nationalism and patriotism

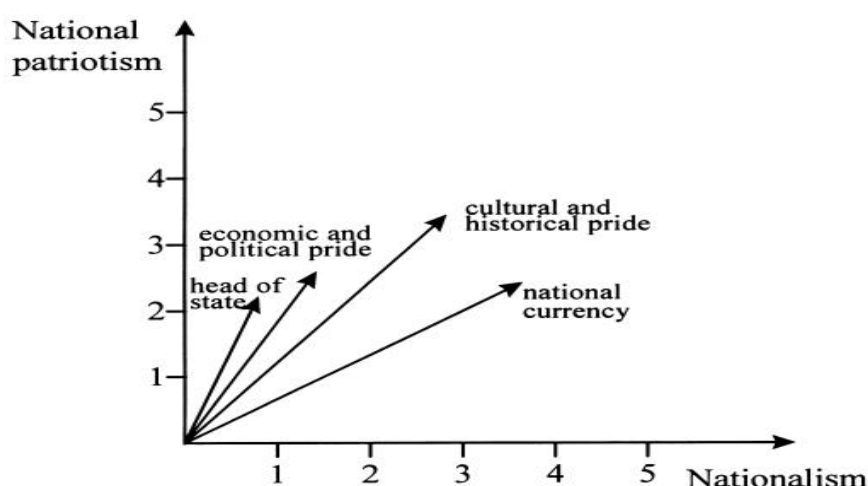
Nationalism and patriotism are two complex and sensitive concepts, both of which have multiple characteristics and forms that can lead to multiple consequences. The emotions underpinning patriotism and nationalism are inseparable in modern political culture. They are simultaneously related to and different from each other. Historically, patriotism and nationalism have been closely linked, with both belonging to the same discourse system.

A state can consist of a single ethnic group, such as the Japanese, where nationalism and patriotism are inextricably intertwined. Alternatively, in a unified multi-ethnic state, nationalism and patriotism can be regarded as the same if the recognition of each ethnic group is strong and profound. When ethnic groups and the state are united, regardless of whether the state is composed of a single ethnicity or multiple ethnicities, there is no difference in the meaning of nationalism and patriotism. A dynamic balance is generally maintained between them. Chinese scholar Li Hongtu (1997) stated that in the process of constructing a nation-state, culturally speaking the ethnic communities becomes a type of national community after joining their political and legal elements. The ‘nation’ becomes the ‘state’, and the meanings of ‘nation’ and ‘patria’ also become the same. In this sense, the

origins of nationalism are identical to patriotism.

The dimensions of pride in the space created by the factors of "patriotism" and "nationalism". The end points of the arrows are formed by the bivariate correlations between the dimensions of national identity and national pride involved in each case (Figure 1). To begin with, it turns out that pride in the national currency correlates more strongly with nationalism than with patriotism. Consequently, the need for demarcation from other nations appears to manifest itself particularly in attitudes toward one's own currency. The remaining three dimensions of pride correlate more closely with patriotic attitudes than with nationalistic attitudes, which may explain their weak overall influence over the attitude toward the euro. This must be qualified, however, by the fact that the overall European point of view abridges the complexity of the results, since national differences in the correlation between the dimensions of national identity and the dimensions of pride furnish additional bases for explaining the attitude toward the euro in individual countries. (Anke.1998).

Figure 1. Correlation between national identity and national pride



Source: Anke, M.Peters. (1998). The significance of national pride and national identity to the attitude toward the single European currency: A Europe-wide comparison.

Patriotism and nationalism have the same target. There is no difference between them when seeking the independence and autonomy of the state or nation, or defending the highest interests of the nation-state. Both emphasise collective loyalty and dedication, obligation, responsibility and collective actions to safeguard the national interests. Under these circumstances, patriotism seeks cohesiveness and momentum in development based on national consciousness and spirit, and nationalism becomes an expression of that patriotism. Nationalism is based on the establishment of a modern nation-state, whereas patriotism is the strong affection citizens (in this case, Chinese) have for the nation-state as a unified nation. All the loyalty and emotions of the people are dedicated to this nation-state.

The national spirit, with patriotism at its core, is a historical category. It has specific content at different stages and periods of social development. It can bring about a consensus under diverse historical conditions and unite all forces which can be united. Nationalism with patriotism at its core has been deeply integrated into China's economic, political, cultural, social and ecological construction. It has become a force for people of all nationalities to create a new socialism with Chinese characteristics. Consequently, the two have become synonymous and interchangeable, and in practice, there is no need to distinguish them. In modern China, nationalism and patriotism have different names but they have the same meaning.

2.3 Nationalism in China

The nationalistic sentiment of the Chinese is relatively strong, and the rise of nationalism has its necessity. Currently in China, it is undeniable that among the young people of the new generation, there has been confusion about such ideological issues. In short, there has been a

crisis of belief. Among our generation, we can say that a large proportion or most people no longer believe in communist ideals and Marxist-Leninism. Although some basic Marxist-Leninist ideological systems have been elaborated in University education, in fact, it is impossible to form an effective impression of education without the precondition of cramming education and the supremacy of scores. This is because it is carried out in accordance with the current situation of China. In theory education, there are also deviations and contradictory theories in this aspect of education. Moreover, young people nowadays are not interested in the theory of Marxist-Leninism, and most of them have never even been exposed to Marx's works. Therefore, instead of suppressing the young people's recognition of Western capitalism so that they can further approach Western values and thus threaten the interests of their own country and their own nation, it is better to encourage and guide them to explore nationalist theories suitable for the Chinese people's psychology. In other words, based on traditional Chinese values it is better to introduce and revise some Western values, so that the sense of identity with the country and the nation is higher than the temptation of external world values.

The status and significance of Mao Zedong (Chairman of the Central People's Government, the most revered leader of the People's Republic of China, 1949-1976) lies not only in the establishment of a new government and the launching of a controversial movement. As a symbol of the legitimacy of the government, Mao Zedong's historical status must not be conclusively determined. Obviously, the young people's perception of Mao Zedong has become deviated and extremized. As a nationalist reformer, the weakening of his revolutionary leadership and the disappearance of his halo as a founding hero undoubtedly had a great impact on the transformation and chaos of Chinese ideology, and the rise of nationalism will certainly end up on a new stage. However, because of the Cultural

Revolution, Mao Zedong's present image no longer rates him as a spiritual leader. However, legendary leaders such as Mao could not be found in previous governments, so this is a major deficiency in establishing a nationalist image in politics.

Professors Tang Wenfang and Loras College Benjamin Dahl of the University of Iowa used large-scale social surveys to analyze the influence of Chinese nationalism. They tended to think that the origin of Chinese nationalism is not cultural, but social and economic.

By surveying more than 3,000 respondents in 2008, they first analyzed the strength of a Chinese national identity. In order to better compare the results, the researchers used the questions and answers found in a 2003 transnational "national identity" study. Respondents were asked to rate four statements reflecting national identity. The survey found that the average score of Chinese was 80. In the 2003 survey, the highest ranking of being American was 76. That is to say, compared with 35 countries and regions surveyed in 2003, Chinese people have the highest sense of national identity. After analyzing the correlation between nationalism consciousness and Chinese social characteristics, Tang and Dahl found that there was an inverted U-shaped relationship between education levels and nationalist consciousness. That is, the respondents with the strongest nationalist consciousness, mainly had educational backgrounds of primary and secondary school, while the respondents with no education and higher education had weak nationalist consciousness. From the perspective of income, the lower the income, the stronger the nationalist consciousness of the respondents. From the perspective of urbanization, the nationalist consciousness of new urban migrants (migrant workers) is the strongest, while rural residents are in the middle and urban residents are the weakest. From the perspective of political identity, the nationalist consciousness of Party members is stronger than that of non-Party members. From the national identity point

of view, the respondents have strong nationalist consciousness, and there are almost no differences between nationalities.

At last, the researcher combines the relevant issues and uses a linear regression equation to measure the effect of Chinese nationalist consciousness, that is, the positive and negative relationships between nationalism and democratic consciousness, autocratic consciousness and other political issues. It is found that Chinese nationalists generally do not support democratization and oppose capitalism, but support the rule of authoritarian government. According to the results of data analysis, Tang and Dahl believe that China's popular nationalism is the most extensive in the world. With the development of urbanization and the improvement of education, the trend of nationalism may be weakened. Nationalism has a significant effect on the stability and legitimacy of the regime and can suppress the public's demand for political liberalization.

2.3.1 Chinese evolving nationalism

To understand the origins of nationalism in China within a historical context, it is essential to examine the diverse aspects of ethnicity in Chinese nationalism. In ancient China, there was no clear definition of the nation. Chinese people were referred to as 'Chinese children' or 'Yan Huang descendants'. The concept of a 'Chinese nation' was not manifested until 1911, when the Republican Revolution overthrew the Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China. Later, the New Culture/May the Fourth Movement (1915-1926), and the Chinese Revolution (1949) established the People's Republic of China. The Communist Party came to power, leading to complex changes in the ways the Chinese elites and common people came

to regard China as a nation, a state, an ethnicity and a civilisation.

After the founding of the PRC, China gradually evolved into a nation of 56 ethnic groups. Through its ethnic policies, China has gradually formed a Han-based community with equality, solidarity and mutual assistance among all ethnic groups. In the process of nation building, the Chinese Communist Party has promoted state nationalism based on a Han-centric ethnic tradition. In the post-Mao era, Chinese leaders have tried to construct a unitary political identity rooted in the tradition and history of Confucianism. In this thesis, the ethnicities in China are not discussed in detail. Nationalism is treated as being interchangeable with patriotism, reflecting the strong love the Chinese people have for their nation. They care about the future of the country, actively participate in its social affairs and foster the development of the motherland.

Since its reform and opening-up in the 1970s, China has achieved rapid economic growth. Such economic achievements have strengthened its international image. Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese reformers have confirmed the importance of economic modernisation to the regime, asserting that capitalism is conducive to economic development (Zhao, 2004). The economic development of modern China has resulted in such things as the establishment of Confucius Institutes across the world and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. These reflect the rise of Chinese nationalism. The development of contemporary nationalism has also been hugely influenced by college students' ideological and political education. With the increase in

China's power and international reputation, pride in the nation is growing and the national identity is being reinforced. The Chinese people have become even prouder of being Chinese citizens as the memory of the 'sadness' relating to the war fades away.

What are the features of nationalism in modern China? Despite its long history of thousands of years, Chinese nationalism is a new phenomenon, emerging after a 'Century of Humiliation'. In the new era, social media has become the main way in which younger generations express their nationalist sentiments. Those born after the 1980s as only children are spoiled at home and are raised in a consumerist culture. Many young people satisfy their curiosity through the Internet and incorporate elements of the West into their lives, with things like electronic devices and movies. Thus, young Chinese may differ from the older generations in the way nationalism is perceived and expressed, which is worth exploring in this thesis.

2.3.2 National identity in China

Due to the influence of globalisation, identity has become multiple and fluid, with a contingent and provisional nature affected by diverse contextual factors. National identity in China reflects the complex nature of its internal processes and multiple political, economic, cultural and religious systems. Further, historical changes and the impact of social development have led to the formation of a Chinese national identity. It is therefore essential to understand how identity is mediated by socio-political and cultural contexts.

In the era of globalisation, China's national identity has been closely interrelated to socio-political contexts. Facing great challenges, the state has been under pressure to reshape itself. The historical political context has influenced contemporary Chinese identity issues. During the 40-plus years of reform and opening-up, China has found a new way to promote socialism with Chinese characteristics, and has established a rather stable development model. The Chinese people now enjoy greater success, underpinned by a socialist market economy and socialist democratic political construction. They have followed the new socialist path of socio-political development, thereby facilitating the substantial reconstruction of China's national identity.

China's identity as a new type of major socialist power continues to be challenged, both domestically and internationally. What then is the nature of the new Chinese national identity? Historical events have affected modern Chinese nationalism, generating two distinct images of the country: (1) China as a historically aggrieved nation that has endured a century of shame and humiliation; and (2) China with comprehensive strength which deserves to 'rise' as a major international power. This dilemma between traditional identity and current status reflects the existing insecurities over China's potential as a superpower. There are, however, some features of the Chinese national identity in the new socio-political context. The first is patriotism, which reflects the love of or attachment to one's country and the belief in the superiority of one's country over other countries. The second is rationality, which reflects national cohesion. National pride focused on a nation's rationality is conducive to helping

people respect and understand their nation and increase their responsibility for it. The degree of rationality depends on how the consequences of international affairs are perceived.

2.3.3 Empirical studies of Chinese national identity

Phinney's model has been adopted by Chinese scholars such as Qin (2005) to study China's ethnic and national identity. Qin developed the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS) specifically based on the Chinese social-political-geographical context, and proved that his questionnaire on Chinese nation identity had good reliability and validity. In Qin's study, the level of ethnic identity was highest in 11-year-old adolescents. It decreased as the adolescents grew older and increased again when they reached age 20. Cai (2015) compared university students in Guangdong Province and Macau, finding that the level of national identity decreased with age for both groups, and that mainland students had a stronger Chinese national identity than students in Macau. Unfortunately, in China there have been few empirical studies in this field. This study contributes by expanding the participation to a wider range of age groups and investigating Chinese national identity from the perspective of sports and sports education. This in turn provides valuable data for the study of Chinese national identity as a whole.

2.3.4 National pride in China

National pride is the spirit that unites a specific group through a strong sense of identification and cohesion. This is a universal phenomenon regardless of what nation a person belongs to. People who feel national pride are confident and proud to belong to the country. For Chinese

people, national pride has been the foundation for developing the country. On the one hand, with the rapid development of the Chinese economy, the global presence of China has increased and its political and cultural influences have grown, making the Chinese people prouder than before. On the other hand, the understanding and knowledge of China's unique history is an important factor contributing to Chinese national pride, and it is shared by all Chinese citizens. The belief that the Chinese are tenacious, hard-working and capable of overcoming any difficulties brings the whole nation together.

2.3.5 Empirical studies of national pride in China

Empirical studies of national pride in China have produced various results. Lu (2014) found that although the national pride of Chinese students was high in general, the level became negatively correlated with age, reflecting the need to improve higher education to enhance national pride among university students. Cai (2015) compared the degree of national pride of students in Guangdong province and Macau and found that students in mainland China were prouder of their country. Zhang and Zuo (2012) examined the relationship between the national identity and national pride of teenagers in China and found that they were positively correlated. Therefore, while most studies have focused on university students or teenagers, none have investigated people closely associated with sports. In the following sections, sports and nationalism are discussed, which is the core of this thesis.

2.4 Sports and politics

The connections between sports and politics are intertwined and multi-layered. For one thing,

sports education and competitions are liable to be used politically (Hoberman, 1984), and symbolic benefits can be achieved from international sporting events such as the so-called ‘politicisation’ of international sports and the use of sports as a vehicle for identity politics (Tomlinson & Young, 2006).

Sports activities grow in importance when they accompany the promotion of public policy. Political interest in sporting events drives the modernisation of states and policies when nations make greater efforts to improve their respective sporting performances (Meier & Reinold, 2013). International sporting events are also an integral part of city-branding projects. For instance, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2010 Singapore Youth Olympic Games showed that international sporting events positively impact national pride, at least in the host country (Lau, Lam, Leung, Choi, & Ransdell, 2012; Leng, Kuo, Baysa-Pee, & Tay, 2015). Apart from their political functions, sports are closely associated with cultural traditions in terms of promoting national pride to prove superiority and affirm their existence for national groups.

Sports have also entered the deeply politicised arena of international relations. Governments from all over the world have manipulated sports to achieve their political aims and maintain political power. Their interventions in sports have been observed throughout history. For example, American President Richard Nixon used ping-pong to create a secret diplomatic backchannel into China in 1971. In such a way, sports can help a country’s public image or

smooth out relations in times of conflict or stagnating diplomatic processes. As Allison (1971) stated, all kinds of governments, representing every type of political ideology, have endorsed international sporting competitions as a testing ground for nations or political systems. Therefore, political ideology has often been linked to international sporting events.

International sporting events are important to the development of countries, providing opportunities to assert and receive acknowledgement of their sovereignty. For China in the 1970s, it was essential for its sovereignty to be recognised. As Cha claimed: ‘Sport is not just a tool to express national identity or to convey an image of modernity. In some cases, a positive reputation in sport can uplift a country’s global status and position on the worldwide stage. In this sense, a strong performance in sport becomes a powerful asset.’

In other words, the purpose of sport is never just entertainment. To the contrary, it has a significant political impact. The ‘two Chinas’ issue is an example of how Asian states have dealt with their bilateral relations and politics through sport (Zhao, 2000). In 1949, China split into two states: The People’s Republic of China in Beijing and the Republic of China in Taiwan. Sport as a soft power may emerge as one of the solutions to fostering inter-cultural relations and a national identity among the two states’ citizens. To further illustrate how sport is closely related to the government and politics, the Whole Nation System of sports in China is elaborated in detail in the following section.

2.5 Sports and nationalism

In China, the effect of sports on nationalism is closely related to how much the nation's values are conveyed. As Houlihan pointed out, 'Sport is a mirror of society and consequently it is a reasonably accurate reflection of the prevailing ideology found within a particular state at a particular time'. Together with modernisation and rapid economic development, the purpose of sport may have moved on and become attached to political intentions for national development purposes. The Chinese government has devoted considerable effort into establishing its image as a powerful nation in sports and promoting sports education.

2.5.1 Sports and national identity

For more than two decades, the link between sports and national identity has been widely explored in the Western literature (Hargreaves, 2000; Jarvie, 1993; Maguire et al. 2002; Maguire, 1994). Hargreaves (2000) described sports nationalism as people's social feelings and the ideology of raising national prestige by means of sports, seeking the legitimacy of ethnic living boundaries and pursuing international recognition through peaceful means. Bairner (2001) agreed that the understanding of nationalism is usually formed in the process of modern sports development. Allison (1993) clarified the features of national identity related to modern sports and traditional sports. Traditional sports are based on cohesion within the identity of the nation. Modern sports focus more on competition between nations, including the dual meanings of national recognition and identity politics.

Sport has been used as a political instrument to enhance national awareness and eliminate racial differences. Sports nationalism has been one of the important motivations underpinning the promotion of political development. The common ideas on the relationship between sports and national identity are summarised as follows (Hoberman,1984; Maguire et al., 2002):

- (1) Sport is conservative and helps to unify central nationalism, patriotic righteousness and racism.
- (2) Sports have characteristics that make it possible for them to become tools of national unity and solidarity.
- (3) Sports provide a platform on which ethnic groups can express emotions.
- (4) Sports contribute to political movements closely related to nationalist politics.
- (5) Sports help individuals seek an identity through a variety of forms, such as love, mythology, flags, anthems and ceremonies.

As discussed above, sports can significantly enhance the collective identity in both its political and cultural aspects. Sports are a central component of popular culture, which helps all sectors of society. They are undoubtedly greater than any other aspect of culture (Hargreaves, 1982, p. 30). To be more specific, sports may display national dominance or superiority, occupying and bringing together diverse groups of people to display ‘sameness’.

In this way, they help to shape the collective identity (Maguire et al., 2002). Nationalism can

easily be observed as a global cultural phenomenon during international sporting events such as the Olympic Games. With the increasing popularity of international sports competitions, nationalism is bound to become more strongly expressed on a larger scale. International sports competitions foster the spread of ideas and information, and people have experiences that parallel education at the individual level.

In modern societies, the links between national identity and sports are easily observed. Variations in national pride have been linked to factors such as the number of gold medals won in international competitions (Kavetsos, 2012; van Hilvoorde et al., 2010). Through media discourse, international sporting competitions have acquired a salience enhancing function (Mason, 2002; Scherer et al. 2008). National stories are progressively promoted through popular culture and the media since athletes represent the nation and its national values. Sports competitions inspire enthusiasm and provide occasions for public discussion that creates short-term unity among citizens and helps people seek affirmation of their national identity (Bairner, 2001). This in turn provides psychological support for athletes.

All in all, the above section illustrates how sport can be used as a political policy tool for nationalism. Sports have been used to promote national unity because they influence people. This review suggests that sports nationalism is important; thus, how sports affect nationalism in China should be further analysed.

2.5.2 Sports and national pride

Sports exert a significant impact on human beings and are closely correlated with personal emotions. Previous studies have examined the relationship between sports and national pride (Denham, 2010; Kavetsos, 2012; Morrison, 2011; Tracy & Robin, 2007). As Horne et al. (1999) observed, 'sport (and play) involves rules and regulations which are derived in some way from the "real world".' Sports provide politically usable resources, endorse international image-shaping and are depicted as inspiring national pride. National pride in sport has been apparent in events throughout history. The evidence suggests a close correlation between sports education and national pride. Sports education can breed nationalism, and nationalism can stimulate the development of sports education.

Many researchers have shown that sports success boosts citizens' national pride. For example, in surveying German people, Hallmann, Breuer, and Breuer (2013) found that most felt proud and happy when their athletes excelled at major sporting events. Moreover, hosting such events could be more important than sporting success. Together this suggests a positive linkage between attending sporting events and national pride (Van Hilvoorde, 2010).

Although the importance of sport has been repeatedly highlighted over time, the manner in which sports education has ignited nationalism has not been comprehensively analysed. Some researchers have focused on how sporting success impacts national pride. For instance, individuals will generally support athletes at international competitions. When an athlete or team excels, the entire nation shares in the victory through national news coverage (Lee and Maguire, 2009; Rensmann, 2004; Tomlinson, 1996). Athletes with more media exposure reportedly generate greater pride in their performances and are more likely to succeed in sports competitions internationally (Whannel, 2002).

Nationalism has always been vividly expressed in China. Before the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952, the Olympic Committee of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was not recognized by the International Olympic Committee. Thanks to the support of some countries that had established diplomatic relations with the PRC, the PRC finally qualified to participate in the Olympic Games at the annual meeting of the International Olympic Committee. However, China officially accepted the invitation late, with a delegation of only 40 arriving in Helsinki. At the time of their arrival the Olympic Games had already been going for 10 days, so they only participated in one competition and thus Wu Chuanyu competed in the swimming. The PRC first participated in the Olympic and Asian Games in 1984 and 1974, respectively. Since then, Chinese athletes have achieved many awards at both sporting events. Professional athletes have concentrated all their effort into competing for the nation and its people and, in turn, millions of audience members follow the competitions.

Table tennis became a source of national pride when Rong Guotuan, a Hong Kong-born table tennis player, won the first world championship for the People's Republic of China in 1959. Since Rong's first world champion was celebrated during the tenth anniversary of the PRC, Premier Zhou Enlai named China's first table tennis brand 'Double Happiness' for the whole nation to memorialise and commemorate the two happy events.

Through an analysis of table tennis in China, this section has reviewed the literature on the relationship between renegotiated nationalism and the influence of sports education in China. In the next section, the connections and mechanisms between sports education and nationalism are further explored to analyse the relationship between sports education and

nationalism.

2.6 Sports education and the Whole Nation System

2.6.1 Sports education

2.6.1.1 Definition of sports education

Sports education, a widely accepted concept initially introduced by Siedentop (1982), is composed of a series of specific curriculums and instructional models that provide authentic and educationally rich sporting experiences for girls and boys through physical education in school (Siedentop, 1994). Siedentop (1998) also noted that sports education incorporates numerous elements, including seasons, affiliation, formal competition, and record-keeping. ‘Seasons’ refers to having enough time to learn. Students take time to organise team practices under a coach’s guidance to learn their essential roles in the sports team. ‘Affiliation’ emphasises the importance of team membership. Students must acknowledge their various roles in the team and their contributions to the team results. ‘Formal competition’ is defined by the game schedule. Based on the schedule, team members know how to prepare appropriately over the course of a long session. ‘Record-keeping’ refers to the team’s results, which provide the team with valuable feedback.

Sports education is critical to the success of athletes. Success at the highest league of a competitive sport requires intensive training and learning theory within the framework of the education system. Specifically, sports education in the case of these athletes involves skills training and mental education. Skills training aims to ‘improve the athletes’ ability to perform

a sporting skill consistently well at speed even when fatigued and under stressful conditions in a competition environment through a series of curriculum and experience’ (Goldsmith, 2012). Mental education refers to a series of ‘systematic and individualised strategies designed to assist sport participants such as athletes and coaches in the development of mental skills to achieve performance success and personal well-being’ (Vealey, 2007).

Mental training is based on ‘self-determination theory’ (SDT), proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985; 1991), who argued that human behaviour develops on the basis of ‘intrinsic and extrinsic motivations’. Intrinsic motivations occur when an individual is interested in doing something and performs the activity because it is personally rewarding. Extrinsic motivation occurs when people engage in an activity to earn rewards, avoid getting hurt, or pursue their self-identity (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004). It is believed that intrinsic motivation and the autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation result in a positive performance in school (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991).

At the school level, sports education is proposed as an instructional model with a pedagogical approach to teaching physical education. However, sports education is not limited to physical skills training. In many sports it is centred on principles and concepts such as ‘the rules of the game’, fair play and respect, tactical and bodily awareness, and social awareness linked to personal interactions and team effort. Sports education theory for amateur players was first introduced by Siedentop (1968), who adopted a ‘play education’ curriculum theory to emphasise the importance of physical activity in collective life. In another study, Jewett and Bain (1995) cited sports education as an important model, but did not discuss its influence on

school programmes.

Many researchers have supported the practical value of sports education. Sports education in schools is beneficial and provides opportunities for students to undergo healthy development through physical activities. Alexander, Taggart, Medland and Thorpe (1995) argued that students prefer sports education over the traditional teacher-directed mode of programme delivery. Sports education enables students to dynamically carry out daily tasks in school and enjoy a range of leisure activities. Evidence also suggests that sports education has been successfully applied in many countries to foster students' motor skills and social development. Curriculum revolution upon physical education should pay attention to the shaping of a life-long sport attitude and the cultivation of physical ability. By voluntarily participating in the sports that suit them, students can fully experience the pleasure and significance of sports, raising interest in the sport. Simultaneously, mastering sports knowledge and the skills required for lifelong sporting activities, students improved self-discipline, and formed attitudes and habits of lifelong sports.

In this sense, sports education provides athletes and students with the skills and mental training that help them achieve adequate levels of sports performance and personal well-being. Specifically, skills training enhances the physical skills of athletes and school students so they can achieve excellent performances in their chosen sporting event. When undergoing skills training in school, students can discover their abilities and limitations in motor skills and the development of positive self-esteem. Apart from skills training, mental training helps athletes enhance their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and internalise certain extrinsic motivations to succeed.

Sports education can be subtle and not delivered in an explicit or obvious way. For example, when table tennis players win gold medals, their respective national anthem is played as they stand on the podium and their national flag is raised. The spectators cannot help but be touched by the scene and proud of their country. This sentiment comes so naturally and seamlessly that few people are aware that their nationalism and patriotism have been nurtured and developed both explicitly and implicitly, and have been since they were a very young age. Nationalist education plays an important role in constructing national cohesion based on national identity and pride.

In this thesis, the concept of sports education aligns with Siedentop's (1998) four elements: seasons, affiliation, formal competition and record-keeping. This means that the daily training, competitions and everything table tennis players receive and produce can be viewed as the results of sports education in both a conscious and unconscious manner. The above is an overview of the type of physical education amateur players receive at the school level. The following is a description of the impact of the physical education professional athletes receive under the Whole Nation System.

2.6.1.2 Differences between sports education at school and at university

The comparison between university sports education teaching and primary and secondary school (hereinafter referred to as schools) sports education teaching is basically a comparison between phenomena and facts. In the process of discussion, theoretical analysis and

elaboration should be carried out, and theoretical persuasion should be strengthened. Therefore, in the comparative analysis, firstly, the difference between the nature of sports education in schools and universities. Sports education in schools belongs to the category of basic and general education, while sports education in universities belongs to the category of higher education (professional education). It is appropriate to locate them in this position. Secondly, the difference between the educational objectives of universities and schools should be compared. The educational objectives directly restrict the teaching objectives of sports education, and the teaching objectives of sports education directly affect the content, methods, organization and evaluation of sports education. Thirdly, the age difference between universities' students and schools' students should be analyzed. Universities' students are not only older than school students, but there are also major differences in terms of growth and development, knowledge and experience, interest and ability, values, subject consciousness and various environmental conditions. The obvious differences must be reflected in sports education teaching.

(1) The similarities and differences in teaching objectives. As the content of school sports education, sports education in university and schools has the basic tasks of improving students' physical and mental health, enhancing students' physique, allowing the students to master the basic knowledge of sports education, and cultivating students' sports ability and habits. However, due to the differences in age and physical development between university students and schools, the focus of sports education teaching should be different. This is because school students are undergoing many stages of growth and development, and should

focus on improving their physical fitness and cultivating good posture; while university students should focus on cultivating their sports ability, and laying a good foundation for cultivating their lifelong sports outlook.

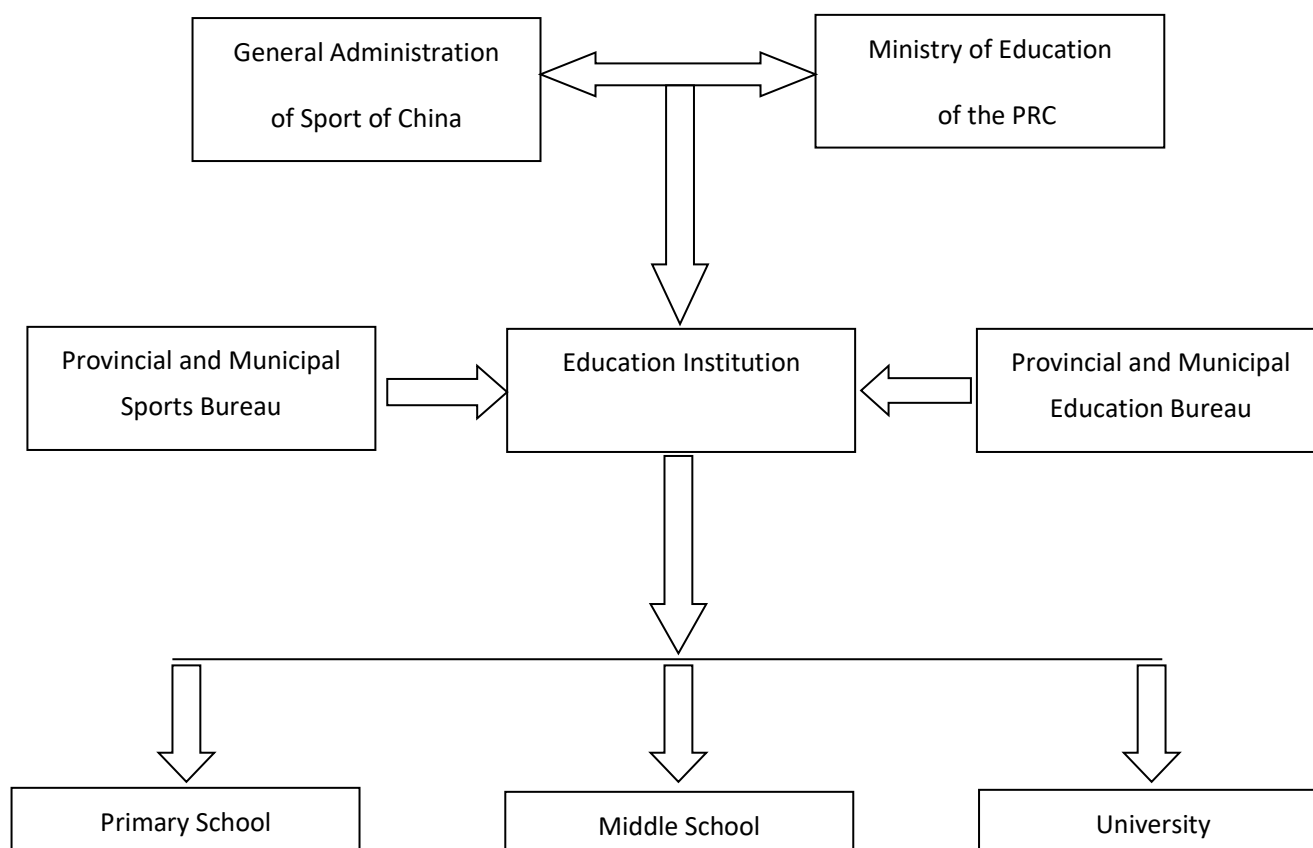
(2) The curriculum should be set up according to the characteristics of the teaching objectives. According to the characteristics of school students, school sports education course should set up sports events which mainly develop quality and cultivate posture. For example, track and field, gymnastics, ball games and other major event sports; and at the same time dance, aerobics, and national sports infiltration become supplementary projects. University students should focus on training sports ability, so college sports education classes should be based on students' hobbies and actual conditions to set up ball games, dance, aerobics and other related things and pay attention to theoretical knowledge. Training should lay a foundation for lifelong sports education, and should focus on elective courses.

(3) Overlapping of teaching content. The content of sports education teaching in schools and universities is often repeated year after year. There will be a choice regarding the focus of teaching objectives. Subjects which have little significance or low value for lifelong sports should be optional or voluntary, while subjects which are more interesting for students should be retained, but the emphasis of teaching should be different. For example, ball lessons should be flexible, familiarity with ball skills and developing an interest in school sports education, while universities should teach basic skills, skills and tactics, and mainly teach theoretical knowledge.

(4) The difference between teaching means and methods. Owing to school students being active and easily distracted, it is most important to mobilize students to participate actively in activities in class. Therefore, making lessons more engaging is more suitable for school sports education teaching. The difference between university students and school students is that they have a strong comprehension skills, so it is more important to adopt heuristic teaching in universities, give students enough time to practice independently, and ensure students give full attention to their main subjects.

There is a structure of educational institutionalization in sports education (Chart 2). This thesis focuses on the sports education of students in university. Generally speaking, students' sports education in universities has the following characteristics: (1) Sports education teaching content is diverse. (2) Sports education in universities is more likely to reflect the interpersonal relationship of students, and the cultivation of personality is prominent. (3) There are more differences in physical fitness, physical fitness, skill level and sports practice level among college students. (4) Sports education in universities improves the ideas and habits of lifelong sports persons. (5) The organizational form of teaching in universities is more complicated than that in schools. (6) Sports education in universities is more novel and systematic. (7) Sports education in universities is equipped with better teachers and teaching conditions. (8) University teaching needs to consider age, gender, physique and other conditions, and is therefore more targeted.

Chart 2: The structure of educational institutions in sports education



2.6.2 The Whole Nation System

Sports have notably contributed to nationalism in China. Sports achievements have greatly changed the image of the Chinese to the world and encouraged people from all walks of life to unite, strengthen and modernise the Chinese nation. To guarantee the success of sports and due to limited expertise, in the early 1950s, an elite sports system was implemented. Centralised training for national teams in various sports was put into place with the full support of the government. China has been endorsing the ‘Whole Nation System’ in competitive sports since 1956, when the first sports school for teenagers was founded (Yang, 2003). Under this system, the government centralised the nation’s best resources to educate and coach sports overachievers selected from across the country. The objective has not only

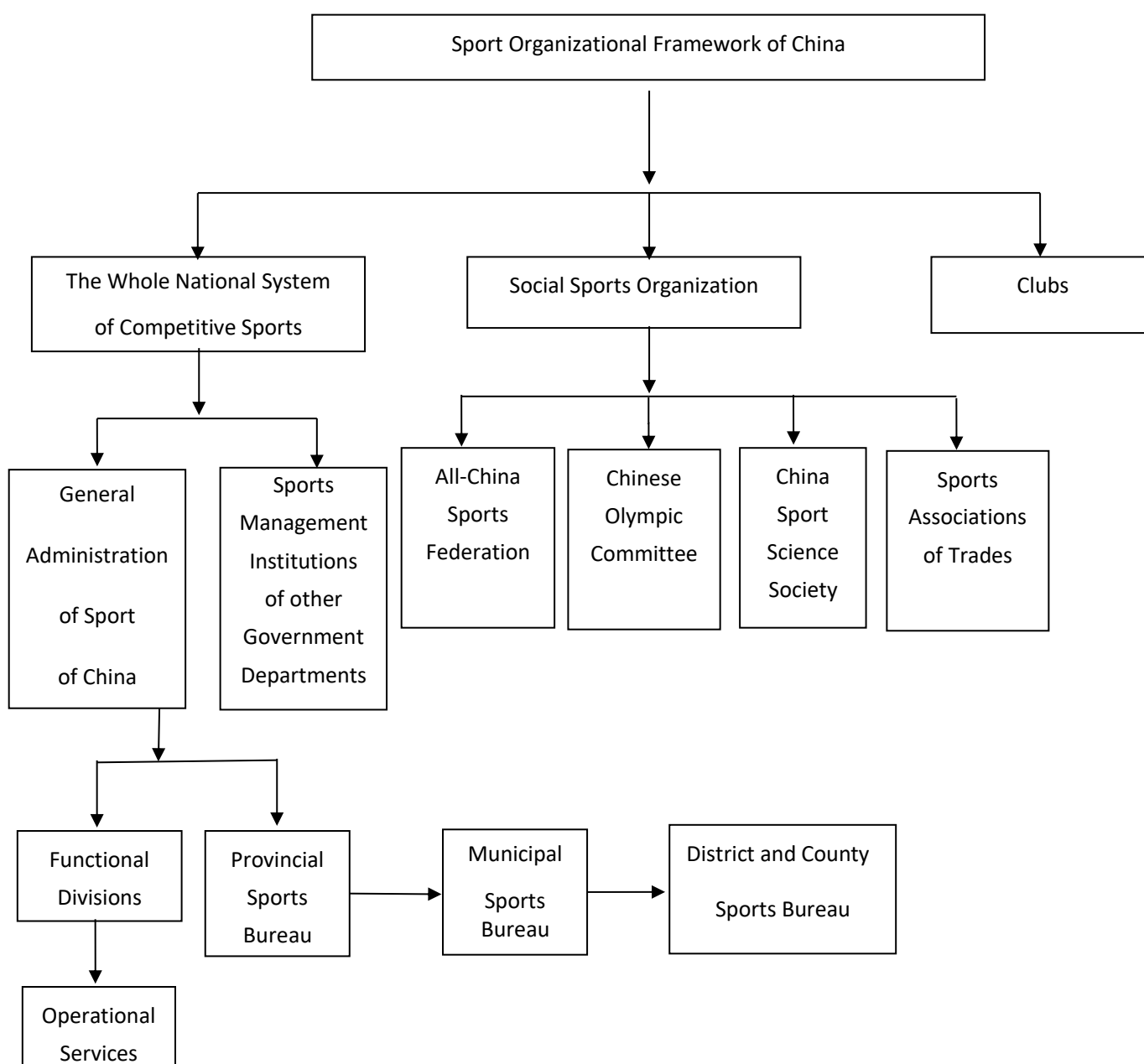
been to win international competitions, but to ultimately foster a nation-wide sense of pride. The Whole Nation System is based on a ‘top-down’ approach with four team levels; ‘from higher level national professional and provincial professional teams, to a lower level involving professional city teams and city/county amateur teams’ (Si et al., 2015). Both the central and local governments have played a dominant role in the Whole Nation System. The central government created the overall design, which was then followed up and implemented by the lower levels of government and other institutions (Jiang, 2014).

The establishment of the Whole Nation System has a cultural and political background. For many years, the Chinese people had been subjected to psychological harm because they were referred to as the ‘sick men of Asia’. Subsequently, this has driven them to pursue world titles to overcome their cultural inferiority complex. The sense of nationalism among the Chinese people and the quest for global recognition has politically motivated the nation’s desire for medals. As a result, the Whole Nation System has developed rapidly (Ye, 2013). Within only a few decades, it has ensured the rapid progress and improvement of Chinese athletes. The efficiency of the system has been evident in the numerous medals awarded to Chinese athletes in international competitions (Liang, 2006). All levels of government and athletes have been fully aware of the importance of winning gold medals to foster nationalism in China. When an athlete has brought honour to the country, he or she has been treated as a national hero, praised by the public, rewarded by the government and overwhelmingly congratulated by the society.

2.6.2.1 The sporting administrative structure in China

China's sports organization structure refers to all kinds of institutions and systems that manage and organize specific affairs and make them work effectively in the process of sports development. At present, China implemented the whole national system of competitive sports, community-based sports organizations and the club system (Chart 3).

Chart 3. The sporting administrative structure in China



First, the Whole National System of Competitive Sports.

The whole national system means that under the restrictions of China's basic national conditions, the state concentrates on allocating relatively limited resources, thus maximizing the mobilization of national and social forces. Therefore, they form a joint force in the field of competitive sports throughout the country and achieve excellent results in international sports events represented by the Olympic Games. The main functional units are the sports management organizations of General Administration of Sport of China and Sports management institutions of other government departments. Under the General Administration of Sport of China, there are functional divisions (operational services) and Provincial/ Municipal/ District /County Sports Bureau. In addition to the sports affairs managed by the State Sports Administration, other government departments also have some special bodies responsible for the internal sports management of the system, such as the Department of Sports Health and Art Education of the Ministry of Education, the Sports Department of the Military System) and the Sports Steering Committee.

Second, Social sports organizations.

Sports organizations are social organizations with the purpose or intent of sports activities. At present, Chinese sports associations also have a certain "duality of officials and people".

(1) All-China Sports Federation. Founded in 1952, it is a national mass sports organization. It comprises legal persons of non-profit associations established according to law. It

implements Association system. Its associations include sports associations of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government, and national individual sports associations (e.g. China Table Tennis Association). At present, the China Table Tennis Association has implemented a four-level management structure: the state, provincial (autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government), prefecture-level cities and counties all have table tennis associations.

(2) Chinese Olympic Committee. A national sports organization established in 1910 with the purpose of promoting the Olympic Movement and developing sports.

(3) China Sport Science Society. It is a nationwide, non-profit academic mass organization registered in accordance with the law and composed of scientific and technological workers and relevant units who are enthusiastic about sports science and technology throughout the country.

(4) Sports associations of trades. Sports associations lead their employees to participate in sports activities, including locomotive sports associations and coal mine sports associations.

Third, Clubs.

The earliest sports clubs came into being in the 17th to 18th centuries. Nowadays, many countries have sports clubs. At present, sports clubs in China are divided into amateur and professional clubs.

(1) Amateur sports clubs provide sports venues and equipment for amateur athletes, which

are generally financed by collecting rental fees for sports facilities and membership fees, as well as by trade unions.

(2) Professional sports clubs employ or rent professional athletes to participate in competitions and performances, in order to earn profits or publicize and advertise certain enterprises. Such clubs are funded mainly by large entrepreneurs or joint-stock companies. In some provinces, from primary school to university, students participate in sports training in amateur sports clubs, and then join professional sports clubs to improve their skills until they become famous athletes locally, nationally or worldwide. For example: The China Table Tennis Super League Club.

2.6.2.2 The advantages and disadvantages of the Whole Nation System

Since Xu Haifeng broke the Chinese gold medal record in the Olympic Games in 1984, the Chinese dream of being a sports powerhouse has become less of a dream and more of a reality. The Whole Nation System of competitive sports has gradually matured, and the effect has also been outstanding. In the Beijing Olympic Games 2008, China won 51 gold medals, consolidating itself as a veritable competitive sport powerhouse of a country. In spite of this, there are indeed many shortcomings in the Whole Nation System of the competitive sports. The following is a list of the advantages and disadvantages (Table 1):

Table 1. The advantages and disadvantages of the “Whole Nation System” of the competitive sports

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Form a unified training system	1. Invest tremendous funds by cuts

2. Select the best seed to achieve a gold medal	elsewhere
3. Develop a high sense of political responsibility	2. Cause human and material waste likely due to loopholes in management
4. Mobilize the enthusiasm of athletes and faculty by huge returns	3. Lack corresponding restraint mechanisms, resulting in corruption
	4. Lose perspective in athlete cultivation, and weaken cultural education
	5. Strangle the development of a great quantity of second-tier athletes

Source: Xinhua wang. "stressed PE and ignored literature"—A Survey of the Status Quo of Cultural Education for Young Athletes, <http://sina.com.cn> . October 24th, 2003.

As demonstrated in the above table, there are pros and cons in the Whole Nation System of competitive sports. The advantages mainly embody the overall enhancement of competitive scores, while the disadvantages reflect other aspects, focusing on its violation of the right to a more rounded education of its athletes. The current education situation faced by Chinese professional athletes is the quality and breadth which is indispensable for human survival and development. No industry can ignore the significance of a good quality, well-rounded education. At the same time as executing the Whole Nation System, athletes should be receiving a quality education, to reflect the physical spirit and nationalism of the Chinese, and to gain affirmation worldwide. However, the status quo of cultural education for professional sports athletes is worrying. (1) The lack of a quality education for the professional athletes themselves. In recent years, Chinese athletes' careers have thrived, achieving remarkable results worldwide. Yet the academic quality of professional athletes has stayed at a relatively low level, to a large extent because the current concept of a comprehensive education for

athletes is not strong. Once athletes reach retirement age or fail to perform at peak, they will be confronted with leaving their respective sports careers. Though the athletes have superior physical skills, their lack of formal education, means it is difficult for them to fit into broader society. (2) Poor educational atmosphere and inferior educational quality. In the construction of China's Olympic dream, the cultivation of professional athletes has emphasized training instead of learning. Usually, professional athletes are selected to enter sports schools for competitive sports training and transformation at a very young age. The shortfall in their formal education results in a generally lower level of professional athletes' basic education. (3) Unclear education and training model. Nowadays, China's competitive sports are chiefly funded by the government, aiming to benefit the nation, which has definitely weakened the humanistic care of their athletes. Part of the athletes' training mold has transformed from the previously single professional sport skills training model in sports' schools to joint training with junior and senior schools, and universities to remedy the previously inadequate breadth of education. Under the vague cultivation mode between nation and person, it still stresses on athletes' performance in sports and ignores the study and examination of that found in a more well-rounded education. (4) Insufficient time for professional athletes' cultural study. It is found in an investigation, that the average training time for professional athletes is over 3.5 hours, while for teenage athletes it is over 4 hours. For young athletes, training time is obviously longer and especially in the central and western regions, this phenomenon is more common. In some schools, teaching hours are much shorter than the average hours, and most of the time is spent on sports training. Premature professional training in adolescence is unfavorable to the development of physical and mental health, and will also greatly reduce

the time spent on the formal education of the athletes. (5) Imperfect formal education system. By comparison, under the existing education system, professional athletes' skills are too narrow, which limits their future career choices. Most professional players have only undertaken professional training in their related sports skills. Although some of them entered colleges, with insufficient grounding in any of the subjects and weak basic social skills, professional athletes, depending on their college degree, find it tough to adjust to the unfamiliar surroundings and academic demands. Even skilled athletes who are trying to offset the lack of formal education in their teenage years have also encountered the issue of training taking priority over learning. The emergence of this situation is the biggest drawback of the competitive sports Whole Nation System.

Despite all the medals won in international competitions over the years, the system has manifest intrinsic disadvantages and has been criticised extensively. One issue has been with the system's political orientation, which was largely been built on devaluing the individual athletes' interests. The gold medal symbolises a human beings' desire to achieve, but if this becomes a burden, athletes may be sacrificed under the system. The Whole Nation System has also led to other serious problems, such as the inefficient allocation of resources, and doping. Thus, the government has expressed its intent to gradually convert the Whole Nation System into a professional system. Under the professional system, the government would mainly be responsible for macro-managing sporting events, and sports associations/clubs would oversee the day-to-day operations (Li, 2006). Sports associations would be responsible for connecting club members, organising sporting competitions,

training umpires and promoting specific sports. A sports association composed of professional sports club members, would maximise profits by training highly-skilled players or hiring professional players to attend competitions (Parrish, 2005). Despite rapid developments in sports associations, the influence of the Whole Nation System in China has remained dominant. Within this system, Chinese players are inspired and educated to fight for their country instead of embracing sport out of genuine interest and love. Players are often used as political tools to serve various propaganda objectives, which is one of the major purposes behind the system. Nonetheless, for the socio-political background, the proposed shift from the Whole Nation System to a professional system provides us with a comprehensive picture of sports development in China. This is critical to any study examining sports and nationalism in China.

The purpose of physical education is to promote health mentally and physically and to promote the development of people's comprehensive qualities. The Whole Nation System, after all, should merely be a transitional system. Physical education under the Whole Nation System needs to go in the direction of national sports and marketization. To conduct a convincing study on sports and nationalism in China, one must combine macro- and micro-perspectives of Chinese sports development. The role of sports education in nationalism is further elaborated in a later part of this thesis, after the general concept of nationalism and its manifestation in China is discussed. Therefore, in the next section, table tennis is discussed in detail as a typical case of how sport has been developed in China.

2.7 Table tennis as a case

Chinese table tennis has long been highly politicised. ‘Ping-pong diplomacy’, a well-known phrase around the world, reflects how table tennis was essential to thawing the Cold War iciness between China and the US. Sports have benefited from the Whole Nation System, with table tennis becoming the most popular sport in China. However, it carries with it connotations relating to politics and the national interest. In the next section, I discuss how table tennis has mattered to China’s red politics at different junctures in its diplomatic history.

2.7.1 The rise of table tennis with increased nationalism

Shortly after the PRC was established in 1949, the Chinese leaders prioritised sports as one of their domestic and international political strategies.¹ Their choice was table tennis. Table tennis was not a popular sport until the 1950s, when Chinese leaders began to promote it. At that time, not many players in China were good enough to compete with their international counterparts. Zhou Enlai, then the Chinese Premier, provided substantial support to some Hong Kong table tennis players when he learned they would like to play table tennis for the Chinese team. China’s first table tennis world champion, Rong Guotuan, was originally from Hong Kong. Two other famous table tennis players from Hong Kong were Fu Qifang and Jiang Yongning. The political considerations of the nation’s leaders laid a solid foundation for the development of table tennis in China’s new era.

¹ For a detailed discussion of the ‘two Chinas’ issue in the table tennis field, see Mayumi Itoh, *The Making of China’s Peace with Japan: What Xi Jinping Should Learn from Zhou Enlai*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 90-91.

Table 2 shows how China has been able to win more medals in international competitions than it had before. Among all the table tennis players who have won gold medals at the Olympic Games, no player has contributed more to improving China's image in world sports than Deng Yaping, a female player only 1.5 metres in height. Deng Yaping has won four Olympic gold medals and 14 world championships. She is a great table tennis player who has not only promoted table tennis to the world but also contributed a great deal to China's Olympic bid.

Despite the enormous success China has achieved in the Olympics, table tennis no longer generates the degree of national pride that it did in the Mao Zedong era. A more worldly China and the more reasonable Chinese people are no longer obsessed with ping-pong diplomacy and the success that table tennis has brought to the country. After Olympic table tennis reached its zenith at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the game gradually lost popularity in China. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Chinese table tennis players won all of the gold medals and all of the medals in men's and women's singles. Nonetheless, since the 2012 London Olympics, table tennis in China has been in decline. This has not just been about sports. The decline of table tennis signals the decline of nationalism in sports. The connection between sports and politics is not as strong as it was before, even in the Olympics.

Table 2: Table Tennis Gold Medals in the Olympic Games (1988-2016)

Years	Men's Singles	Women's Singles	Men's Doubles	Women's Doubles	Men's Team	Women's Team	Total
1988		1	1				2
1992		1	1	1			3
1996	1	1	1	1			4
2000	1	1	1	1			4

2004		1	1	1			3
2008	1	1			1	1	4
2012	1	1			1	1	4
2016	1	1			1	1	4
Total	5	8	5	4	3	3	28

Source: <https://www.olympic.org/table-tennis>, accessed April 8, 2018.

2.7.2 Two-China issue: recognition of PRC by ITTF

Since the birth of the new China in 1949, sports have become an inseparable part of Chinese politics. However, although the PRC was fully established in the 1950s, Taiwan continued to represent China in many international sports organisations. This changed in 1952 when the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) recognised the PRC and offered it membership. At the time, it was the only international sports organisation to do so (Wu, 2018). After China was admitted by the ITTF as an official member, Taiwan's status also changed. It was thereafter accepted as 'Taiwan', although it insisted on being designated as 'Republic of China (ROC), China' (Itoh, 2017). This is the source of the well-known 'two Chinas' issue in table tennis history. Unlike other international sporting competitions, this issue with the ITTF has caused no significant problems with the PRC's dominant leadership in this sport.

In Maoist China, table tennis was raised to a higher political position. Reportedly, in the 1950s, Mao Zedong, the then president of the PRC, designated table tennis the national sport of China. According to Chairman Mao, table tennis players should 'regard a ping-pong ball as the head of your capitalist enemy'. You 'hit it with your socialist bat, and you have won a point for the motherland' (Douglas, 2013). In 1959, when Rong Guotuan won the first world championship for China, Mao Zedong treated the victory as a 'spiritual nuclear weapon'.

Back then, the ITTF was the only international sports organisation to recognise the legitimacy of the PRC. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) did not accept it. Thus, the PRC cut all official ties with the major international sport organisations.

The role table tennis has played in Chinese politics and international relations has not come naturally from enhancing the players and the game. Rather, it has been due to the international politics of the Cold War period, when table tennis became the national sport of China.

2.7.3 Ping-pong diplomacy in the 1960s

In April 1961, despite great economic difficulties at the end of the Great Leap Forward, China hosted the 26th World Table Tennis Championships. The table tennis players had their own political mission. They were carefully selected to not only win gold medals but to become domestic and international role models for political purposes. The championships and gold medals could increase public confidence in the communist regime. As a result, Chinese table tennis players were not always expected to win when they competed with players from socialist or African countries.² To the contrary, they were sometimes ordered to intentionally lose to strengthen the friendship and brotherhood among countries from the same communist camp. The spirit of this was manifested in the slogan, ‘friendship first, competition second’.

Between 1959 and 1961, in the middle of the economic hardships caused by the Great Chinese Famine, table tennis was used to improve people’s trust and support for Communism.

² 追溯中国乒乓让球事件受害者远非何智丽一人 in Chinese, http://sports.qq.com/a/20070323/000236_1.htm, accessed 14 April 2018.

As Nicholas Griffin explained, ‘sports were political, they were simply serving one aim: victory for Communism.’³ The 26th World Table Tennis Championship was used as a propaganda tool to show the world that China was a great country. China prepared for the Championship in spite of its domestic economic difficulties.

In the end, China’s table tennis players won three gold medals, and the success at the 26th World Table Tennis Championship greatly boosted national morale. The Chinese people could see that China was not isolated from the world, and the power of table tennis to generate nationalism became undisputed. Nonetheless, despite the enormous educational effect table tennis had on its people, China did not host another world table tennis championship under Mao. This was due to the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976.

2.7.4 Increased political functions of table tennis

Table tennis improved China’s political function. In 1962, Rong Guotuan and other famous Chinese players were sent on a diplomatic tour to some developing countries (Dichter & Johns, 2014). On 10 April 1971, the same day the American Table Tennis Team paid their first visit to China, Neil Amdur, wrote an article for the *New York Times* stating that in China, table tennis was not just a sport but a way of life.

On 2 November 1971, the Asian-African Table Tennis Friendship Invitational Tournament was held in Beijing at the Capital Gymnasium. Players from 51 countries and regions of Asia

³ For example, 通讯: “友谊第一, 比赛第二”——中国维和部队举办联黎乒乓赛, Xinhua, 25 March 2017.

and Africa attended this propaganda sporting event (Fan & Lu, 2014). The tournament successfully helped China renew its relationships with old friends (Third World countries), which had been suspended for more than five years by the Cultural Revolution. Similar friendly matches revealed that China was eager to use table tennis as a channel to secure international acceptance and recognition. China's diplomatic success in the 1970s proved that ping-pong diplomacy could be effective, not only for Sino-US relations, but relations with other countries.

The role of table tennis in China shows that diplomacy has been the result of both intentional selection by the government and international opportunities. When faced with difficult situations after the founding of the PRC, and particularly the 'two China issue', table tennis was the only means China had to gain domestic and international recognition. The overwhelming support table tennis received in the 1960s and 1970s was because it was the only international game in which the PRC was considered legitimate. It was only through table tennis that China could build the desired diplomatic ties with other countries. The attention to this single sport was amplified to a large extent when Mao used it and all of its propaganda tools to show the greatness of the country. Naturally, table tennis generated nationwide pride and patriotism, thus it became a political sport. The large number of table tennis players China had led to its dominance of the sport, which in turn paved the way for sports diplomacy. The success of ping-pong diplomacy with the US and China's great achievements in table tennis championships led to the climax of table tennis nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s. In this way, the Chinese people learned to believe in the greatness of the country and the government. Although table tennis was not recognised as an Olympic event in the Mao era, that changed in 1988. Since then, China has won 28 out of 32 gold medals in table tennis at the Olympic Games, which has been a huge source of national pride.

In the previous section, a detailed description has been given on how table tennis as a national sport has been involved with the international and domestic political environment. In China, no sport has been as important as table tennis and no other sport has permeated Chinese national sentiment and pride in the same way. This made table tennis the most typical target to study when it comes to sports and Chinese nationalism.

2.7.5 Table tennis nationalism

The nationwide attention to the accomplishments of table tennis athletes illustrates the privileged place of sports in constructing the national identity, or what one might refer to as nationalism. The nationalism generated by table tennis' success can be simply defined as a force and driving power supporting the Communist Party, which makes everyone proud to be Chinese. Such nationalism can be referred to as table tennis nationalism.

According to Anthony D. Smith (2000), 'nationalism itself can be defined as an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential "nation".' 'In many countries, national identity is promoted during the compulsory years of schooling through state-mandated history, and a moral and civic educational curricula' (Christopher, 2016).

China's table tennis achievements in the 1960s were the major source of national pride and national confidence. Although table tennis may not currently be important to all or even most Chinese, one cannot understate its historical significance in creating the Chinese national identity. To revitalize this traditional sport by introducing the new idea of 'table tennis nationalism' and explaining how table tennis influences patriotic political education,

President Xi Jinping said in episode six of the ‘Great Power Politics’ that ‘table tennis nationalism’ is not only the inheritance of great power diplomacy, it strengthens the national emotions of teenagers and helps the people of other countries know more about China. It also explains the practical guiding significance and future expectations of how table tennis as a case of sports education promotes nationalism (Yang, 2017). The contribution of this thesis is to empirically study table tennis nationalism. To extend the Domain Specific National Pride Scale that contains only one question on sports (Smith and Kim, 2006), this sports related section further develops the table tennis nationalism scale for use as a questionnaire in data collection.

2.7.6 Table tennis under the Whole Nation System

In the process of continuously improving the comprehensive strength and international competitiveness of the national team, China has gradually formed a competitive sports development strategy with Chinese characteristics and the highest level of the Olympic Games, namely the “Whole Nation System”. In essence, this competitive system is a special state administrative system and operational mechanism. The main feature of the Whole Nation System is that the government adopts the administrative means to allocate national resources. Table tennis has a solid foundation and a high degree of popularity. Through long-term effort, sports workers, coaches and athletes have maintained the prosperity of table tennis in China. One of the most important things is continuous innovation. The advantages of the Whole Nation System are described as follows:

(1) The Whole Nation System facilitates the effective centralization of manpower, material and financial resources throughout the country and the formation of a unified resource

training mechanism. The Whole Nation System can deploy a large number of the best grass-roots, provincial, municipal and national coaches in the country; select the best seedlings of China's table tennis players from the whole pool; centralize the national educational and research institutions; research, analyse, and innovate the latest table tennis technology; and provide strong theoretical and technical support for all its team members. The best training teams in China can emulate and show how to defend all kinds of foreign tactics with high fidelity; coach training-players to learn skills used by foreign opponents for athletes' practice sessions; provide the best logistical support services in the Whole Nation System, recruit the best psychologists in the Whole Nation System, and provide the best psychological counselling services for the players.

(2) The Whole Nation System can produce a global production line of "gold medalists". After all kinds of cruel selection processes, the main players who finally enter the core positions on the national team, regardless of age, physical condition, and technical and tactical levels, are like needles in a haystack. Each of them would have strong gold-winning strengths and be full of unique skills. Looking at table tennis today, only a few members of other countries have had an impact on the sport. This can be seen from the achievements of table tennis around the world, since the rise of table tennis in China.

(3) The Whole Nation System can cultivate a high sense of political responsibility in their team members and the concept of honor to win glory for China. Undoubtedly, the Whole Nation System can be concluded as "the training mechanism of devoting the national effort to a few lucky people." Therefore, the country has a moral obligation to ensure members obey organizational arrangements, national decisions, to strive to win glory for the country, and to

have a high degree of political responsibility. This is the most important criterion with which to decide whether a team member can be in a core position. When you enjoy the benefits of this system, you are also obliged to obey the decisions of the state and the organization. It is gratifying to see that most of China's players have a high sense of political responsibility. It is the system of the Whole Nation System that can cultivate such patriotism.

However, as far as the long-term development of present-day international table tennis and China's table tennis are concerned, the "Whole Nation System" is having a negative impact. The following are the disadvantages of the Whole Nation System in the development of table tennis.

(1) Although the national system is convenient for the whole country, huge talent and material waste still exist in various ways. The practical method of the Whole Nation System is to effectively integrate the human, material and financial resources of the country, and then establish a relatively unified resource training institution. Despite the fact this kind of sports strategy can promote a rapid flourish in table tennis in China, it has caused an enormous waste of talent and material in the process of training table tennis players. If the country invested all the manpower, material and financial resources used to cultivate a table tennis Olympic champion into mass sports or school physical education, it would speed up the development of China to a major sporting country.

(2) Overemphasizing the competition, and ignoring the cultivation of the cultural quality of table tennis players. Under the Whole Nation System, a pyramid-type sports talent training system from the sports school to the local sports team to the national team has gradually been formed. Each table tennis team exercises near-military management of their athletes.

Meanwhile the athletes insist on assiduous training every day to constantly improve their competitive level. Due to the long training period and loads of exercise, athletes neither have sufficient time, nor a good attitude toward culture education and social skills. This is one of the issues that current competitive sports have to solve.

(3) Limiting people's subjective initiative and creative development. The Whole Nation System is a unique phenomenon which arose during the development of China's physical education, a trace of modern China's development. At the same time, the rapid development of China's social economy, the Whole Nation System has exposed many of its own drawbacks in the process of practice. They have created certain obstacles to the healthy development of table tennis, and thus have had some negative effects on competitive sports. Therefore, the Whole Nation System should continuously improve its own inadequacies, enabling people to participate in table tennis actively and voluntarily, and give full credence to people's subjective initiatives and creativity in table tennis.

(4) The Whole Nation System has stifled the development of other excellent table tennis talents. After all, there are many equally talented people. If Deng Yaping's father was not a famous coach, not had the strength of the Henan Team coach behind her, and not had Zhang Xielin's wisdom and insight, she would have failed long ago. This also demonstrates the negative side, where other excellent talents like Deng are less fortunate and fade away in the fight to be recognised as a table tennis athlete.

2.8 How sports education might promote identity and pride of youth

Sports helps children develop socially and physically. Chatzisarantis et al. (1997) found that

youth focused on positive development through sport to cultivate self-identification, national pride and character. This thesis extends the knowledge based on sports education and the effects thereof for personal awareness and growth. There is thus a correlation between sports education, nationalism and youth development.

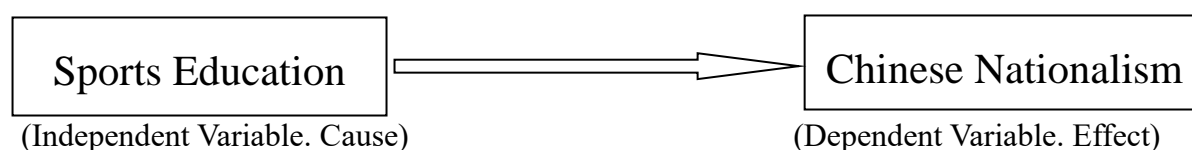
Sports education positively influences national identity, pride and ultimately personal growth (Chen, 2001). Broadcasting sports achievements is one way for sports education to convey social values and the benefits of youth participating in sports. China aspires to disseminate its sport programme to promote national values and increase the national identity of its youth by creating images of super-star Chinese in the media. For example, the interview about the table tennis player Ding Ning is from the Beijing Evening News (Oct, 2017), which emphasized that her desire to stand on the podium at the Olympic Games as a representative of China's athletes was the major reason for her victory. From this report, one can understand how the athletes' spirit and stories can promote youth development and improvement.

Sports Education as a curriculum model, addresses the concerns over traditional approaches to teaching physical education (Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2011; Tsangaridou & Lefteratos, 2013). Sports can be an excellent context in which to teach youth to identify with and build up their commitment to sport. At the same time, athletes' perceived levels of individual identity have had positive effects on sport and can be a good indicator of how one's athletic experience can affect one cognitively. There is robust evidence to suggest that sports participation can equip youths with the tools needed for national identification and growth. Sports education in school helps students understand the concept of collectivism, thereby laying the foundation for nationalism.

2.9 Thesis Hypothesis

This chapter reviewed the interconnection between sports and nationalism, both in general and in China. By providing a background of the Whole Nation System, in which athletes are nurtured, it is understood that sports can never be separated from politics, especially in China. By introducing table tennis as a case of the Whole Nation System, showing its development from a historical perspective, the socio-political foundation was laid to explore sports and nationalism in China. Further, by discussing the dimensions of nationalism, including national identity and national pride, in empirical models, the relationship between sports education and nationalism could be studied in a systematic way. This is the major contribution of this thesis. Therefore, its hypothesis (Chart 4) is that sports education can stimulate and contribute to Chinese nationalism.

Chart 4: Thesis Hypothesis



This research is more about sports and society, as well as the politics. That is to say, the socio-political aspect. There is no previous study on sports education leading to nationalism which looks at amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches in the field of table tennis. Nationalism as the socio-political aspect. National identity and national pride as the intervening variable. Chinese identity means the Chinese cultural and political identity. Chinese political identity refers to the support of the Chinese Communist Party and pride in being Chinese. This is where sports education and nationalist sentiment become interconnected, but in this Doctor of Education programme, the research does not have a sufficient base to analyze all of the complex relationships between the variables. The study primarily focuses on sports education's contribution to nationalist sentiment.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Theoretical research design

In this chapter, the influence of social context and organisational mechanisms are considered, and the dimensions of national sentiment (such as national identity and national pride) in relation to sports and sports education are discussed. Using table tennis (the national sport) as a case study, through quantitative analysis (questionnaire survey) and qualitative analysis (in-depth interviews), groups of amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches are investigated to show how sports and nationalism are interlinked in a multi-layered manner. Table tennis as an educational tool used to inspire and cultivate nationalism is also a major focus of this thesis.

3.2 Mixed method research design

Mixed method research, as its name suggests, is when more than one research method is adopted or different methods, (e.g. quantitative and qualitative) are combined (Viadero, 2005). It is argued that this is essential to researchers in the humanities and social sciences (Howe, 1992).

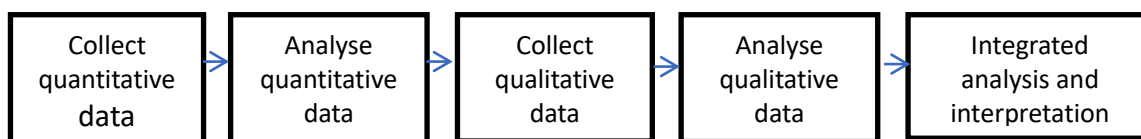
The advantages of combining quantitative and qualitative research are significant (Sechrest & Sidana, 1995). In this thesis, quantitative research was first conducted. A survey questionnaire was used to acquire data on the relationship between national sentiment and table tennis, the national sport of China. However, to overcome the disadvantages and limitations of relying on a single methodology, it was understood that some data could be more fully explained

through qualitative research. Thus, in-depth interviews were used to acquire more information, not only to confirm the basic hypotheses, but to address any unexpected data found in the questionnaire results. In other words, mixed methods were used to expand the insights and understandings that might have been overlooked by applying only one method. For pedagogical and sociological phenomena which are diverse and comprehensive, a mixed methods approach is a powerful tool for providing a sound and precise analysis of a topic.

In mixed-methods research, quantitative and qualitative research relies on a series of research steps: constructing research questions, collecting research data, interpreting research results and drawing research conclusions. Different methods are applied at different stages of the research. Depending on the stage of the research, methodologists Creswell and Clark (2007) described and discussed four mixed-method designs: (1) triangulation, (2) nested, (3) sequence explanation and (4) sequential probe.

In the process of collecting data for this thesis, the third design, sequence explanation, was relied upon. This design uses qualitative data to help analyse preliminary quantitative results (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Analysis of the quantitative data precedes qualitative analysis (Chart 5). Since this research started with quantitative research, its approach was emphasised. Qualitative data analysis was used to make sense of the unanticipated results from the quantitative study and the sequential explanation design is relatively simple and clear. The two research methods are independent, easy to execute and conducive to describing and reporting the results.

Chart 5: Mixed Research Methods Sequence Explanation Design Icon



Source: Creswell J W, Clark V L P. (2007) Designing and conducting mixed methods research[M]. Sage Publications Inc.

Based on the mixed-methods sequence explanation design, from the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire survey to the initial data analysis of the topic followed by qualitative in-depth face-to-face interviews, microcosmic and meticulous descriptions were generated. These are discussed in the remainder of this thesis.

3.3 Research overviews

3.3.1 Participants

3.3.1.1 Participants in the questionnaire

The participants were mainly identified through official websites, or the contact numbers for the government agencies, universities, associations and clubs related to table tennis. The contact information was provided by the staff associated with the table tennis project. The process was relatively easy for the author as a former professional table tennis player attached to various teams in Guangdong province. The author as a player familiar with the system and with knowledge of who to contact to acquire useful data, the data were mainly collected from two sources. Almost 80% of the questionnaires were distributed through the network of Guangdong University student table tennis associations. Requests were made to universities which had table tennis teams by contacting the table tennis team leader via email or phone call. After the purpose and details of the study were clarified, 14 university team captains

agreed to help distribute and collect the questionnaires. Most of the data were collected in this way. Alternatively, participants were also recruited by distributing the survey questionnaires to table tennis coaches and players at the following venues: 1) Guangdong Ersha Sports Training Centre; (2) Guangdong University Student Championship Stadium (South China University of Technology); (3) Table tennis associations; and (4) The International Table Tennis Open.

According to the sampling principle, the scope of this investigation covers table tennis amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches. A total of 175 questionnaires were distributed. After removing the extreme value, the amount of the final valid questionnaire was 171 (99 amateur athletes, 45 professional athletes and 27 coaches). The effective recovery rate of the questionnaire is 97.7%. The period of participation is from October to November in 2017. The basic information of the participants is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Basic Information from the Questionnaires

Variable	Option	Number of People	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	91	53.2
	Female	80	46.8
Age	Under 18	25	14.6
	18-30 years old	118	69.0
	31-45 years old	22	12.9
	46-60 years old	4	2.3

	Above 60	2	1.2
Nationality	Han	167	97.7
	Others	4	2.3
Educational Background	High School or Below	24	14.0
	Technical Secondary School	12	7.0
	Junior College	19	11.1
	Bachelor's Degree	97	56.7
	Master's Degree	18	10.5
	Doctoral Degree	1	0.6
Occupation	Amateur Table Tennis Athletes	99	57.9
	Professional Table Tennis Athletes	45	26.3
	Table Tennis Coaches	27	15.8
Political Status	Chinese Communist Party Members	23	13.5

	Communist Youth	110	64.3
	League Members		
	Democratic Parties	2	1.3
	General-public	36	21.1
<hr/>			
Monthly Income	Less than 6000 Yuan	63	36.8
	6001-9000 Yuan	50	29.2
	9001-12000 Yuan	36	21.1
	More than 12000 Yuan	22	12.9
<hr/>			
Received professional	No	69	40.4
table tennis training?			
	Yes	97	56.7
	Deficiency	5	2.9
<hr/>			

The population for some options was too small, so they were deleted or combined. Adjustments were made to the following: (1) the 46-60 year old participants were combined with the above 60 group to become a group designated 45 and above; (2) ‘Master’s degree’ was combined with ‘Doctoral degree’ to become ‘Master’s degree and above’; (3) the group ‘democratic parties’ was deleted.

3.3.1.2 Participants in the in-depth interview

According to the sampling principle, the scope of interviewees covers 10 amateur table tennis athletes, 10 professional athletes and 5 coaches from 171 of the interviewees, who had previously received the questionnaires. A total of 25 interviewees were interviewed in Chinese and each one was interviewed in person and face-to-face from February to May in 2018. Their basic information is compiled in Table 4.

Table 4: Brief Introduction to the Participants

No	Code Name	Gender	Age	Identity	Current/Graduate School	Major
1	CO1	Male	29	Coach	South China Normal University	Sports Training (Bachelor's Degree)
2	CO2	Female	27	Coach	Guangzhou Sports University	Sports Training (Master's Degree)
3	CO3	Male	54	Coach	Guangzhou Sports University	Sports (Bachelor's Degree)
4	CO4	Female	38	Coach	South China Normal University	Chinese (Bachelor's Degree)
5	CO5	Male	43	Coach	Guangzhou Sports University	Physical Education (Master's Degree)
6	PA1	Female	37	Professional	Guangzhou Sports	Sports Training

				Athlete	University	(Bachelor's Degree)
7	PA2	Female	41	Professional Athlete	Hubei Institute of Technology	Business Management (Bachelor's Degree)
8	PA3	Male	27	Professional Athlete	South China Normal University	Physical Education (Bachelor's Degree)
9	PA4	Female	31	Professional Athlete	Guangdong University of Technology	Business Administration (Bachelor's Degree)
10	PA5	Male	21	Professional Athlete	Shanghai Physical Education Institute	Sports Training (Bachelor's Degree)
11	PA6	Male	52	Professional Athlete	Shanghai Physical Education Institute	Athletic Sports (Bachelor's Degree)
12	PA7	Male	21	Professional Athlete	Guangdong Er Sha Sports Training Centre	Senior
13	PA8	Male	33	Professional Athlete	South China University of Technology	Athletic Sports (Bachelor's Degree)
14	PA9	Female	21	Professional Athlete	Shanghai East China University of Technology	Sports Engineering (Bachelor's Degree)
15	PA10	Female	18	Professional Athlete	Shanghai Physical Education Institute	Sports Training (Bachelor's Degree)

16	AA1	Female	23	Amateur Athlete	Chinese University of Hong Kong	Economics (Master's Degree)
17	AA2	Male	73	Amateur Athlete	South China University of Technology	Architecture (Bachelor's Degree)
18	AA3	Male	53	Amateur Athlete	Zhongshan University	Administrative Management (Master's Degree)
19	AA4	Female	21	Amateur Athlete	South China Normal University	Administrative Management (Bachelor's Degree)
20	AA5	Male	57	Amateur Athlete	Huazhong Normal University	Fine Arts (Bachelor's Degree)
21	AA6	Female	31	Amateur Athlete	Guangdong University of Foreign Studies	Administrative Management (Bachelor's Degree)
22	AA7	Male	48	Amateur Athlete	Foshan University of Science and Technology	Highway Bridges (Bachelor's Degree)
23	AA8	Male	33	Amateur	Guangdong University of	Business Administration

				Athlete	Technology	(Bachelor's Degree)
24	AA9	Female	44	Amateur Athlete	Guangdong Institute of Petrochemical Technology	Civil Construction (Junior College)
25	AA10	Male	30	Amateur Athlete	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University	Architecture (Master's Degree)

3.3.2 The design of the instruments

3.3.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into four parts. The first provided the participants' basic information such as gender, age, ethnicity, educational background, profession, political identity, experience of being abroad and monthly family income. The second part inquired into the participants' table tennis experience, such as their training history and the level of competition they have participated in. The third part evaluated the participants' nationalism based on Qin's (2005) Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS). To reduce the length of the questionnaire and guarantee the quality of the participants' answers, eight representative questions targeting four elements (self-identification, behaviours and practices, affirmation and belonging, and evaluation) were selected. The fourth part of the questionnaire was about table tennis nationalism, intending to probe the participants' national sentiment related to table tennis. This part is very important for analyzing the relationship between sports education (table tennis) and nationalism.

3.3.2.2 In-depth interviews

The purpose of the qualitative research is to provide a further explanation of the results obtained from quantitative research and to obtain direct information from the participants. There are 13 questions and the questions are divided into three types of formal in-depth interviews. In this thesis, the participants were asked for detailed information about their experience and interpretation of nationalism, table tennis nationalism, and the relationship between sports education and national sentiment.

3.3.3 Procedures

Prior to data collection, the pilot questionnaire items were checked by graduate students from the department of linguistics for clarity, simplicity and comprehensibility. Exploratory factor analysis on the pilot questionnaire was conducted through trial tests with 30 participants to determine its reliability and validity, especially its structural validity from August to September 2017. There were 10 table tennis amateurs, 10 professional athletes and 10 coaches. The pilot study is based on the concept of research, research design, sample size, sample selection and data collection. By interpreting the research hypothesis, the pilot questionnaire determines the factors that hinder the completion of the large-scale study, evaluates its methodological feasibility, the performance of the equipment used by the subjects, the time required to test the subjects who participate in the study, and forecasts the data loss rate and patient compliance. This provides the basis for the subsequent large-scale research design. When the students evaluated the first draft of the questionnaire, they eliminated multi-overloading or low-loading items, and adjusted the expression of the items in the questionnaire according to the collected opinions. They then deleted and replaced some questions and options, and finally the official version of the questionnaire was confirmed.

Once the data were distributed and collected, SPSS software was used to analyse it from December 2017 to January 2018.

With the findings from the quantitative research established, further interview questions were developed. In December 2017, 20 questions were set up in in-depth interviews. The purpose of the questions was not to distinguish the specific interview objectives. In January 2018, pilot interviews were conducted with six participants, who were either table tennis amateurs, professional athletes or coaches. Three were male and three were female. Before the formal launch of the interviews, a pilot study was carried out to test the key event interview methods, including the techniques for interview implementation and coding recorded texts. The goal of this exercise was to accurately identify the behavioural indicators of each dimension of the interview text data. The publication of the pilot study results does not emphasize the statistically significant difference results, but puts forward the expected results for each interest measurement index, and describes and summarizes the experiences and lessons learned through the pilot study, so as to provide the basis for subsequent large-scale research. The research found that the original questions in the pilot interview were not targeted enough, especially in response to the interview questions made by interviewees who participated in playing table tennis in different roles. Therefore, the interview questions needed to be revised and simplified.

After these interviews, the content was organized into printed text. The researchers separately coded the recorded interview texts, ensured the consistency of the codes based on a pilot study of the pilot interviews and then coded the remaining documents separately. After that, the main interviews were conducted and recorded according to the appendix of the Personal

Interview Outline. Appointments were made by email or telephone. All of the participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and they decided voluntarily to be interviewed and recorded. During the interview, the investigator asked the participants various questions and explored them extensively. The table tennis coaches were usually interviewed right after training or competitions. As a result, the coaches invited the researchers to observe some scenes. This helped the researchers further understand the table tennis players' training, competition and daily lives. Each interview lasted for less than two hours. Due to the interviewees all being from mainland China, and their native language being Chinese, the interviews used Chinese dialogue and were carried out by voice recording. The research employed a professional translation agency to translate the content of the interview into English and a PhD in English translation reviewed the relevant translation content from June to July 2018. Then, the research analysed the interview data with the NVivo software from August to October 2018. In the following chapter, the quantitative and qualitative research findings and results are presented.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

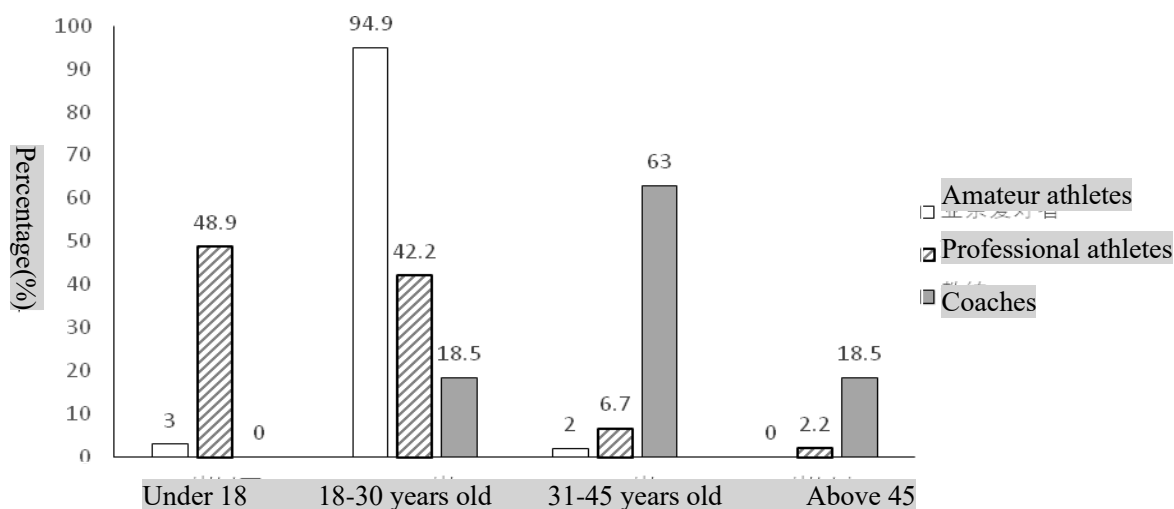
4.1 Overall analysis of the selected objects

4.1.1 Group comparisons

The participants in this study were from three different groups related to the sport of table tennis, namely amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches. Although they came from different regions, backgrounds, ages, academic qualifications and political affiliations, they had one thing in common: they all loved table tennis and were actively involved in the sport. Most of them had even played in competitions. The following section presents further information about the 171 participants who took part in the survey.

4.1.1.1 Age distribution

Chart 6: Age Distribution of Different Groups (N=171)

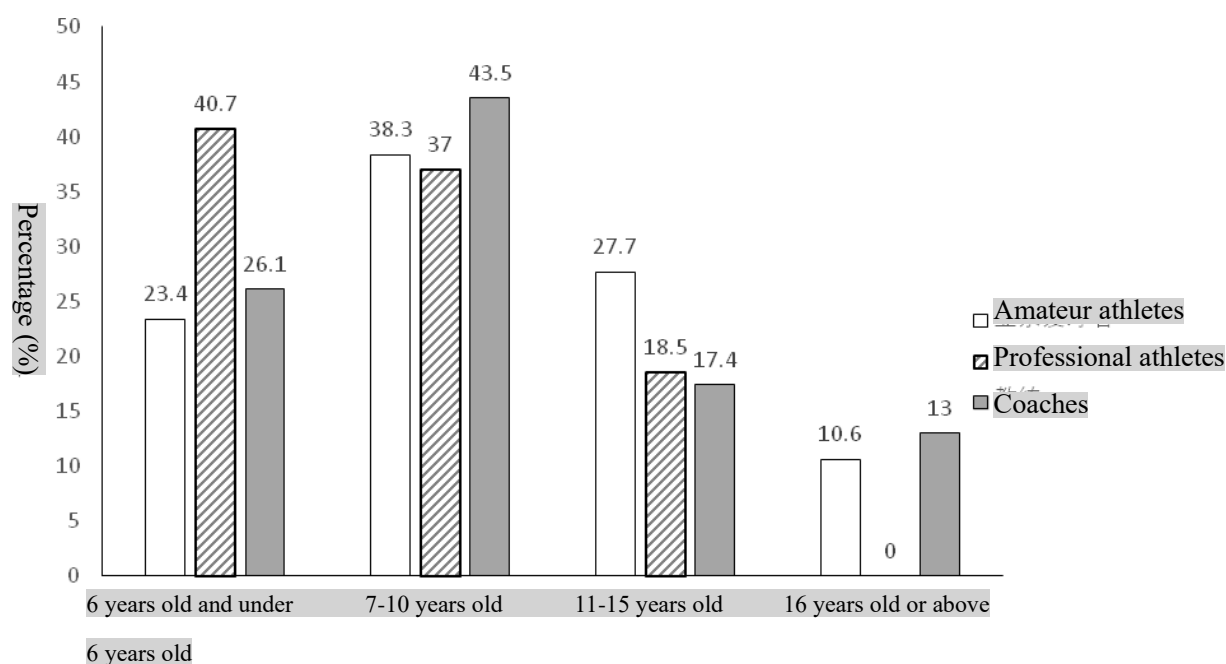


In chart 6, we can see that most of the amateur and professional athletes were under 30 years of age and the coaches were mainly 30 years old and above. The age difference could be one

important element explaining the differences between coaches and athletes.

4.1.1.2 Age at which respondent participated in training for the first time

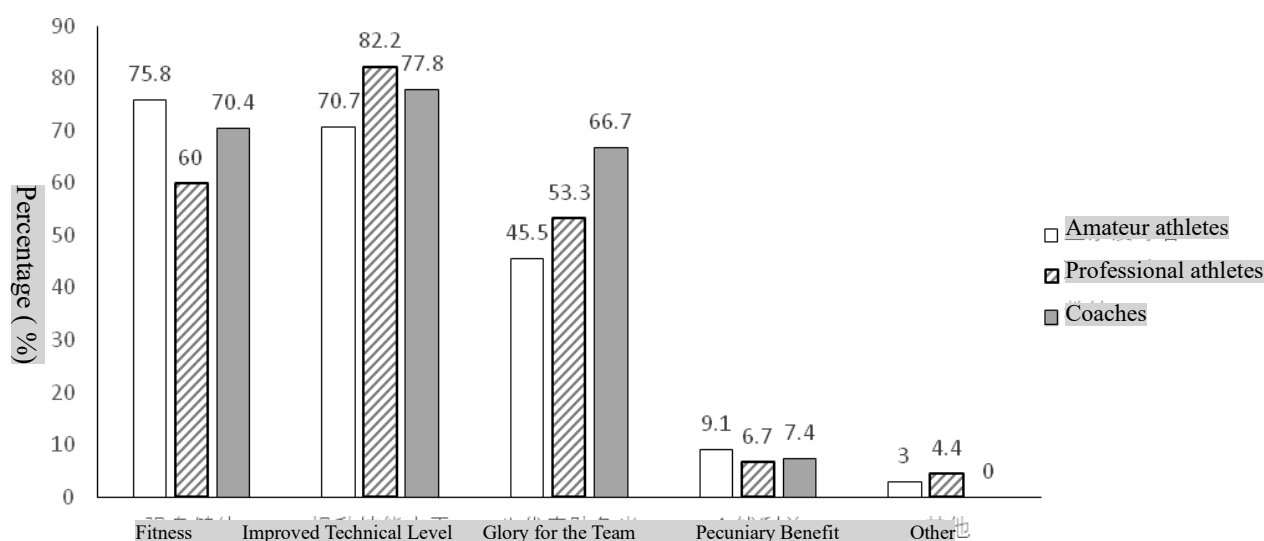
Chart 7. Ages of Different Groups Participating in Training for the First Time (N=96)



In chart 7, it can be seen that among the 96 people who participated in professional training, the age at which professional athletes participated for the first time was generally under 6, whereas amateur athletes and coaches were generally 7 to 10 years of age.

4.1.1.3 Purpose of participating in training

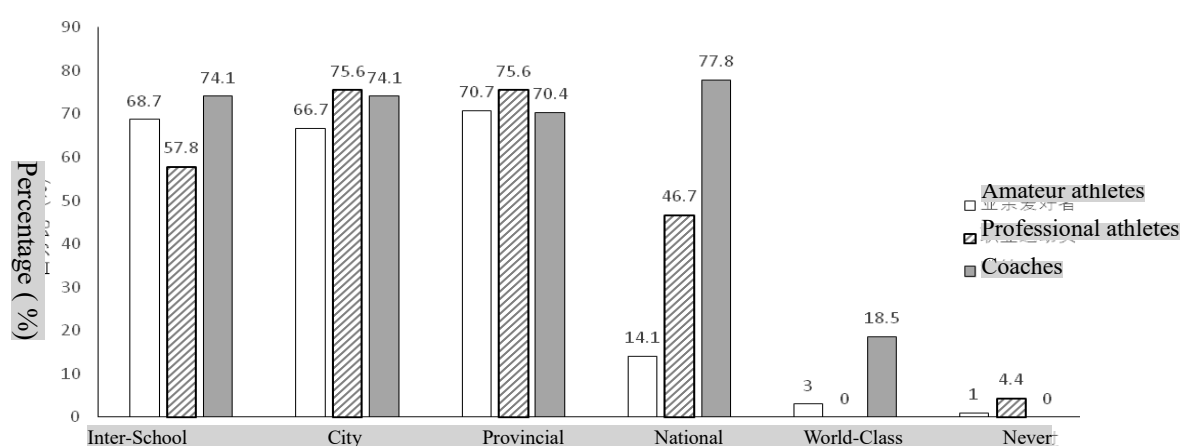
Chart 8. Purposes of Different Groups Participating in Training (N=171)



In chart 8, most of the amateur athletes reported that participating in table tennis kept them fit, whereas most of the professional athletes and coaches indicated that participating in table tennis improved their technical levels.

4.1.1.4 Types of competitions respondents participated in

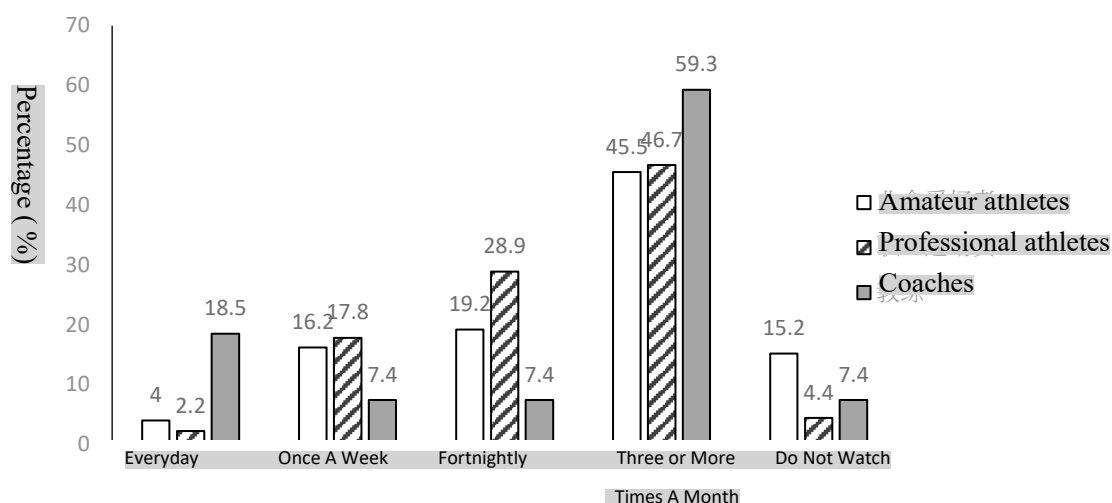
Chart 9. Types of Competition Different Groups Participated in (N=171)



In chart 9 shows that most amateur and professional athletes participated in competitions at the provincial level, whereas more coaches participated in national competitions.

4.1.1.5 Frequency of Watching Table Tennis Competitions

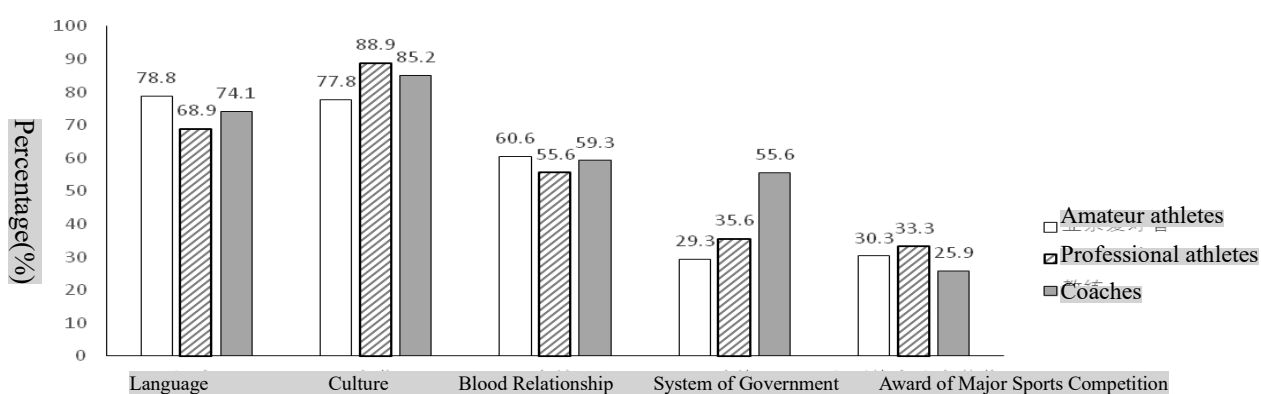
Chart 10. Frequency of Watching Table Tennis Competitions According to Occupation (N=171)



From the above, most people watch table tennis competitions three or more times a month whether they are amateur athletes, professional athletes or coaches.

4.1.1.6 Demonstrating Chinese Identity

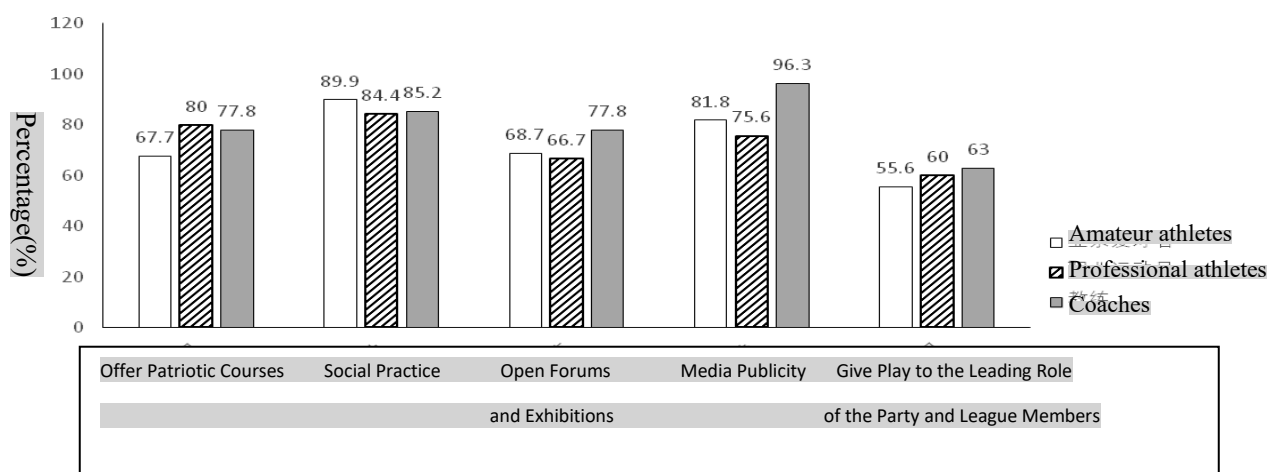
Chart 11. Comparison of Ways to Demonstrate Chinese National Identity as Viewed by Different Groups (N=171)



As seen in Chart 11, most of the amateur athletes indicated that language was the best way to demonstrate their Chinese ethnicity, whereas professional athletes and coaches indicated that culture was the most important symbol of Chinese national identity.

4.1.1.7 Ways of enhancing Chinese national knowledge

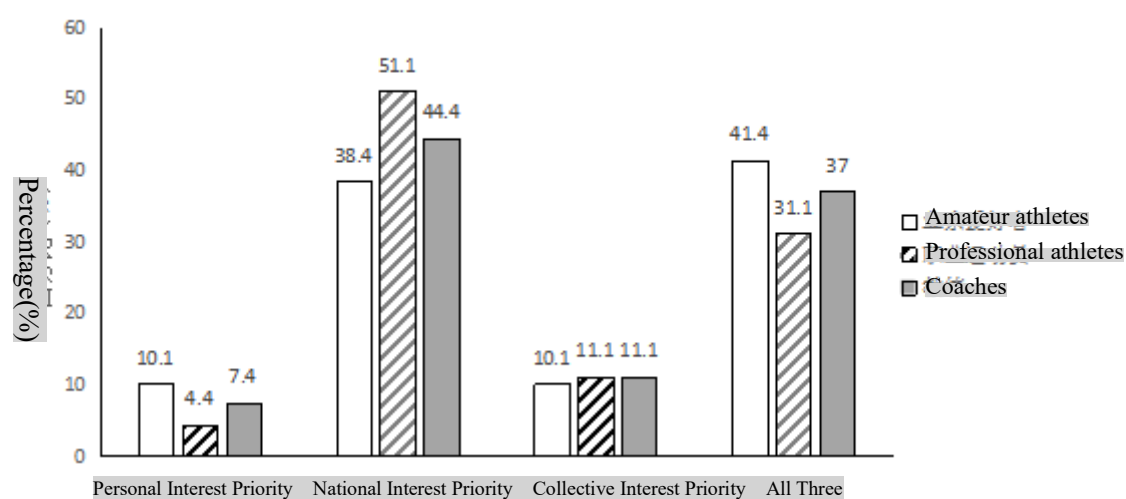
Chart 12. Ways of Enhancing Chinese National Knowledge by Different Groups (N=171)



In chart 12, most amateur and professional athletes chose social practice as the way to help athletes cultivate nationalism, whereas most coaches chose media publicity such as campus lectures and association activities.

4.1.1.8 Choice of different occupations with conflicts of interest

Chart 13. Choices of Different Occupations with Conflicts of Interest (N=171)



In chart 13 shows that in all three groups, most chose to prioritize the national interest when there was a conflict of interest, although some chose to balance personal interest, collective interest and the national interest.

4.1.1.9 Degree of table tennis familiarity

Table 5. Degrees of Table Tennis Familiarity of Different Groups

Groups		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Occupations	Amateur Athletes	99	3.91±0.74	13.255	< 0.001
	Professional Athletes	45	4.33±0.53		
	Coaches	27	4.54±0.44		

The score for the Degree of Table Tennis Familiarity was the average score of both questions ‘Are you familiar with the history of table tennis?’ and ‘Are you familiar with table tennis and have knowledge of such things as equipment and competition rules?’ (5-point scale with 1 being ‘very unfamiliar’ and 5 being ‘very familiar’). Coaches were the most familiar with table tennis and amateur athletes had the lowest amount of knowledge.

4.1.2 General nationalism

4.1.2.1 Factor analysis of general nationalism

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for general nationalism. The Bartlett spherical test results show that two variables are suitable for factor analysis ($p < 0.001$). After using principal component analysis to conduct a rotation of factors, it was discovered that eight items could be explained by two factors. The variance contribution of the first factor was

1 0 0

36.85%, which was called ‘national identity’. The variance contribution of the second factor was 33.02%, which was designated ‘national pride’. The characteristic values for each factor and the factor loading of each item are shown in the table below.

Table 6. Characteristic Values and Variance Contribution of Each Factor

Factors	Characteristic Values	Variance Contribution (%)
1. National identity	2.926	36.58
2. National pride	2.642	33.02

Furthermore, in the factor loading of each item (table 7), factor rotation was conducted to examine each one by principal component analysis. It revealed that the eight items could be generalized into two factors. Questions 1 to 4 reflect ‘national identity’. Questions 5 to 8 reflect ‘national pride’. The figure nearest to one, will not exceed one, the greater the degree of which factors can be explained. On the one hand, the degree of which national identity can be explained by the first question is 0.870, while the fourth question is 0.636 and less to explain the factors. On the other hand, the degree of which national pride can be explained by the fifth question is 0.856. The eighth question is 0.649 and less to explain the factors. In the questionnaires, the questions were set up to reflect each factors’ significance.

Table 7. Factor Loading of Each Item

Items	Factors	
	National identity	National pride

1. Do you celebrate traditional Chinese festivals?	.870	
2. Are you happy to be a member of the Chinese nation?	.855	
3. Do you agree that having a Chinese identity has a positive impact on your life?	.785	
4. Do you agree to participate in the activities organized by your Chinese compatriots?	.636	
5. Do you agree that the Chinese nation is a nation that is developing in an all-round way in the fields of economics, politics and sports?		.856
6. Do you agree that you feel more affection towards Chinese people abroad?		.732
7. Do you agree that you are proud to be a member of the Chinese nation?		.705
8. Do you take the initiative to introduce our culture to people of other cultures?		.649

Note: Factor loadings of less than 0.5 are not presented.

4.1.2.2 Relationship between general nationalism and each influencing factor

Further correlation analysis was carried out on general nationalism and the duration of exposure to table tennis, the frequency of watching competitions, the degree of familiarity

with table tennis and the number of competition types (see table below). No significant correlation was found between the duration of exposure to table tennis, the frequency of watching competitions, the number of competition types and general nationalism. There was a significant positive correlation between the degree of familiarity with table tennis and general nationalism ($r=0.260$, $p=0.001$). The age at which one participated in training for the first time was also significantly and negatively correlated with general nationalism ($r=-0.240$, $p=0.019$). The higher the degree of familiarity with table tennis, the higher the level of general nationalism. The younger the athletes were when they started participating in professional training, the higher their level of general nationalism.

Table 8. Correlation Analysis Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Duration of exposure to table tennis	1					
2. Frequency of watching competitions	-0.025	1				
3. Degree of understanding table tennis	0.337***	0.318***	1			
4. Number of competition types the respondent participated in	0.374***	-0.067	0.319***	1		
5. Age at which respondent first participated in training	-0.134	0.022	-0.225*	-0.012	1	
6. General nationalism	-0.017	0.103	0.260**	-0.015	-0.240*	1

Note: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$; the same below

Further regression analysis was performed on general nationalism in relation to the age at which one participated in training for the first time, the degree of familiarity with table tennis and the control variables such as gender, age and capital monthly income per household (see table below). The degree of familiarity with table tennis had a positive predictable effect on general nationalism, that is, the more familiar a person was with table tennis, the higher the level of general nationalism the person experienced. One possible explanation is that a person's familiarity with table tennis not only reflects his or her technical prowess, but also his or her political, cultural, historical and social understanding of table tennis as a national sport. This in turn enhances the level of nationalism. Other variables showed no correlation with the general nationalism factor.

Table 9. Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variables	β	T	Adjusted R^2	F
Degree of Understanding Table Tennis	0.145	3.241**	0.123	6.947***
Gender	-0.157	-2.539*		
Age	-0.113	-2.376*		
Income	-0.020	-0.731		

4.1.3 Table tennis nationalism

4.1.3.1 Comparing means of table tennis nationalism

The table tennis nationalism of all participants was above the average ($M=3.97\pm0.42$), meaning that their feelings of nationalism relating to table tennis were more positive. There were significant differences in table tennis nationalism in the following areas (see table below): The nationalism of males was significantly higher than females; ($F=2.528$, $p=0.012$); the nationalism of people under 18 years old was the highest, while it was the lowest among people more than 45 years old ($F=5.943$, $p=0.001$); general nationalism was the highest among those with an income of less than 6000 Yuan ($F=4.452$, $p=0.005$); the highest nationalism level was found among people whose highest educational achievement was an associate degree, whereas technical school students were the lowest ($F=2.665$, $p=0.034$).

Table 10. Differences in Table Tennis Nationalism Based on Demographic Variables (N=171)

Variable	Option	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>	<i>t/F</i>	<i>p</i>	Back Testing			
Gender	Male	91	4.05±0.40	2.528	0.012	Male>Female			
	Female	80	3.89±0.43						
Occupation	Coaches	27	3.92±0.47	1.267	0.284				
	Professional	45	4.06±0.40						
	Athletes								
	Amateur Athletes	99	3.95±0.42						
Age	Under 18 years old	25	4.19±0.36	5.943	0.001	Under 18 years old>			
	18-30 years old	118	3.96±0.42			18-30 years old; 31- 45 years old>			

	31-45 years old	22	3.93 ± 0.34			Above 45 years old
	Above 45 years old	6	3.46 ± 0.45			
Educational Background	High School and Below	24	4.07 ± 0.29	2.665	0.034	Junior College>Bachelor Degree
	Technical Secondary School	12	3.76 ± 0.52			High School and Below> Technical Secondary School
	Junior College	19	4.19 ± 0.45			
	Bachelor Degree	97	3.94 ± 0.39			
	Master Degree and Above	19	3.94 ± 0.52			
Political Status	General-public	36	3.88 ± 0.48	1.098	0.336	
	Communist Youth League Members	110	4.00 ± 0.40			
	Chinese Communist Party Members	23	3.96 ± 0.41			
Income	Less than 6000 Yuan	63	4.02 ± 0.39	1.862	0.138	
	6001-9000 Yuan	50	4.00 ± 0.39			
	9001-12000	36	3.96 ± 0.35			

	Yuan				
	More than 12000	22	3.79 ± 0.42		
	Yuan				
<hr/>					
Received					
professional	Yes	97	3.92 ± 0.41	-1.856	0.065
training?					
	No	69	4.05 ± 0.43		
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4.1.3.2 Table tennis nationalism and each influencing factor

Correlation analysis was conducted between table tennis nationalism and the duration of involvement with table tennis, the frequency of watching competitions, the degree of understanding of table tennis, the number of competition types, the age at which one participated in training for the first time and general nationalism (see table below). The frequency of watching competitions ($r=0.151$, $p=0.049$) and general nationalism ($r=0.445$, $p<0.001$) were found to have a positive effect on table tennis nationalism; the number of competition types the respondent participated in ($r=-0.186$, $p=0.015$) and the age an athlete first participated in training ($r=0.235$, $p=0.021$) had a negative effect on table tennis nationalism. There were no significant correlations between the duration of exposure to table tennis and the degree of understanding of table tennis and table tennis nationalism.

Table 11. Correlation Analysis Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	1						
2. Frequency of Watching Competitions	-0.054	1					
3. Number of Competition Types Participated in	0.379**	-0.095	1				
4. Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	0.333***	0.281***	0.316***	1			
5. Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	-0.130	0.053	0.000	-0.239*	1		
6. General Nationalism	-0.040	0.187*	-0.025	0.335***	-0.169	1	
7. Table Tennis Nationalism	-0.067	0.151*	-0.186*	0.146	-0.235*	0.445***	1

Further regression analysis of table tennis suggested that the frequency of watching competitions, general nationalism and the varied and numerous competitions the respondent participated in, had a positive effect on table tennis nationalism. The control variables were gender, age and educational background (see table below). The adjusted R^2 of Model 3 was the largest. The frequency of watching competitions and general nationalism had a positive predictive effect on table tennis nationalism, whereas the number of competition types a

person participated in had a negative predictive effect on table tennis nationalism. This meant that the greater the frequency of watching competitions, the greater the improvement in nationalist emotions related to table tennis; the higher level of general nationalism, the greater the improvement to the level of table tennis nationalism; the fewer the types of competitions one participated in, the greater the improvement to the nationalist emotions one had in relation to table tennis.

This means that the more one watched competitions, the more one had positive nationalist emotions relating to table tennis. This finding aligns with how sport can ignite nationalism by raising people's national pride. People's general nationalism was also positively associated with table tennis nationalism, showing that sport was an indispensable component in stimulating people's nationalist emotions. The younger a person was when he or she participated in professional training, the more positive nationalist emotions relating to table tennis that person tended to have. This shows the importance of sports education to cultivating domain-specific nationalism. With regard to the phenomenon that the fewer competition types a person participated in, the higher the level of table tennis nationalism; further explanation is provided in the quantitative analysis.

Table 12. Regression Analysis Results

Model	Independent Variables	\hat{a}	t	Adjusted R^2	F
1	General Nationalism	0.418	5.614***	0.240	14.394**
(Control Variables)					*
	Educational Background	-0.034	-1.370		
	Gender	-0.089	-1.510		
	Age	-0.160	-3.466**		
2	General Nationalism	0.413	5.692***	0.277	14.045**
(Control Variables)					*
	Quantity of Competition Types Participated	-0.073	-3.106**		
	Educational Background	-0.018	-0.715		
	Gender	-0.105	-1.815		
	Age	-0.124	-2.680**		
3	General Nationalism	0.403	5.606***	0.293	12.733**
					*
					1 1 0

(Control Variables)	Quantity of Competition Types	-0.068	-2.912**
	Participated		
	Frequency of Watching Competitions	0.057	2.152*
	Educational Background	-0.019	-0.765
	Gender	-0.076	-1.297
	Age	-0.123	-2.682**

Further regression analysis was conducted on the participants who underwent professional training. The purpose was to determine the relationship between the age at which one participated in training for the first time and table tennis nationalism. It was discovered that the age an athlete first participated in training had a negative forecasting effect on table tennis nationalism, which means that the younger the age at which one first participated in training, the greater improvement to their table tennis nationalism emotions (Table13). This suggests that table tennis can be a good educational tool for cultivating nationalism in young children.

Table 13. Regression Analysis of Table Tennis Nationalism by Age Participating in Training for the First Time

Independent Variables	β	t	Adjusted R^2	F
Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	-0.115	-2.611*	0.148	5.140**

Educational Background	0.015	0.461
Gender	-0.158	-1.902
Age	-0.133	-2.314*

4.2 Quantitative and qualitative analysis of amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches

In this thesis, quantitative survey research was first conducted to investigate general nationalism and table tennis nationalism. To further illustrate the deep connection between table tennis and nationalism, the surveys were supplemented with qualitative in-depth interviews investigating national identity, national pride and table tennis within the Whole Nation System. Twenty-five participants of three categories were interviewed: amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches. The participants' different perspectives were collected to illustrate the relationship between physical education and nationalism.

4.2.1 Amateur athletes

As a competitive sport, table tennis creates conditions for human beings to understand and communicate with each other. It is an important way to inspire national spirit and stimulate national potential. Table tennis has made valuable contributions to world peace and even to the progressive cause of all mankind. What is the connection between nationalism and amateur table tennis athletes? We analyse this from quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

4.2.1.1 Quantitative analysis

4.2.1.1.1 General nationalism

Correlation analysis was conducted on the general nationalism of amateur athletes and the duration of exposure to table tennis, frequency of watching competitions, the degree of understanding table tennis and the number of competition types the athletes participated in (Table 14). There were no significant correlations among the duration of exposure to table tennis, the number of competition types the athletes participated in, the age an athlete first participated in training and general nationalism. There was a significant positive correlation between the frequency of watching competitions ($r=0.329$, $p<0.01$) the degree of understanding table tennis ($r=0.208$, $p<0.05$) and general nationalism. This means that the more competitions the participants watched, the higher their level of general nationalism; and the higher the degree of understanding of table tennis, the higher the level of their general nationalism.

Table 14. Correlation Analysis Results

	Gender	Age	Income	Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	Frequency of Watching Competitions	Degree of Understanding Table Tennis	Participation in Varied and Numerous Competitions	Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	General Nationalism
Gender	1								
Age	.046	1							
Income	.185	.094	1						
Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	-.034	.051	.073	1					

Frequency of Watching Competitions	-.301**	-.064	-.077	.027	1				
Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	.028	.054	.015	.003	.257*	1			
Varied and numerous Competitions Participated in	-.017	.142	-.051	.352***	-.123	-.037	1		
Age an athlete participated in Training for the First Time	-.282	.067	-.032	-.427**	.139	-.095	-.147	1	
General Nationalism	-.222*	-.136	-.021	.084	.329**	.208*	-.057	-.076	1

Regression analysis was conducted on general nationalism for the frequency of watching competitions and the degree of understanding table tennis (Table 15). The frequency of watching competitions had a positive forecasting effect on the general nationalism of amateur athletes, which means that the higher the frequency of watching competitions, the greater the improvement in the general nationalism of amateur athletes. However, the degree of understanding table tennis was not included in the regression model, which means that its effect towards the general nationalism of amateur athletes was not significant.

Table 15. Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variables	β	t	Adjusted R2	F
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Frequency of Watching Competitions	0.115	2.875**	0.106	11.742**
Gender	-0.115	-1.355		

4.2.1.1.2 Table tennis nationalism

Correlation analysis was conducted on the table tennis nationalism of amateur athletes and the duration of the table tennis contact, the frequency of watching competitions, the degree of understanding table tennis, the number of competition types the athletes participated in and the age at which they participated in training for the first time (Table 16). There was no significant correlation among the duration of table tennis contact, the degree of understanding table tennis, the varied and numerous competitions one participated in, and the age the respondent first participated in training and general nationalism. The frequency of watching competitions ($r=0.293$, $p<0.01$) had a positive effect on table tennis nationalism, which means the higher the frequency of watching competitions, the higher the amateur tennis table athletes' nationalism.

Table 16. Correlation Analysis Results

	Gender	Age	Income	Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	Frequency of Watching Competitions	Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	Varied and numerous Competition Participated in	Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	Table Tennis Nationalism
Gender	1								
Age	.046	1							
Income	.185	.094	1						

Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	-.034	.051	.073	1					
Frequency of Watching Competitions	-.301**	-.064	-.077	.027	1				
Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	.028	.054	.015	.003	.257*	1			
Varied and numerous Competitions Participated in	-.017	.142	-.051	.352***	-.123	-.037	1		
Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	-.282	.067	-.032	-.427**	.139	-.095	-.147	1	
Table Tennis Nationalism	-.117	-.159	-.065	.141	.293**	.086	-.135	-.044	1

Regression analysis of table tennis nationalism on the frequency of amateur athletes' spectating competitions was carried out (Table 17). The frequency of watching competitions had a positive forecasting effect on the table tennis nationalism of amateur athletes. The higher the frequency of watching competitions, the greater the improvement in table tennis feelings of nationalism.

Table 17. Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variable	β	t	Adjusted R^2	F
Frequency of Watching Competitions	0.114	3.018**	0.076	9.105**

4.2.1.2 Qualitative analysis

4.2.1.2.1 Strengthen national pride

Strong national pride in being a member of the Chinese nation was reflected in the interviews with the amateur athletes. The daily activities the amateur athletes participated in were mainly divided into four categories:

The first was traditional cultural activities. AA7 introduced traditional festivals to his hometown and said he actively supported and joined various activities.

We have lots of traditional ethnic activities, such as the lettuce meeting in Guanyao, Shishan and Nanhai. The lettuce meeting is a non-legacy traditional cultural event in Guangdong Province, which is held on Jan 26 every year. Basically, I like to participate. Every place has their own traditional cultural festivals and I actively support and participate in various folk activities (AA7).

The second was sport. In the interview, amateur athlete AA3, from Guangzhou, spoke about his achievements.

I led the Nansha representative team to Toronto to participate in the National Day Table Tennis tournament held by the Chinese Table Tennis Association to contribute to the promotion of local table tennis. Also, we organized teams to participate in the international invitational competition to play against world famous athletes (AA3).

The third was political and economic activity. AA8 was a member of the Democratic Party

Jiu San Society and he described his activities in the Party. He expressed that table tennis can promote the nationalist spirit and that this spirit of loving the Chinese nation and the country has little connection with affiliated parties.

I think I am definitely a proud member of the Chinese nation and table tennis is our national sport. Aside from table tennis at work, the fellowship activities organized by the Jiu San Society allow members to communicate and socialise with each other (AA8).

The fourth was voluntary activity. AA2 from Guangzhou spoke about his experience. He taught table tennis at the local primary school in his spare time to help improve the children's skills without receiving any compensation. AA3 discussed this topic combined with his ambitions and aspirations. He said he was proud of the country and at the same time he would actively promote foreign exchange activities to advance the national spirit of table tennis.

Sports can be borderless, but athletes must have national boundaries. I am a Chinese citizen and table tennis is our national sport. I love this sport very much and I participate actively in different kinds of competitions held by our county. For example, I took the Nansha representative team to Toronto to participate in the National Day Table Tennis tournament held by the Chinese Table Tennis Association to contribute to the promotion of local table tennis. I also organised teams to participate in the international invitational competition to play against world famous athletes to promote the Nansha area and teams to go to Shandong to participate in the member league of the China Table Tennis Association (AA3).

AA5 said he grew up listening to songs such as ‘The Descendants of the Dragon’ when raising the national flag every week in school. He was proud of himself as a Chinese citizen who had received a more traditional education. Such patriotic education has formed the national pride of citizens for a long time. For people who received a patriotic education in childhood, their national pride was formed through their education.

I am very proud of being Chinese. China as a nation has suffered pain and disaster in modern times. Because of the self-improvement wish of the Chinese people, the Communist Party has led people to overthrow the three mountains of imperialism, feudalism and capitalism, and stand up for the new Democratic revolution. National independence and the liberation of people has also proved that we are an indomitable nation. In the face of all kinds of competition in the world, we have taken the road of independence and self-improvement; our nation has a profound cultural history, cultural heritage that we should be proud of (AA5).

In their interviews, most of the participants said they participated in activities related to table tennis and consciously or subconsciously received a table tennis education that improved their table tennis techniques and cultivated a sense of nationalism in them. Most of the athletes or coaches who participated in the interviews recalled that through their table tennis training they had become more patriotic and had acquired a stronger sense of nationalism.

4.2.1.2.2 Strengthen national identity

Amateur athletes also responded positively when asked about national identity. AA10

described the importance of cultural exchange through his own story.

Many conflicts in the world, including Islamic State related, have stemmed from cultural disapproval. Foreigners' understanding of the Chinese nation is very limited. I think introducing our cultural background to other people will help Chinese people acquire a cultural identity in the world and culture must be developed and spread through communication. There is no reason to close ourselves up from the context of globalisation. Through my explanation, their impression of the Chinese nation will be improved because freedom of expression is one of the important parts of Western democratic values. Seeking common ground and reserving differences is the most intelligent way (AA10).

Alongside the development of China's economy, national strength has grown and attention to large-scale sporting events has become even higher. Major international sporting events such as the World Championships and the Olympic Games have been infused with nationalism to become an area that engenders the highest national enthusiasm. Winning or losing is always accompanied by a series of solemn ceremonies, such as raising the national flag and playing the national anthem, which is directly related to the honour of the country. Victories in competitive sports can stimulate national self-confidence and pride, and strengthen the nation's centripetal force and cohesion.

4.2.1.2.3 Patriotism and table tennis

Amateur athletes are divided into two groups when it comes to the connection between

patriotism and table tennis and how it is viewed. One group asserts that table tennis can promote patriotism. Most people begin to play table tennis for fun or exercise when they are children. With age and a patriotic education, love for the motherland gradually grows. When watching China's national teams achieve good results in international arenas like the Olympic Games, and seeing the five-star red flag raised, patriotic feelings rise in the hearts of the audience. AA2's description of his experience is a good example of this:

I played table tennis when I was young just as a hobby and because I enjoyed it. In 1961, after listening to the live broadcast of the Beijing 26th World Table Tennis Championships, I was so excited and could not sleep because China had won the world championship for the first time and Zhuang ZeDong won the singles championship for the first time. Table tennis can win glory for the country (AA2).

AA3, in another group, definitively explained the relationship between table tennis and patriotism combined with his own experience. He had participated in the sport and gradually gained an understanding of it. When he watched athletes compete, he combined common sense with his own sports experience. When athletes on the TV won a championship, he said he was more excited and happier than others who had not played the sport or did not know much about it. His feelings of patriotism were also raised.

Table tennis is our national sport, and the Chinese people's degree of affection towards it is deeper than any other sport. Playing table tennis helps strengthen patriotism. If you love the sport, then you will connect it with national feelings. I love watching our national team compete in particular. When they get good results, I

cheer for them; when they face setbacks, I encourage and show them understanding.

This is one reflection of patriotism (AA3).

4.2.1.2.4 Table Tennis under the Whole Nation System

The Whole Nation System, concentrating on cultivating first-class table tennis athletes, has produced some negative consequences. There has been a lowering in the levels of artistic appreciation and knowledge, and shrinkage in the visual arts fields. Some athletes have developed poor learning abilities or the ability to adapt. At the same time, their professional training has constrained the function of exercise and enjoyment of the sport. Some have trained with injuries for long periods of time and some athletes said they only paid attention to their results. They pointed out how difficult it had been to feel happy and derive a sense of accomplishment. Some even said they had become sporting machines. This training mode of athletes is not conducive to their overall development and ability to adapt to their future social life, and it has inevitably affected the selection and training of athletes.

I obey the national interest absolutely. When the country is strong, personal interest can be guaranteed. If there is a conflict between the two, I will face it and instead, focus on the national interest (AA4).

Feelings did not run so deeply in the past. However, when interests collide, I chose to obey the national interest, and make my priorities national priorities (AA9).

4.2.2 Professional athletes

Owing to the small size of the table tennis community, the complexity of the techniques and fast pace of the sport, table tennis is no longer among the most popular sports. The number of spectators cannot be compared with football or basketball. The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) significantly revised the rules three times (on the big ball, 11 points and the unblocked serve), to promote interest in the sport. Accordingly, how do professional athletes find a balance between self and nationalism?

4.2.2.1 Quantitative analysis

4.2.2.1.1 General nationalism

Further correlation analysis was conducted on the general nationalism of professional athletes and the duration of exposure to table tennis, frequency of watching competitions, the degree of understanding table tennis, the number of competition types the athletes have participated in, and the age they participated in training for the first time (Table 18). There was no significant correlation between the duration of table tennis contact, the frequency of watching competitions, the degree of understanding table tennis and the number of competition types one participated in, and the general nationalism of professional athletes, without taking gender into account.

Table 18. Correlation Analysis Results

	Gender	Age	Income	Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	Frequency of Watching Competitions	Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	Varied and Numerous Competitions Participated in	Age an Athlete Participated in Training for the First Time	General Nationalism
Gender	1								
Age	.098	1							
Income	.195	.202	1						
Duration of exposure to Table Tennis	.291	.366*	.480**	1					
Frequency of Watching Competitions	-.017	.117	-.260	-.411**	1				
Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	-.141	.040	.110	-.077	.165	1			
Varied and Numerous Competitions Participated in	.031	.084	.165	.246	-.224	.283	1		
Age an athlete participated in Training for the First Time	.048	.019	.423*	.123	.131	-.470*	-.025	1	
General Nationalism	-.460**	-.240	.029	-.140	-.274	.293	.097	-.070	1

4.2.2.1.2 Table tennis nationalism

Further correlation analysis was conducted between the table tennis nationalism of

professional athletes and the duration of exposure to table tennis, the frequency of watching competitions, the degree of understanding of table tennis, the number of competition types one participated in and the age an athlete participated in training for the first time (Table 19). There was no significant correlation between the frequency of watching competitions, the degree of understanding of table tennis, the age at which they participated in training for the first time and the table tennis nationalism of professional athletes. The duration of table tennis contact ($r=-.433$, $p<0.01$) and the varied and numerous competitions they participated in ($r=-.357$, $p<0.05$) had a significantly negative effect on the table tennis nationalism of professional athletes. This means that the longer their exposure to table tennis, the lower the level of their table tennis nationalism, and the more varied and numerous the competitions professional athletes participated in, the lower their level of table tennis nationalism.

Table 19. Correlation Analysis Results

	Gender	Age	Income	Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	Frequency of Watching Competitions	Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	Varied and numerous Competitions Participated in	Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	Table Tennis Related Nationalism
Gender	1	.098	.195	.291	-.017	-.141	.031		-.344*
Age	.098	1	.202	.366*	.117	.040	.084		-.388**
Income	.195	.202	1	.480**	-.260	.110	.165		-.272
Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	.291	.366*	.480**	1	-.411**	-.077	.246		-.433**
Frequency of Watching Competitions	-.017	.117	-.260	-.411**	1	.165	-.224		.000

Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	-.141	.040	.110	-.077	.165	1	.283		.091
Varied and Numerous Competitions Participated in	.031	.084	.165	.246	-.224	.283	1		-.357*
Age an Athlete Participated in Training for the First Time	-.048	.019	.423*	.123	.131	-.470*	-.025	1	
Table Tennis Nationalism	-.344*	-.388**	-.272	-.433**	.000	.091	-.357*	-.387	1

Further regression analysis of table tennis nationalism was conducted on the duration of table tennis contact and the varied and numerous competitions athletes participated in. The control variables were gender and age. The duration of exposure to table tennis and the varied and numerous competitions athletes participated in were not included in the regression model, which means that these two factors were not significant for the nationalism of professional table tennis athletes.

4.2.2.2 Qualitative analysis

4.2.2.2.1 Strengthen national pride

The professional athletes' answers were simpler than the coaches. Most provided positive answers to questions about their Chinese national identity and did not elaborate. This could be attributed to some of the professional athletes being young and active. Alternatively, these professional athletes were busy training and had less time to think about such topics.

Most of the professional athletes' answers were simple affirmative statements such as 'proud' or they emphasized the words 'yes' and 'absolute'. These simple statements reflect the national pride of the younger generation of athletes.

For sure I am proud to be a Chinese national. Chinese as we are, especially those who have taken part in lots of international competitions are welcomed everywhere. Plus table tennis is our national sport. Relatively speaking, since we are part of a professional team, we are likely to reach a certain score no matter where we are. Some foreign athletes respect us as well. In particular, I participated in the world competition twice. In New Zealand, I defeated Sweden's world champion Carlsson in the semi-final of the singles. After the game, some fans asked me to sign [autographs] and took pictures with me. It is indeed a great honour (PA5).

4.2.2.2.2 Strengthen national identity

All of the participants said they had had the opportunity to discuss table tennis with foreign friends, introduce the traditional culture of China and relate the status of China's vigorous development. They said they led foreign friends to visit local cultural monuments and taste the local food.

Every year I go abroad to compete and I actively introduce everything about our country. Sometimes foreigners will ask about our related situation. Our country is strong enough, especially in sports. We are definitely the leader in table tennis. They

will ask for some tips and in turn we are promoting table tennis, hoping that not only as China develops, but also the whole world develops. When going abroad, we promote our league and training methods to allow more foreigners to learn our table tennis knowledge and techniques (PA10).

In reflecting on the strength of China's table tennis, his answer conveyed the Olympic spirit of mutual understanding, friendship and solidarity. When communicating with foreigners, he relies on self-knowledge and generously offers advice on techniques, revealing the comprehensive development of China.

4.2.2.2.3 Patriotism and table tennis

The national sentiment that links physical education to nationalism is patriotism. In interviews, many of the participants bifurcated the role of table tennis education into its physical and psychological aspects. For them, the role of promoting the sport began to emerge with their early engagement in it. The participants also described the physical benefits of table tennis, and their ability to withstand psychological stress. However, table tennis education remained an important way to promote patriotic consciousness. This, they remarked, was not directly displayed, but had an effect on people through its imperceptible influence.

When I began to play table tennis, I did not know too much because I was young.

After entering the provincial team and then the national team, my thoughts were mainly about the country. Especially after participating in international competitions, when you put on the team uniform of the nation, your patriotism becomes stronger. When I go abroad to participate in competitions, I remind myself that I am Chinese and I am a member of the national team, therefore I can't lose the match. I think all the athletes playing for the Chinese international team feel patriotic, especially after participating (AA10).

The professional athletes said they became more patriotic after playing table tennis, based on their own real-life experiences. Consciousness of winning honour for the country ran through their entire athletic career. This was deeply felt by athletes who had been on the national team.

4.2.2.2.4 Table Tennis in the Whole Nation System

With the help of nationalism and the Whole Nation System, the entire nation, whether official or private, has developed an orientation based on results rather than the process of competition. Although this has helped athletes in important international games achieve impressive results, it has also had a negative effect on competitive sports. Under the Whole Nation System table tennis has received excessive attention due to China's advantage. The excessive attention paid to this super sport has resulted in the short-term intensification of investment to support training. This has been a hindrance to the balanced development of a variety of sporting events. In pursuing results, coaches, athletes and even some local sports bureau officials have collectively misled and seriously damaged the appreciation for and

sense of fairness in competitive sports.

I personally believe that national interest is more important than personal interest, and we should make it a priority. Whether it is for training or daily life, our nation provides a lot of support. As a result, it is necessary to focus on the national interests (PA3).

Because we have devoted most [of our] time to participating in the sport, we don't have the time or energy for other sorts of development. However, no one is omnipotent, there will always be some problem, and thus athletes should spend more time on education (PA7).

The benefit is that athletes are freed from other concerns and focus on playing excellent table tennis exclusively. under the Whole Nation System, the governor arranged the schedule in training, studying, competitions and daily life. They will help the professional athletes to do the certain things. Professional athletes like the flowers in a Greenhouse are protected. As a result, professional athletes do not have the opportunity to learn to deal with daily affairs (PA6).

The athletes also expected the existing system to be transformed. They anticipated that it would become more flexible and adapt to the latest market economy by changing the system from one in which there is government selection to one that would be upgraded at different levels.

PA1 remarked that it has probably been easier to generate achievements under the Whole Nation System; however, that era is changing. According to her, the future will be led by the market.

Going to marketisation will be inevitable. I personally feel that it has a certain impact on sports performance, is imperative and we will finally develop in this direction. It is only a matter of time because this is connected to current international trends. At the time of the 19th National Congress (2017), the Director of the General Administration of Sports also proposed to be more open and fairer in selecting athletes. In the future, it would gradually fall to associations or clubs, but require a certain process and be slowly integrated with the ways of the international community. The current mechanism in Hong Kong can be a reference, but it would require a well thought out process to slowly integrate us with the international community.

In China, most of the athletes' growth process is inseparable from the model of 'amateur sports school - children team - youth team - adult team - national team'. From the resumes of and interviews with most professional athletes and coaches, they receive a prematurely specialised and professional education. The great majority of them started playing before the age of seven., then after two or three years, they are selected to enter a municipal sports school, thereafter training for one or two years. Excellent table tennis athletes are selected and promoted into a provincial sports school, and then a provincial team. Once in the provincial team,

starting from the alternate athletes, they are divided into training pairs according to their level of talent. Once they achieved certain results, particularly achieving at least third place in the national games championship, they join the national team and are initiated into a higher level of training. In this whole process, there is less in-depth contact with peers who receive a general education. Athletes spend a maximum of their time in training or playing games. Meanwhile, there is also a lack of systematic study of scientific and cultural knowledge. Although China advocates the education goal as a comprehensive development of ‘moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetics and labour’, the fact is that parents and schools have enduringly emphasised science and cultural education and neglected physical education training. This has resulted in a lack of professional physical guidance in the general education system and cannot deliver satisfactory results in professional competition. Simultaneously it means children with high scientific and cultural abilities seldom participate in amateur sports training and they do not develop any interest and enthusiasm for sports. Therefore, the separation of professional and amateur training is the inevitable result of competitive sports. It should be understandable, but the premature separation and excessive separation between the two hinder national fitness and competitive sports (PA1).

4.2.2.2.5 Inside stories

In the in-depth interviews, some professional athletes shared their personal experiences.

There were three shocking stories.

Story 1: PA7

The experience of being selected to the national team at 14 years old spoiled me by its undue haste. Not just that I failed to develop myself, I totally lost confidence in playing table tennis. There was no such impulse for me to represent China in international competitions, let alone a sense of national glory or strong nationalism.

It is true that sports competition depends on strength, but it is also common for teenagers to falsify their personal details. When training in sports school, we often went to competitions. Sometimes we represented ourselves, sometimes we represented others. It is common for coaches to paste a photo of another teenager in our entry card and ask us to play. We were often afraid of being discovered, but the coach would assure us. Should anyone say that the photo didn't look like us, we should just state categorically that it was indeed ourselves, then it would be fine. Besides that, I also witnessed things like falsifying age. At that time, the coach held the opinion that elder players should compete against the younger ones, which means the elder athletes minimised their age and participated with younger players. They had the advantage of mental maturity, physical development and technical proficiency. The coach requested me to become one year younger and submitted my Identity Document Card and residence record to the related departments. Therefore, my age has been changed. Because of this incident, now, my age cannot be changed back so that I have to postpone my retirement by a year. I don't know how to change the age back. I have only heard of how to do it, but until I try to do it myself I will not know if it is very difficult. I know these things sound dirty to outsiders, but for me, there is no harm and it seems normal. What I am worried most about is that by only focussing on training professionally, instead of achieving something, it will be difficult to find a nice job. A team member I have known from the national team was

transferred as a table tennis coach, earning 8000 yuan per month. Nevertheless, this chance is seldom given to professional athletes like us. Thus, lots of members who train together with me have already quit professional training to join regular education.

His coach at the Guangzhou sports school was very experienced, and many famous domestic coaches were his classmates. According to the local news reports, this coach had already selected about a thousand people from Guangzhou, including an Asian champion and more than 10 national champions. The coach had abandoned the idea of joining the Shantou team, and his coach found it hard to determine the reason. He said, ‘Actually this member is not bad, and his father is also pretty responsible on education.’ He could only attribute the coach’s maverick behaviour to the common phenomenon of being an only child in the training field. The general portrait of only children is that they have strong personal consciousness but a less hard-working spirit. Lack of desire to win glory for the country and little dedication to the collective have become common concerns among many domestic and foreign coaches of China’s ‘only child’ athletes.

Even though it was unlikely his coach could understand the younger coach’s refusal to join the Shantou team, he was very understanding. He agreed with PA7’s desire to study more and prepare for future employment. In his words:

More than 10 students attained the first tier in college entrance examinations, and more than 10 people reached the second tier. Some athletes are also free to enter university. In addition to the college entrance examination, we also send talent to the provincial team every year. Some athletes are found to have little potential for

development in table tennis. We create opportunities for them to be transferred horizontally to related projects, such as tennis or golf.

The coach added:

Guangdong's attempt to integrate sports and education is at the forefront of the country. Our sports school also pays special attention to the combination of physical education and teaching. The coach is required to enter the classroom, and the teacher must enter the training ground. The coach and the teacher of the culture class should have greater mutual understanding and support so there are fewer contradictions. If an athlete's cultural performance is good, his or her coach will be rewarded. If the competition results are good, the athlete's cultural teacher will receive a bonus.

Story 2: PA9

When provincial athletes enter the national team, there is a big or small possibility of playing international competition for the country. If you want to enter the national team, certain things need be taken into consideration. First, determination; athletes need to give up their regular education and be ready to carry out a particular sport for the long term. Without determination and a serious attitude it is not going to work out. Second, different systems. Upgrading a from city team to a provincial team and national teenager team, they need to be promoted step by step. Without working hard, gaining outstanding scores, and having a qualified coach, promotion is impossible. Some athletes perform extremely well during training but are poor at competitions. They also need to handle their relationships with their coaches, team members and provincial sports bureau personnel. People with bad tempers who fail to deal with their relationships are useless no matter how proficient they are in table tennis. China is short of everything except people.

Lots of professional athletes have accepted training since their childhood, and being educated in patriotism for many years. As a matter of fact, on the national and provincial level, before talking about dedication, money is first settled on. For example, if I was hurt on the national team, putting the effect of the national games aside, the cost of treatment, nutrition, recovery and so forth, actually falls on the provincial team, the same as for members who are not able to reach the national team their protection lies with the city sports bureau. It not merely about the placement but also insurance for injuries. Thus, not only are these humans dedicated, they make money as well. In the less important national competitions, we cannot stress too much importance on dedication. The nation needs to balance the provincial team and take good care of the professional athletes. When there is training or contest, there is a probability of someone being injured. In any case, when a local team wants to compete in the national games or other tournaments, they may decline sending one of their athletes to the national team. Therefore, the position of athletes on the national team varies, even if they miss the three major competitions. Aren't players and coaches happy when they win gold medals? They are energetically publicised in various cities and provinces. However, no one gains, and there is no pay.

Provincial members rely on wages. If they receive a chance to participate in training with the national team but are not officially contracted, they are still paid provincial level wages. Only when an athlete officially joins the national team will he or she be paid wages from the national sports funds. Of course, they still need to attend some commercial games and activities to earn bonuses. Provincial teams supply talent to the national team under a clear incentive policy. Players can enhance their reputation when they are sent to the national team. There is a need for partial marketisation under the sports planning system, to raise athletes' income so it is proportionate. Overall, there is a complicated interest distribution pattern. It is

meaningless to simply demand dedication and let go of the benefits. Once the money aspects are understood, it becomes clear why local sports, especially team projects in underdeveloped areas are always beaten by teams from developing areas. Every year, certain young members from underdeveloped areas are relocated to economically developed provinces.

Story 3: PA1

At that time, I had a great opportunity to enter the national team upon my excellent score in league games. But for reasons I don't know, the provincial team coach didn't arrange for me to play in later rounds during the league. Afterwards I did not qualify for the national team because I didn't play enough in the league. I should have sent some gift or money to the provincial team coach so I could play more games and ensure my quota of world championships.

Now I don't watch the domestic table tennis leagues, or the games of the national team. I am so busy earning a living, and table tennis reform is not being taken seriously. It changes in form but not in content. The nation has administrated the table tennis team with an unclear plan for a long time, resulting in uncertainty in system development and unprofessional management staff. Though table tennis is a national sport, the nation has also stressed its continuing development. I still believe that the administration has to implement the right points. Then athletes will then be able to fight for the country and enhance nationalism.

The three "inside stories" for the case of professional athletes are the reflection of reality. Take PA7 as an example, he was recommended by a coach to go to a sports school in Guangzhou as a potential seedling. The sport school did not charge him for tuition and even provided him with a monthly 500-yuan allowance. When PA7 quit the national team, his

coach thought it might be for personal reasons such as immaturity of character. For a young athlete like him, it requires strong will to withstand the stress of the hard training and adapt to a rigorous collective life. It is true that sports competition is dependent on strength, but it is also common for teenagers to falsify records. "Fake age" incidents are commonplace in table tennis, and means athletes have to postpone their retirement a year. In the case of PA9, athletes like him are allowed to take part in national table tennis super leagues and some other commercial contests in order to become famous. In fact, the Whole Nation System should be changed in China. The mechanism should recommend market-orientated associations or clubs, in order to stop the monopoly on physical games' approval or on propaganda. Apart from the national team, the clubs, sports group or individual can apply for numerous international competitions. In this way, athletes' development path will be broader, and they can also represent China in other aspects, reflecting nationalist spirit. Lastly, in the case of PA1, only the provincial or national team that bribed relevant officials can be outstanding. There are too many potential seeded players with strong abilities being defeated by impure insiders because truly gifted talents are often too poor to bribe coaches or related officials. The management of the national team administered the table tennis team with a lack of focus and clarity, resulting in uncertainty in system development and unprofessional staff management. Though table tennis is the national ball, the nation also stressed its sustainable development, and the administration have to implement the right to the point, then athletes are able to fight for the country and enhance nationalism. Therefore, it is said that the more suitable mechanisms and administration, the better the development of table tennis will be.

4.2.3 Coaches

4.2.3.1 Quantitative analysis

4.2.3.1.1 General nationalism

Coaches are just one type of interviewee, therefore they cannot represent the different levels of sports education. However, they have an important role in the research. Coaches of amateur and professional athletes have some views on table tennis nationalist sentiment, therefore this issue is presented from the perspective of the coaches. Correlation analysis was conducted on the general nationalism of coaches and the duration of exposure to table tennis, frequency of watching competitions, degree of understanding of table tennis, number of competition types participated in and age an athlete participated in training for the first time (Table 20). There was no significant correlation between the duration of table tennis contact, the number of competition types participated in, the frequency of watching competitions and general nationalism. There was a significant negative correlation between the age an athlete first participated in training ($r=0.547$, $p<0.01$) and general nationalism. There was a significant positive correlation between the degree of understanding table tennis ($r=0.400$, $p<0.05$) and general nationalism. This means that the younger one was when first participating in training, the higher the level of general nationalism, and the higher the degree of understanding table tennis, the higher the level of general nationalism.

Table 20. Correlation Analysis Results

	Gender	Age	Income	Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	Frequency of Watching Competitions	Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	Varied and numerous Competitions Participated in	Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	General Nationalism
Gender	1								
Age	.000	1							
Income	-.166	.332	1						

Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	-.277	.000	.086	1					
Frequency of Watching Competitions	-.330	-.431*	.287	.109	1				
Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	-.519**	-.213	.119	.017	.292	1			
Varied and numerous Competitions Participated in	-.557**	.083	.140	.289	.104	.406*	1		
Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	-.106	.591**	.499*	-.361	-.259	-.151	.172	1	
General Nationalism	-.180	-.154	-.286	.242	-.080	.400*	.085	-.547**	1

Further regression analysis of general nationalism was conducted on the age an athlete first participated in training and their degree of understanding table tennis (Table 21). The age at which one participated in training for the first time had a positive forecasting effect on the general nationalism of coaches. That is, the younger the coach was when he/she participated in training for the first time, the greater the improvement to his or her general nationalism. However, the degree of understanding of table tennis was not included in the regression model, which means the degree of understanding of table tennis on the general nationalism of coaches was not significant.

Table 21. Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variable	β	t	Adjusted R^2	F
Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	-0.159	-3.066**	0.267	9.398**

4.2.3.1.2 Table tennis nationalism

Correlation analysis was conducted on the table tennis nationalism of coaches and the duration of exposure to table tennis, the frequency of watching competitions, the degree of understanding table tennis, the number of competition types participated in and the age an athlete first participated in training (Table 22). There were no significant correlations between the duration of table tennis contact, the degree of understanding table tennis, the frequency of watching competitions, and table tennis nationalism. The age an athlete first participated in training ($r=-0.511$, $p<0.05$) and the varied and numerous competitions participated in ($r=-.382$, $p<0.05$) had a significantly negative effect on the table tennis nationalism of the coaches. This means that the younger a coach was when he/she first participated in training, the higher the level of his or her table tennis nationalism; and the fewer types of competitions the coach participated in, the higher the level of his/her table tennis nationalism.

Table 22. Correlation Analysis Results

	Gender	Age	Income	Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	Age an athlete participated in Training for the First Time	Frequency of Watching Competitions	Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	Varied and numerous Competition Participated in	Table Tennis Nationalism
Gender	1								
Age	.000	1							

Income	-.166	.332	1						
Duration of Exposure to Table Tennis	-.277	.000	.086	1					
Age an Athlete First Participated in Training	-.106	.591**	.499*	-.361	1				
Frequency of Watching Competitions	-.330	-.431*	.287	.109	-.259	1			
Degree of Understanding of Table Tennis	-.519**	-.213	.119	.017	-.151	.292	1		
Varied and Numerous Competitions Participated in	-.557**	.083	.140	.289	.172	.104	.406*	1	
Table Tennis Nationalism	-.236	-.469*	-.284	-.147	-.511*	.312	.328	-.382*	1

Further regression analysis of table tennis nationalism was conducted on the age an athlete first participated in training, and the varied and numerous competitions he or she participated in. The age at which a coach first participated in training and the varied and numerous competitions he or she participated in were not included in the regression model, which means these two factors of the table tennis nationalism of coaches were not significant.

4.2.3.2 Qualitative analysis

4.2.3.2.1 Strengthen national pride

CO1 said it was a great honour and privilege to be a member of the Chinese national team

and that this was due to his participation in table tennis from childhood and cultivating his own sense of honour. Other coaches gave the same answer. CO3 was special due to his immigrant background. Owing to his special teaching background, his answer had great reference value for exploring table tennis education and national identity.

Certainly, I feel I am a member of the Chinese nation. Though I have immigrated, it does not change the fact that I am Chinese. I actively participate in some traditional activities such as Spring Festival, Tomb-sweeping Festival and so on. The stronger the country, the stronger you are. You will not be discriminated against or bullied by others. When you go abroad, you promote the food culture, the world view, the development of table tennis and so on of the Chinese nation to others (CO3)

4.2.3.2.2 Strengthen national identity

CO3's answer reveals his deep sense of national identity. Although he had not been to China for some time and has been working in Australia, his work has not been outside the scope of table tennis. By continuing to play table tennis, he consolidated his table tennis sentiments and patriotism, so he had a very deep sense of national identity. China guides and helps people in all aspects of their lives and people enjoy good welfare. CO1 said he fully agreed with the state's investment in education and medical care. He said he discussed the basic situation of China whenever he went abroad. He communicated with foreign teams, helping them understand that China has not just performed well economically, it has also done well at the grassroots level, enhancing people's livelihoods and successfully hosting the 2008 Olympic Games.

The country is strong enough to protect its own citizens. CO3, who has immigrant experience, recounted that ‘The stronger the country, the stronger you are, and you will not be discriminated against and bullied by others’. CO2 also said that other people respected him when he was introduced to them as a Chinese table tennis coach due to the strength of the country and its national sport.

4.2.3.2.3 Patriotism and table tennis

When responding to relevant questions, all of the participants expressed their deep pride in being members of the Chinese nation. The professional athletes also explained that because they were national athletes, their sense of pride was stronger. They related how the nation guided and helped people in all aspects of their lives and that people enjoyed good welfare. According to them, when the country is strong, people are protected as a nation and feel secure. Most of the participants held the view that loving the motherland and playing table tennis influenced and promoted the other.

I have my own interest in teaching table tennis. The key to cultivating interest is to cultivate patriotism from childhood at every level of table tennis training. We often feel the honour that table tennis brings us. On the other hand, after I became a table tennis coach, I found that the investment of the country in sports training was very large. I think our country is really good for our younger generations, so I have become more patriotic (CO1).

The Chinese table tennis team got all the prizes again and again at Table Tennis

Tournaments, the World Championship and the Olympic Games. The national anthem of China was played again and again and the five-star red flag was raised, which showed that Chinese sports development was the best in the world. As a coach, watching the national athletes standing on the highest point of the podium, I can see their hearts are full of pride and they know they have contributed to the brilliant results (CO5).

CO1 and CO5 described the relationship between national pride and patriotism from different angles. CO1 pointed out that he agreed with the transformation from the Whole Nation System to a market-oriented one, and said it would not affect table tennis nationalism.

I also agree that the country has gradually become a business from the Whole Nation System. It means that we will progressively push forward to marketisation, taking the advantage of the market to diversify the project. If a project is supported only by the state and the government, it will be difficult to develop without the response of the masses. The national management is very forward-looking to see this problem, so it is slowly becoming market-oriented. The athletes under the Whole Nation System are more supported by the government. Accordingly, their nationalist spirit is also relatively strong. I believe that this project will not necessarily be weakened through the development of the market. Table tennis is the Chinese national sport, and the nationalism rooted in it is already robust. The existing management comprises professional coaches in business clubs, and I won't expect much influence from it (CO1).

National pride is one of the most important elements of patriotism. Most of the participants held the view that loving the motherland and playing table tennis were tightly interconnected. CO1 made it clear that he began to teach table tennis because he was patriotic. At the same time, he felt more patriotic after teaching table tennis. When athletes win medals, it is

naturally inseparable from their hard work, guidance and the coaches' training. Watching their national athletes win medals and stand at the top of the podium, filled them with excitement and pride.

4.2.3.2.4 Table Tennis under the Whole Nation System

CO4 said she was in favour of the Whole Nation System. She argued that the system of the government taking the lead and the athletes making the effort has cultivated many talented athletes.

From my point of view, the government plays a vital and central role. Upon the exchange of ideas about development among so many countries and related areas, there is not a single country that has had a Whole Nation System like us. After the selection from varying degrees, athletes are well protected and receive numerous opportunities as long as they show potential. I think the government's policy in this area is very good (CO4).

The Whole Nation System for cultivating athletes has several advantages. Through the layered selection process, many outstanding athletes have been trained, and the fate of some athletes has even changed. Due to the training being arduous and life unitary, in some projects only children from poor families have entered the sports schools. The state provides accommodation and food so the athletes do not have to worry about making a living. The moment at which the athletes compete for gold and win glory for the country, is the moment the nationalist spirit rises. In his interview, CO1 discusses the selection of players. He points out that selection under the Whole Nation System is fair to the athletes. It considers who is

capable and who is available for competition. At the same time, under the Whole Nation System, athletes have better protection and are better able to improve their performance, in his view.

Selection according to competition score, I feel, is suitable, open, fair and just. If you are capable in the game, you get the place. And it isn't just that. I some projects not only protected us and received us into the team but also some expenses for food. We were well provided for with protection in all aspects to enable young members to be good condition so as to have few worries beyond training (CO1).

Physical education overloaded with the spirit of patriotism undermines its fitness function and the aesthetic value of competition. It is a troubling to think about accepting defeat by misjudging athletes by the outcome of their games. This is also closely related to rising nationalist sentiment. The value orientation of the Chinese audience affects the instruction ideology of the sports workers, which further affects the athletes' perceptions of sporting competition and strengthens the position of the Whole Nation System in competitive sports training. With the Whole Nation System guiding the nation in sporting competitions, only those who win and become champions become heroes. This has been excruciatingly clear after every Olympic Games. For the past 20 years, only the champions have been invited to visit Hong Kong and Macau, where they have been warmly welcomed. Some improvement, however, was shown in the latest Hong Kong-Macau visiting delegation after the Rio Olympic Games. When the sports delegation visited Hong Kong and Macau and did a demonstration performance, the audience was in high spirits. Some people said the elite Olympic delegation brought positive energy to Hong Kong and Macau, and aroused people's

patriotic enthusiasm.

Coaches have realized that there are problems with this phenomenon and have started to make recommendations accordingly. They have added more multiple courses when arranging training for the athletes, so as to improve the quality of athletes.

The nation has invested a large quantity of sources to support (the athletes). It may generate waste for the growth of abundant organisations under the Whole Nation System pattern, which has turned out to be too bureaucratic and not practical enough with money. In comparison, the benefit of the market economy is that the state is less burdened, and advertising might be more effective because it is operated by the market instead of the Whole Nation System (CO2).

Undeniably, the Whole Nation System has drawn upon the power of the whole country for the programme, drawing athletes from diverse areas. In this way, it has cultivated batches of remarkable table tennis players. Yet in the 30 years during which the Whole Nation System has developed, it has gradually grown out of touch with the times, and disparities have emerged between it and the world's advanced athlete training modes. Coupled with the inaction of government officials and the shortage of rigorous training programmes, China's top athletes have not played their due role in recent events. Thus, the blemish on the Whole Nation System has been progressively exposed. It has mainly manifested itself in the over-emphasis of results, and contempt for training and the competition process. This has led to excessive alienation between professional athletes and amateur sports enthusiasts. Only certain sports professionals have been trained. The nation has already become aware of the

matter and has taken the corresponding countermeasures to ameliorate it. However, for China's current table tennis programme and even the entire competitive sports world, it may be difficult to improve.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 The relationship between sports education and nationalism

Based on analysis of the interviews with amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches, the following discussion has been drawn. General nationalist sentiments have two dimensions: national identity and national pride. Table tennis communities are relatively positive about general nationalist sentiments. The degree to which they understand table tennis general nationalism has a positive forecasting effect. That is to say, the better one's understanding of table tennis, the more nationalism is promoted. This is especially true in China, as opposed to other participating nations, where nationalism is encouraged and promoted from an early age. Therefore, in this way the spirit of nationalism has always been an intrinsic part of sports education.

When the participant-amateurs watched matches, there was a positive predictive effect on their general nationalism. This means that the frequency of game watching had a positive effect on the amateurs' nationalist sentiments. It also signifies that the frequency of watching competitions and the amateurs' nationalist sentiments were positively correlated. However,

for professional athletes, there was a negative effect between the duration of table tennis contact, the types of competitions participated in and table tennis nationalism. The influencing factors usually did not affect general nationalism. The reason for this is that the professional athletes knew the inside stories and became perceived injustice of table tennis. The longer they were exposed to the sport, the more types of competitions they participated in, the lower their table tennis nationalism became. For the coaches, the age of their first training had a positive predictive effect on their general nationalism. In other words, the age at which they first participated in training was in inverse proportion to the increase in their nationalism. In addition, the varied and numerous competitions participated in was inversely proportional to table tennis nationalism, which was also a result of the coaches becoming weary of table tennis.

The table tennis players were more positive on the general nationalism associated with table tennis. The age at which they participated in training for the first time had a negative forecasting effect on table tennis nationalism. This means that the younger the athlete was when he or she participated in training for the first time, the greater the improvement in his or her table tennis nationalism.

4.3.2 Table tennis education and nationalism

In this thesis, there is a profound connection between table tennis and nationalism,

predominantly seen in three areas: table tennis education and national identity, table tennis and national pride, table tennis education and the Whole Nation System. The participants all affirmed that they all felt part of the Chinese nation and that their attachment to the motherland had become more apparent with age. Combined with their own experiences, the participants stated that their national pride was derived from table tennis, in situations like overseas matches, watching games on television or in person and going abroad for exchange. For many of the participants, being energetically involved with the activities associated with table tennis had consciously or subconsciously resulted in their table tennis education.

4.3.2.1 Table tennis education and national identity

Among the 25 participants, most active professional athletes or coaches like CO2 and CO4 were busy training. To do well, they had to sacrifice their time off and time with their families. To a certain extent, table tennis education had dampened the professional athletes' enthusiasm for participating in traditional Chinese cultural festivals. Compared with the responses of the coaching staff and professional athletes, the amateur athletes had a lot to say about this. This also related to changes in the relationship between table tennis and the participants. For the amateurs, table tennis was no longer the core of their current or former employment but a helpful specialty in their jobs and friendships without any decisive function. Rather than call these people amateurs, they could be referred to as fans. The activities of the amateurs were splendid and full of variety.

4.3.2.2 Table tennis education and national pride

National pride is one of the important elements of patriotism. Most of the participants held the view that loving the motherland and playing table tennis influenced and promoted the other. For athletes, winning medals was naturally inseparable from hard work, guidance and training from their coaches. Watching the national athletes win medals and stand at the top of the podium, the coaches were full of excitement and pride. Professional athletes related that they became more patriotic after playing table tennis, combined with their own real-life experiences. Awareness of winning an honour for the country ran through the athletes' entire careers, and was deeply felt by those who had participated in the national team.

4.3.2.3 Table tennis education and the Whole Nation System

It is undeniable that winning sports events has enhanced the nation's self-confidence and pride. However, issues underpinning the honour of winning have also begun to appear. The model for training athletes in China is called the 'Whole Nation System'. It is a national mobilization mechanism backed by the finances of the entire country, and the state contributes its authority, money and personnel to the program. The amateur and professional athletes together with the coaches interviewed for this thesis expressed their views on the advantages and disadvantages of the Whole Nation System and the direction of future development. China has relied on the Whole Nation System to train competitive sports athletes. By the screening of countless athletes, or seedlings, through layered selections and numerous assessments, very few top athletes are designated and the power of the whole

country has been poured into their training. In the end, excellent athletes compete with other countries in the international arena. This model has cultivated many high-quality and high-level athletes with great nationalism. At the same time there have been drawbacks such as institutional rigidity, separation from the masses and the poor overall quality of athletes. The ‘Whole Nation System’ training mode has not strengthened the nationalist awareness of ordinary table tennis enthusiasts because they have not received a sufficient quantity and quality of table tennis education. To the contrary, because of the concentration of resources and the lack of corresponding training, the level of table tennis education has not been enough, which means that nationalist education has been deficient.

Through regular table tennis training and daily life, constantly strengthening national sport awareness, competition awareness, team awareness and the role of coaches, the national pride, self-confidence, patriotism and group consciousness of table tennis athletes can be enhanced. Meanwhile, it is necessary to strengthen the guiding role of the coaches in table tennis education, so they can use their own words and deeds to teach athletes the correct table tennis concepts. They can deepen their understanding of the nation by mastering promotional technology to play a role in table tennis education.

The qualitative interviews supplement the quantitative dates. At the same time, quantitative dates also support the qualitative argument and they are all consistent with each other. The majority of the athletes believe that through sports education (table tennis) they have become

more politically and socially nationalist. The researcher was born in China and the research was carried out in Guangdong province over many years. China's national conditions and personal experience of the researcher reflect the relevant phenomena. The findings are significant for the future.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Further discussion about the study

According to the results of the theoretical analysis and experimental study, the higher the frequency of watching/ taking part in competitions, the better the promotion of table tennis nationalism in the case of amateur athletes. The longer the time one has played table tennis, the lower the level of professional athletes' nationalism. The younger a coach starts training for the first time, and the lower the variety of competitions involved, the higher the level of the coach's table tennis nationalism.

For amateur athletes and coaches, such a result is rather understandable, but for professional athletes, it is significant to make further analysis and to find the reasons behind it. Under the Whole Nation System, Chinese table tennis athletes have dominated most international competitions, making China the leading table tennis power recognized worldwide. In recent years, world competitions have seen Japan making notable progress with table tennis, which has been challenging China's leading role. It is the Whole Nation System at work, and many excellent athletes, such as Jun Mizutani have been noticed and trained in the talent development program starting from 2008 by the Japanese Olympic Committee. After the Beijing Olympic Games, the Japanese Olympic Committee started to implement a plan aimed at promoting table tennis, through which talented athletes in primary school are

selected and provided complete training courses. Three Japanese male table tennis players attending this Olympic Games, Jun Mizutani, Maharu Yoshimura and Tanba Kaki all started their career at the age of five to six. Not only that, the Japan Table Tennis Association has been sponsoring a three-level table tennis competition in domestic primary schools since the 1980s, and such an environment has helped train famous players like Jun Mizutani and Fukuhara Ai. In Japan, players of all age groups can participate in Japan's National Table Tennis Championship, the country's highest-level competition, where it is not rare for senior students to be defeated by those from lower grades. In addition, special funds provide talented player opportunities to compete abroad, for example, Jun Mizutani and Tanba Kaki gained experience by attending overseas professional competitions. With such a Whole Nation System, it is understandable that Japan has been progressing notably with table tennis. Japan was ranking 3rd in 2013, up from 18th in June 2006. In the 2016 Olympic Games, a silver medal in table tennis marked an unprecedented breakthrough for this nation.

Athlete training modes differ in different countries. In America, a third of middle school students are trained as potential players, and most professional athletes are college students. Both academic years and grades are required to make sure these players qualified, at an acceptable educational level. In Germany, talented players are sought by sports clubs, schools, sports associations and the state governments. Similar to Germany, South Korean athletes are also selected and trained by colleges and sports clubs. It can be seen that foreign training systems have been well established with respectively complete structures.

In recent decades, China has also benefited from its sports management system, which is reflected by the number of Olympic gold medals. However, the Whole Nation System is a double-edged sword, which has inevitably cultivated athletes with a low comprehensive standard of education. China has long adopted a three-level training mode, in which potential child players are first selected and trained in sports schools, then with further round by round selections based on training and competition results, only a few finally make it to the national team and stay there until their retirement. The biggest disadvantage of such a model is the lack of regular education for those professional athletes. Along with China's economic growth, breakthroughs had been made within a short period, during which the Whole Nation System had been adopted to make remarkable progress within a very limited time. Over time, training clubs and schools of different levels all focused on extensive training, and time for cultural education was reduced accordingly, as well as the educational funding for athletes, which has led to the lower comprehensive standard of education of professional athletes.

In the process of training and learning, both education and training have their own emphasis. A weekly amount of educational time for athletes is stipulated by law. In practice, most schools offer 12 hour curriculums and some have 20 hour curriculums, providing half day education and half day training. However, it is just a basic guarantee to provide some hours of education, of which the results are actually the keys to improving athletes' education. Most schools offer complete curriculums to children from first to sixth grade, including art, music,

Chinese, mathematics and English. However, class time is sometimes compressed by frequent competitions and the intensive training, which results in unsystematic learning and low attendance rates. Moreover, the lack of supervision leads to poor implementation and low quality of education. Therefore, in terms of education, professional athletes receive far less than their peers in normal schools.

Under the Whole Nation System, when athletes are selected for a provincial team or go further, their working years start to accumulate just like state employees, though welfare it seems, is at the cost of the athlete's normal education. Trained intensively in sports since childhood, most of these athletes have not received their compulsory education. They need to practice every day to get into the provincial and national teams, with no time or energy left for learning other skills. Their only goal is to perform better in competitions and get selected to a higher level, which is common among all Chinese athletes who seek success in sports competitions at the expense of their personal life. Otherwise, they may be eliminated from professional teams too early and not be able to adapt to society. This is largely because they are not qualified for any other job except sports. In recent years, measures have been adopted to increase the employment rate of retired athletes, such as a co-training with colleges, but little has been achieved with athletes still focusing on training and seldom attending classes. Thus, they have nothing except for a diploma to enable them to find work after they retire from sports.

In summary, under this Whole Nation System, it is necessary to further study how to equip professional athletes with specialisations and help them to adjust to the world outside the sports ground. If life after leaving sport is no longer a concern, many athletes will be more dedicated to China's sports development, which will also strengthen their spirit of nationalism. Only in this way can China more speedily turn into a world sporting powerhouse.

5.2 Overview

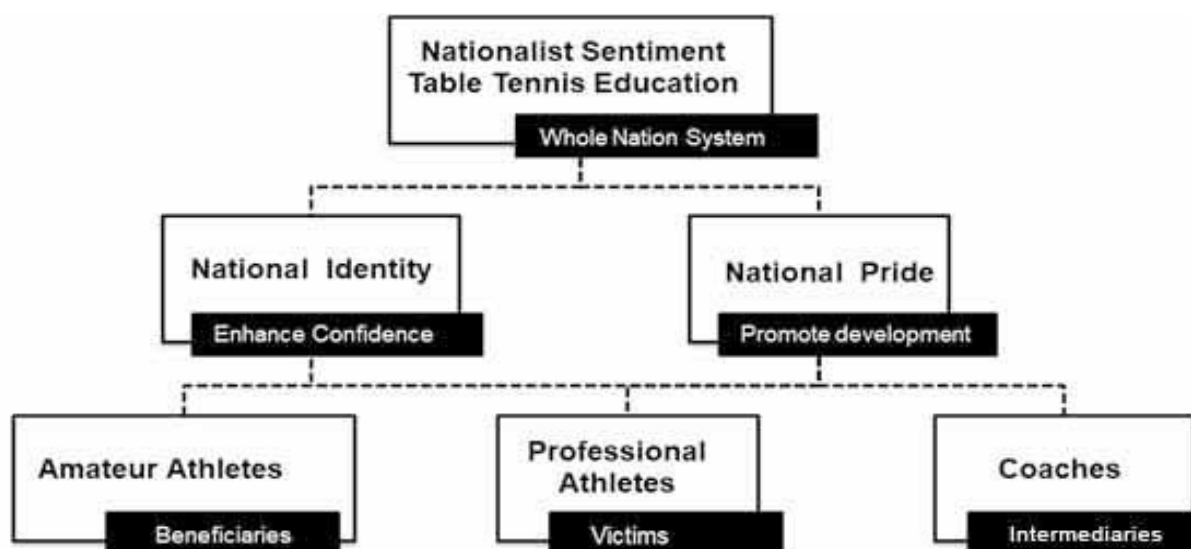
5.2.1 Sports education can ignite nationalism

Table tennis embodies nationalism in two aspects: national identity and national pride. National identity could enhance the participants' confidence, and national pride could stimulate their future development. A large number of people have joined activities related to table tennis, for instance, table tennis training and education, which has reinforced their sense of nationalism. Most interviewed athletes pointed out that self-nationalism consciousness has been significantly improved by table tennis training. In the case of amateurs, the educational influence of table tennis nationalism is reflected in a series of factors such as table tennis training, spectating competitions, daily entertainment and national policy.

Within China's current system, three groups have their respective individual roles. Firstly, amateur athletes are the largest group of table tennis participants. They are beneficiaries and their nationalism is the highest among the three groups. The government provides them with abundant resources and exchange opportunities to study table tennis, therefore, they are

inclined to be more positive by the government. Secondly, professional athletes are innocent participants who are profoundly influenced by the Whole Nation System. The athletes who started playing table tennis at an early age and participated in a number of match types will know more “inside stories”, and be more dubious about the Whole Nation System, which results in a lower sense of nationalism toward table tennis. Thirdly, coaches are intermediaries of the Whole Nation System, in charge of carrying out the national policies and instructors of amateur athletes and professional athletes. Although they are mostly ambivalent about which system is better, it is not easy to change this system. They could not change the circumstances and simply throw their suggestions to the government. Despite the distinctive roles the three groups play, sports education can ignite nationalism for table tennis. Chart 14 shows the roles of different facts.

Chart 14: The roles of different factors



5.2.2 The importance of national identity and national pride

Table tennis is intertwined with nationalism in two aspects: table tennis and national identity, and table tennis and national pride. All respondents affirmed their recognition of the Chinese nation, and some of them described the reasons for this. The majority of people will participate in activities organized by their own compatriots, which will unconsciously increase the participants' nationalism. Large numbers of people joined the activities related to table tennis. Table tennis training and education reinforces the inner awareness of nationalism. Most interviewed athletes pointed out that self-nationalism consciousness has been significantly improved by table tennis training. In the case of amateurs, the educational influence of table tennis nationalism is reflected in a series of factors such as table tennis training, spectating competitions, daily entertainment and national policy.

As a sports type favored by large groups of people, table tennis exerts an influence greater than imagined. With fairness as the core of morality, it has established a variety of competition systems. The victory or defeat of the athletes are constantly associated with national glory, national self-esteem, and even the prestige of the country. The victory of a match positively unites the people, boosts morale, and enhances national self-confidence and pride. Table tennis is so attractive that some significant events have often become the heated topics of hundreds and millions of people in China. Being the highest display of human vigor, competitive sport creates an emotional atmosphere, an aesthetic conception, and a colorful cultural landscape, which makes it extremely aesthetic. It will not be affected by the stages of social development, and has become a common goal that people from all over the world

aspire to. The competing and contesting of table tennis are carried out under open and fair rules. It receives supervision from the audience, relevant institutions and the control mechanism of refereeing groups. It is not subject to any powerful interference. Being a transparent and equal competition, table tennis is one of the best ways for athletes from different nations to compete equally.

The underlying meaning expressed in terms such as "loving the Chinese nation", "loving China" and "patriotism in China" are basically the same. When being asked questions concerning patriotism for China, all respondents expressed their deep pride as a Chinese citizen. They are certainly proud of being a member of the Chinese nation. All respondents expressed the willingness to discuss table tennis with foreigners, are ready to introduce them to traditional Chinese culture, the delicious food and prosperous situation (recent economic developments), and take them to visit cultural relics and scenic spots. National pride is one of the important elements of patriotism. Most respondents hold the view that playing table tennis is a way of showing love for the motherland.

Once noticing the triumph of star athletes, they will express pride for the nation. The older generation relish talking about the accomplishments of "ping pong diplomacy". There are still many examples to name that are based on the excellent table tennis masses in China. Professional or amateur athletes take advantage of opportunities to participate in matches abroad and contests with players from other countries, in which case they will unavoidably

discuss their countries. Through their communication, participants will intensify their patriotism and nationalism because of their strong motherland. When witnessing the raising of the Chinese national flag on a world-class rostrum, the athlete becomes more aware of the distinct national pride and patriotism deep within, and be proud of being a member of the Chinese nation. This love and affection for the country resonates with thousands of households in China through the mass media such as television broadcasting. It can be said that the growth of patriotism and nationalist consciousness is related deeply to the emotions and spirit behind the sport of table tennis.

5.2.3 Quantitative Analysis

There are two levels of dimensions in the regression model, two first-level dimensions and four second-level sub-dimensions. Two first-level dimensions are sports education and nationalism, and four second-level sub-dimensions are improved national identity, improved sense of national pride, the relation between patriotism and table tennis as well as "the Whole Nation System" respectively, including the relation between table tennis nationalism and the number of years involved in table tennis, the frequency of watching matches, the degree of understanding table tennis, the number of match types played, and the age of initial training and general nationalism. Empirically, the model is well structured and properly summarizes what nationalism is.

SPSS software has been used to analyse the collected data from questionnaire surveys.

According to the sampling principle, the survey covers amateur athletes, professional athletes and table tennis coaches. A total of 175 questionnaires were distributed. Excluding the extreme value, 171 valid questionnaires were finally collected. In other words, the E-value of the questionnaire for effectively recovering data is 97.7%.

The tables are divided into four categories and three methods. More precisely, four categories refer to differences in demographic variables for general nationalism, the characteristic value and variance contribution of each factor, differences in demographic variables for table tennis nationalism and how the age of initial training makes a regression analysis on table tennis nationalism. The tables are also divided and classified into three methods: general, results of correlation analysis and results of regression analysis. Among them, the regression model can be popularized and applied once its test reaches an acceptable standard.

Results show that there is a positive correlation between general nationalism and table tennis nationalism, which corresponds to the previous studies that general nationalism is closely inter-related with domain specific nationalism, especially in the sports sector (Smith and Kim, 2016; Zhang and Zuo, 2012). By digging deeper into the relationship between sport and nationalism, it has been observed that the more one understands how a specific sport is played, the more positive national sentiment one has towards one's own country, at least in the table tennis field. It might be ascribed to the accumulation of holistic table tennis knowledge, which enables table tennis players and coaches to learn more about the historical, cultural and political aspects relevant to the sport itself. As a result, apart from gaining a technical understanding of table tennis, athletes also grasp

knowledge that enhances national identity and national pride. However, the detailed mechanism behind this phenomenon still begs for further investigation not only in the field of table tennis, but also in other sports as well, which is one possible direction for future study. In addition, it has also been found that demographic factors such as gender, age, educational grounding and income play a role in affecting table tennis nationalism, thus the current study contributes as a piece of evidence for the influence of demography on national pride (Zhu & Hao, 2017). For example, in this research, males' level of table tennis nationalism is higher than that of females, which partially aligns with the previous discovery by Smith and Kim (2006). However, it contradicts Kavetsos (2012) whose research showed no significant difference in the level of national pride between the two genders. Liu, Lai, Yu & Chen (2014), however, observed that females' sense of national pride is higher than that of males among Chinese university students. It is still a mystery how gender as a factor affects the level of national pride and national identity, and would be an interesting topic for an empirical study of nationalism. With regards to age, there is a negative association with national sentiment, which is similar to the results shown by Kavetsos (2012), but different to that of Smith and Kim (2006). In the current study, no specific pattern has been found on educational background. All of these findings suggest that the phenomena involving nationalism are complex and require a large amount of study before any conclusions can be drawn about the influence of demographic factors. Moreover, it has been discovered that the earlier a person starts table tennis training, the stronger the national sentiment the person feels toward their country, which indicates the importance of sport education from a young age in China. From the perspective of amateurs, professional athletes and coaches, this research illustrates the relationship between sports education and the spirit of nationalism. The four categories and three methods shown in the table compare the relevant results of amateurs, professional athletes and coaches.

5.2.3.1 From the perspective of amateur athletes

The result shows that for amateurs, the higher the frequency of watching games and deeper understanding of table tennis, the higher the level of general nationalism. The frequency of watching matches has a positive correlation with the general nationalism of amateurs, that is, the higher the frequency of watching matches, the higher the nationalism emotion of amateurs; while the degree of understanding table tennis has not yet been included in the regression model, which means the degree of understanding table tennis has no obvious influence on the general nationalism of amateurs. There is no significant correlation between the number of years involved in table tennis, the degree of understanding of table tennis, the number and variety of matches participated in, the age of initial training and general nationalism; while there is a positive correlation between the frequency of watching games and table tennis nationalism. This result suggests that the more often amateurs watch games, the higher the level of nationalism in table tennis will be. The frequency of watching matches has a positive effect on the nationalism of amateurs in table tennis, that is, the higher the frequency of watching matches, the more the nationalism of amateurs can be enhanced.

5.2.3.2 From the perspective of professional athletes

From the perspective of professional athletes, excluding the gender factor, the days of getting started with table tennis, the frequency of watching matches, the degree of understanding of table tennis, the variety of match types, the age of initial training, none of these factors has a significant correlation with the general nationalism of professional athletes. Nor does the frequency of watching matches, the degree of understanding table tennis, the age of initial

training, have any correlation with the nationalism of professional athletes towards table tennis. While the number of years involved in table tennis and the number of match types are both negatively correlated with nationalism of professional athletes toward table tennis. To be more specific, the younger the person was when starting to play table tennis, the lower the nationalism of professional athletes toward table tennis. Likewise, the more match types professional athletes participate in, the lower nationalism they would have towards table tennis. As the number of years involved in table tennis and the variety of match types are not included in the model, they both have less influence than any other factor on the nationalism of professional athletes towards table tennis. When promoting national pride, a professional athlete who receives a more traditional education feels prouder of being Chinese. As months and years pass, the education of patriotism is transformed into national pride, and in turn national pride is formed in patriotic education of which people have received since childhood.

Professional athletes' answers have promoted national pride, reflected in the powerful strength of table tennis in China and also conveyed the Olympic spirit of mutual understanding, friendship and unity. To be more specific, when communicating with foreign friends, Chinese athletes are generous enough to share their expertise, which also reflects China's all-round development and strength. When it comes to patriotism and table tennis, the national emotion that connects sports education with nationalism is patriotism. In the interview, many interviewees mentioned that table tennis education had played a decisive role in forming their physical and psychological mentality, in the early stages of table tennis practice. The interviewees described how table tennis practice benefited their physical health and enhanced their physical and psychological resilience to stress. However, for table tennis under the state-run system, with the help of nationalism, "the Whole Nation System"

has become result-oriented. Although it contributed to achieving outstanding results in important international competitions, it has negative effects on competitive sports events. On the one hand, under the “Whole Nation System”, excessive attention is likely to be paid to an advantageous sports type, taking table tennis as an example. The resulting intensified short-term investment and training is not conducive to the balanced development of any sport. On the other hand, in some regional parts of the country, coaches and athletes, even some local sports bureau officials commit collective fraud in the pursuit of performance, which seriously damages the appreciation and fairness of competitive sports. At the same time, the “Whole Nation System” requires athletes to make the national interests their priority, when expressing their views. CO1 mentioned the selection of players in the questionnaire, which refers to the fact that under the policy of the “Whole Nation System” for cultivating athletes, a few competitive sports have been developed. After successive rounds of selection, a number of excellent athletes are trained and their lives transformed. Due to some sports requiring intensive training and a self-disciplined lifestyle, only children from poor families will enter a corresponding training school. Luckily, the Chinese government provides food and accommodation so that these athletes have no worries about living. Truly excellent athletes will stand out after several rounds of rigid selection processes. Therefore, when athletes win gold and silver medals on the sports field, it is also a time the spirit of nationalism runs the highest. CO1 also pointed out that the “Whole Nation System” not only helps to select athletes fairly, (that is, only the athlete with the strongest ability and best performance will be selected), but also guarantees athletes’ a better living standard, resulting in better performance.

5.2.3.3 From the perspective of coaches

For coaches, none of the factors such as the days of getting started with table tennis, variety and number of match types, and the frequency of watching matches has a significant correlation with general nationalism. In contrast, there is a negative correlation between the age of initial training and general nationalism. In addition, there is a positive correlation between the degree of understanding of table tennis and general nationalism. Results show that coaches who started initial training at an earlier age show a higher level of general nationalism, and coaches who have a deeper knowledge of table tennis display a higher level of general nationalism. What is more, coaches who started their initial training at a younger age show higher nationalism, which means the age of initial training has a positive effect on general nationalism. However, the depth of understanding table tennis had no obvious influence on the general nationalism of the coaches so that it was not included in the regression model. In addition, none of these factors such as the number of years involved in table tennis, the depth of understanding table tennis, and the frequency of watching matches has an obvious correlation with the nationalism of table tennis. However, the age of initial training and the variety and number of match types negatively correlate with the nationalism of table tennis. Results show that coaches who start their initial training at a younger age have a higher level of nationalism for table tennis. In contrast, coaches who participated in fewer match types show a higher level of nationalism for table tennis. However, it is noteworthy that neither the age of initial training nor the number of match types is included in the regression model, that is to say, neither had a significant influence on coaches' nationalism for table tennis. CO1 said his sense of national identity and pride had started to develop since childhood when he started playing table tennis, and he felt honored and proud to be a member of China. Other coaches gave similar answers, indicating national identity is greatly significant to them. They said, "the stronger my country, the stronger I will be". Therefore, I will not be discriminated against and bullied by others." Since they live in a strong country

and play an advantageous national sport, they feel respected by their foreign friends when they introduce themselves as a table tennis coach. As patriotism is an important component of nationalism, love for the Chinese nation, love for the country and patriotism in China are basically considered to be the same. When answering questions about nationalism or patriotism, all interviewees expressed strong affirmation of their deep pride as a member of the Chinese nation.

5.2.4 Qualitative Analysis

For amateurs, there is a positive correlation between the frequency of watching competition and general nationalism for table tennis, which means watching competitions more frequently results in better promotion of amateurs' nationalism. However, the effect of these two factors on professional athletes' nationalism is not very obvious. In the case of professional athletes, the longer they play table tennis and the bigger variety of contests they compete in, the lower nationalism they have. The reason for their lower nationalism might be from a sense of burnout from table tennis or that some have experienced "inside stories" under the Whole Nation System. They also know the weaknesses of the system, thus this affects the nationalism of professional athletes. From the perspective of coaches, the younger they were for their initial training and the less variety in the competitions they participated in, they have a higher level of nationalism, but their impact is not very significant. The varied and numerous competitions that have played in and the nationalism of table tennis coaches have a negative correlation, which is caused by the sense of burnout from table tennis.

Human beings are motivated sensibly, emotionally, randomly and occasionally to do something. When we have to explain reasons for something, we tend to give reasonable explanations because we are inclined to trust these reasons. Reasonable explanations include examples such as raising a cat for it to catch a mouse, working for a company for its culture, and disliking a person for something he or she did. However, these reasons are not necessarily true, and we have to reveal the dark side of humanity to uncover the true reasons that lie deep within. Things such as falsifying the ages of the athletes and other less honorable behaviors. However, these are not in the scope of this thesis, so the thesis just includes some brief examples in the following.

Some professional athletes said they felt tired and like robots after having played table tennis for a long time. Under the Whole Nation System, some professional athletes queried the system once they became aware of the negative aspects, such as corruption and the faking of age. These new findings have resulted from the in-depth interviews. Thus there is something wrong in the Whole Nation System, that could be improved and introduce the market elements in the future. At the same time, the three stories only represent a minority view, and do not affect the main argument of this thesis. It is a side-track in the researcher's argument. The major argument is that sports education contributes to nationalism. Nationalism means political and social nationalism. Nationalism supports the Chinese Communist Party, which supports the government of China and in turn supports the Chinese citizens. Also, because the sample is small, other researches could dig deeper into this issue in the future. The research indicates that, on the whole, sports education does bring about Chinese nationalism in the table tennis case study.

5.2.4.1 Relationship between Table Tennis Education and National Identity

When responding to these questions, CO3's answer is more complicated. His educational background is quite special, and his answer represents the thoughts of most people who supported table tennis education and national identity. He believes that he is a Chinese national, although he is an immigrant. He also said that the stronger China is, the more respected he will be as an immigrant and less likely to be bullied or discriminated against by foreigners. When he went abroad, he would introduce Chinese food, culture and the development of table tennis to people from other countries.

The answers from professional athletes are simpler. The same as amateur athletes, they gave positive answers. They said that as a member of the Chinese nation, their national pride is strong. They also actively promoted diplomatic exchanges and activities to promote the national spirit of table tennis. Sports have no borders, but athletes have national boundaries. Table tennis is the national sports of our country. Besides their keen interest in table tennis, professional athletes said they also actively participate in various competitions to enhance their patriotism and make their due contributions to promote table tennis in local areas.

5.2.4.2 Table Tennis Education and National Pride

When answering these research questions, all respondents stated their pride of being Chinese, especially the professional athletes because they are international athletes. Patriotism is part

of their education and most Chinese people have been taught to love their country since early childhood.

The respondents said when presented with opportunities to discuss table tennis with foreigners, they would also introduce them to traditional Chinese culture, prosperous situations (recent economic developments), take them to visit cultural monuments, and enjoy good food in China. Professional athletes also said that in table tennis matches with international players, they not only showed their competitive edge for the sport, but also showcased mutual understanding, unity and friendship. When communicating with foreigners, they are generous enough to share all their knowledge and professional skills with them, showing the strength and development of the motherland. Professional athletes have opportunities to participate in competitions held overseas. When they are abroad, they will proudly talk about China's achievements in table tennis, promote table tennis, and hope that other countries will also develop while China is developing. When they go abroad, they also promote and share China's table tennis training methods, so that more foreigners can learn about the advanced knowledge and technology of table tennis in China.

5.2.4.3 Table Tennis Education's Three Influences on Nationalism

There are three aspects of influence on nationalism. First. The Charm of Table Tennis:

Playing table tennis gives us confidence. We respect our opponents in competitions so that

we build friendship. This is the charm of table tennis. **Second. The Promotion of Group Life and Collective Honour:** Why does table tennis give us friendship and cultivate our sense of collective **honour**? We know that friends with common interests and hobbies can easily foster a long-term friendship. For amateurs, they play table tennis together, feel happy, and naturally they will form a mutual friendships. Therefore, it is recommended that primary and secondary school students play table tennis from an early age, learn about mutual respect, confidence, building friendships, and being an all-round well-developed person. **Third. Personal Feelings and Patriotic Feelings:** When asked about whether table tennis can enhance nationalism or not, athletes' answers are divided into two groups due to their respective achievements. Athletes who have entered the national team and participated in international competitions strongly believe that table tennis can enhance nationalism. This is because when they go abroad and participate in international table tennis competitions, they represent China and the Chinese team. Under such circumstances, athletes would reach unprecedented heights for their national attributes and their own characteristics. They would also desire to win a gold medal and glory for China. That is why PA5 said that for a Chinese table tennis player, nationalism and patriotism hold a very momentous position, especially in some international competitions.

5.2.5 Four Roles of Table Tennis Education

In this research, many respondents have mentioned the role of table tennis education, which is divided into the physical and psychological aspects. The role of table tennis education

began to show in the early practice of table tennis. Respondents described the physical benefits of table tennis, including fostering the ability to withstand stress and build a strong mentality. Meanwhile, table tennis education can also promote awareness of patriotism often in imperceptible ways.

5.2.5.1 Strengthen the Consciousness of the National Ball and Permeate the Education of Patriotism.

In China, table tennis is quite a popular sport and the overall strength of China's professional athletes ranks high around the globe. For the past decade, China's table tennis team has been considered one of the strongest in international competitions. Out of all the table tennis competitions in the past 60 years, China has won more than 130 championships, trained nearly 100 world-class table tennis athletes and won hundreds of millions of table tennis fans. Table tennis has not only promoted national prestige, but also made important contributions to China's economic development and political exchanges, especially from diplomatic aspects, such as table tennis diplomacy and foreign trade in relative fields.

5.2.5.2 Strengthen the Awareness of Competition and Educate the Strong Will.

Table tennis as a general sport is favored by many, but is also a competitive sport. Table tennis education should not only promote nationalism, teach students basic techniques to master how to play the sport and improve their physical health, but also encourage

participation in competitions to foster players' competitive spirit and will. Young table tennis athletes have a competitive nature. Table tennis education should strengthen their competitive awareness to stimulate their interest in learning professional skills and encourage young athletes to participate in competitions to foster their fighting spirit. In the teaching of table tennis, it is necessary to organize table tennis competitions in the teaching process to nurture athletes' consciousness of nationalism and practice the methods and techniques of table tennis they have learned. Table tennis competitions teach athletes to compete in a civilized manner, observe rules and directives, cultivate a sense of teamwork and strengthen their spirit, will, and perseverance. The competitions also teach them how to face challenges and overcome difficulties, understand the value of hard work, confidence, courage, decision-making, and strength. In the competition, friendship comes first and winning comes second. Even when you win, you should not be too proud; when you lose, you should not lose faith in yourself.

5.2.5.3 Strengthen the Sense of Teamwork.

The sport of table tennis strengthens collectivism. Table tennis is a collective competition, regardless of whether it is singles, doubles or in teams, due to the people who are behind the scenes. Team competitions require cooperation, so the award represents the country. Winning a team competition will enhance nationalism and national pride. In the course of table tennis education and training, in addition to playing videos of team competitions, athletes should attach importance to team work and collectivism in their daily training and competitions. In

the process of table tennis teaching and small group competitions, all students should participate in the design and organization of competitions, so that they learn to be organizers, participants, referees and spectators. Collectivism, teamwork and cooperation are highlighted; while solidarity, tolerance and friendship are strengthened. It is on this basis that students can realize the collectivist connotation of contemporary table tennis, showcasing their talents in collective activities, realize their individual value, feel the superiority of the collective, deepen their understanding of collective power, strengthen the sense of cooperation and mutual help, strengthen the sense of team and team identity, and cultivate the sense of collective honor. This can teach the students that the biggest collective in our country is the Chinese nation and they should understand their Chinese identity deeply to improve their nationalist consciousness.

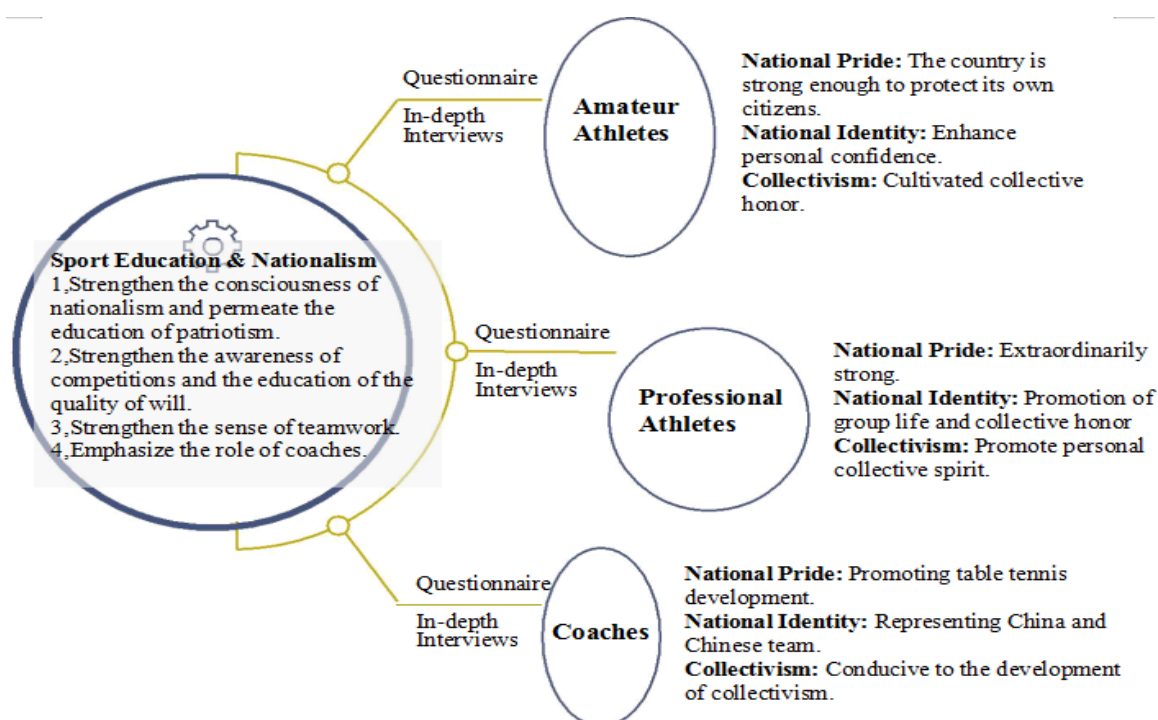
5.2.5.4 Emphasize the Role of Coaches.

The coach is the main participant in table tennis education and plays an important role in the development of students. Table tennis coaches should act as an outstanding example in terms of words and deeds in the process of teaching table tennis and strengthening nationalism. The coach is not only the leader in improving nationalism consciousness, but also the practitioner of improving nationalist consciousness. In the process of teaching and learning, thoughts, actions, words and manners of the teacher will have a subtle effect on the students. Moreover, most table tennis players start playing the sport at a very young age of only five or six years of age, so they still do not have the ability to tell right from wrong but their ability to imitate

is strong. Obviously, they will imitate the coaches. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the coaches ‘teacher consciousness’ to improve the value of nationalism. Coaches should be strict with themselves and teach by their words and deeds. On the one hand, coaches should teach students skills and set rigorous daily exercise in order to improve students’ skills, and set a good image among students so that they can win students’ respect and trust. On the other hand, the coach himself should firmly abide by the belief of teaching by words and deeds, be an exemplary role-model for students and carry forward his own nationalist consciousness.

To sum up, the relationship of sport education and nationalism (national pride and national identity) are shown in chart 15 below.

Chart 15. The relationship between sports education and nationalism



5.2.6 Effect of Sports Education on the Development of Teenagers

Sports have an important influence on the development of young people. Table tennis education plays an evident role in promoting the national consciousness of young people. Through strengthening table tennis education, it is possible for teenagers to strengthen their national awareness and enhance their nationalism in training and watching games. At the same time, by passing on ideological and ethical qualities, education can strengthen team spirit and cultivate collective consciousness. These methods include daily training, competition, watching videos, watching games on the spot, and having close contact with excellent athletes. It is noteworthy that coaches should play a guiding role in the practice of the above-mentioned, setting a positive example for students both in action and thinking.

5.3 Summary

5.3.1 There is a profound connection between table tennis and nationalism.

This connection is predominantly presented in the following three respects: table tennis education and national identity, table tennis and national pride, and the effectiveness of table tennis education on nationalistic awareness. Respondents all affirmed they are Chinese nationals, and their attachment to the motherland became more and more apparent as they got older. According to the respondents' personal experiences, they stated that their national pride rises in situations like taking part in table tennis matches overseas, watching table tennis competitions via TV or live, or going abroad for exchange. Large numbers of interviewees

were proactively involved in activities associated with table tennis, and receiving table tennis education in the process actively or passively.

5.3.2 The "Whole Nation System" is a system that our country has in the training of competitive sports athletes.

After numerous selections and assessments, the system selects a small number of top athletes to compete for the country and invests a very large amount of resources to train them. In the end, excellent athletes will compete with players from other countries in international games. This model has indeed cultivated a large number of excellent athletes with high nationalist feelings, but there are drawbacks at the same time such as institutional rigidity, separation from the masses, and the unbalanced development of the athletes. Under the "Whole Nation System" training mode, the awareness for ordinary table tennis enthusiasts will not be strengthened since they have not received sufficient table tennis education. On the contrary, because of the concentration of resources and the lack of corresponding training, table tennis education for the masses is not readily available, which means that most table tennis lovers are not receiving enough nationalist education.

The Whole Nation System in Chinese sports was learned from the former Soviet Union. In the former Soviet Union, the government selected and trained talented athletes to participate in competitions. The greatest advantage of doing this is so they can concentrate their strength

and train excellent coaches with a unified concept and training plan. Under this system, athletes were disciplined, train hard and have a strong desire to win, which is the key to winning in the Olympic Games. In more than half a century, China's competitive sportspeople have risen from poor and weak foundations to the world's "first group", and the national system has played an important role. The Whole Nation System is a system in which China concentrates its limited human, financial and material resources to mobilize the enthusiasm of all aspects to the maximum extent and effectively allocate the national competitive sports resources to train "professional athletes". Under the national system, China has been able to make great leaps ahead in competitive sports achievements in a short period of time. These excellent sports achievements greatly enhance the confidence of Chinese people.

The achievements of the national system have attracted the attention and imitations of other countries around the world. International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge said that many countries, including the United States, have similar initiatives to concentrate resources on developing certain sports and training certain athletes. Since the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, Britain has increased government investment in sports. After London's successful bid for the Olympic Games, the British government promised to invest about 1 billion pounds in the six years before 2012 in preparation for the Olympic Games in order to achieve the goal of the British team ranking among the top four in the gold medal list of the London Olympic Games. British sports will assess all the events one by one and allocate the

funds according to the medal winning prospect, which is similar to China's "Olympic glory plan". It is also the fundamental reason Britain has leapt to the third place in the gold medal table in this Olympic Games.

In addition, the Whole Nation System should be integrated with a club/association-based system for a more balanced and optimal development of sports in China. Combining the advantages of these two systems can guarantee both good sports and economic development in China. In this thesis, we can see that table tennis can promote nationalism, and cultivate the collective sense of **honour** and patriotism among people who engage in this sport. Thus, it is a sport worth promoting.

5.4 Implications for future research

5.4.1 Limitations

First, the selected sampling in this thesis was limited to Guangdong province and it may not be applicable to every Chinese table tennis athlete or coach. In addition, the situation in Guangdong province may not necessarily represent other places in China or China overall. Despite these limitations, this thesis is the first to try and gain an accurate understanding of sports education and nationalism.

Second, the research for this thesis was limited to Han Chinese, and included no ethnic minorities. Thus, it cannot be generalised to ethnic minorities who participate in table tennis,

either locally or internationally. In addition, because the participants are all Han Chinese, they do not represent the entire nation of China. The ‘Chinese nation’ is the general term used to describe all of the ethnic groups that live in China. ‘China’ is the same as ‘Zhonghua’ and ‘Huaxia’ and they are used interchangeably. The term ‘Chinese nation’, first proposed by Liang Qichao, is both a political and nationality concept. It has been important to modern Chinese nationalism and the establishment of a Chinese nationality. Nowadays, ‘China’ or the ‘Chinese nation’, refers to all ethnic groups living in greater China and Chinese living overseas. China has been a unified multi-ethnic country since ancient times, experiencing long periods of differentiation, integration and development. Now, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the large family of 56 ethnic groups enjoys equality, unity, common prosperity and development. The Han ethnicity is the most populous among the many ethnic groups. However, its experience cannot represent the experiences and beliefs of other ethnic minorities.

Third, this thesis was limited by the size of its sampling. It was very important to scientifically base the sampling number on the number of those involved with the sport of table tennis. The focus of this thesis is on amateur athletes, professional athletes and coaches of table tennis. Among the 171 people who completed questionnaires for the quantitative analysis, 99 were amateur athletes, 45 were professional athletes and 27 were coaches. Twenty-five participants were later invited for face-to-face interviews, including 10 amateur athletes, 10 professional athletes, and five coaches. Compared with the large number of people involved with the sport of table tennis, the number in the sample for this thesis was therefore limited. Thus, it cannot represent all of those involved with the sport.

Fourth, there is limited research on nationalism in this thesis. Nationalism has both political and cultural implications, which suggests that sports education is not the only influencing factor. This thesis mainly studies the influence of national identity and national pride. Nevertheless, other political, psychological, cultural and individual factors are important and can contribute to igniting national sentiment. In any study of the social-political-cultural sector, it is difficult to separate sports from all other influences. Future studies will need to explore how other factors interact and contribute to enhancing nationalism.

In addition to the factors discussed in this thesis, it would also be interesting to study how nationalism contributes to practical aspects. There are many other factors that can ultimately influence a participant's final performance. How nationalism coordinates with other factors to generate a final outcome would be an appropriate topic for further discussion. Future research can therefore tackle the limitations of this thesis.

5.4.2 Necessity of the athlete system reform in China

There are some undesirable phenomena in athletes' management in China. The main task of the athlete system reform is to establish a system structure adapted to the development of the market economy, and to measure the original system, mechanisms and modes with the benefit criterion of the market economy. It is necessary to change the crude management form of athlete command management by sports management departments and "the whole country", and to establish a new mechanism adapted to the socialist market economy.

According to the requirements of China's market economy and the development of competitive sports, the organization should be adjusted. The government's one-handed operation under the original "Whole Nation System", exercises all its functions, with its strictly established old model of competitive sports' departments in accordance with administrative regions, needs to be reformed, and a new system which integrates athletes' selection, training, communication, use and placement established in its place. In the new structure, sports associations and sports clubs would have full power over the management of athletes and be responsible for dealing with specific issues in the circulation of athletes. The sports project management center would mainly formulate macro measures to give overall guidance and not deal with specific cases. Reforming the selection and transportation of athletes to sports teams of different levels is the comprehensive management of competitive sports entities, and further improving the degree of organization in the organization and operation. The management of sports events should continue to deepen the implementation of an "association system", making a good job of the transformation from qualified projects to club system, and establish and improve its organization and operation structure under the market economy. The management of athletes by associations should minimize mandatory behavior, fully respecting the members of each sports entity, give play to the regulating function of the sports talent market, and mobilize the initiative and enthusiasm of each sports entity based on its own needs.

5.4.3 Implications

China's existing physical education system has certain limitations. On the one hand, physical

education covers a comprehensive range of disciplines under normal circumstances such as humanities and social sciences, natural sciences, philosophy, and sports science. However, physical education mostly teaches only sports skills in China. Theoretical teaching only accounts for a small percentage of physical education, neglecting the development of athletes' cultural, literary, ideological and moral qualities, psychological qualities and social adaptability. On the other hand, outstanding players are only trained to be professional athletes, and soft skill education is more emphasized for ordinary sports participants. Under the Whole Nation System, sports education ignites nationalism. However, there are advantages and disadvantages of this system. To counter this, the thesis proposes some feasible methods based on transparency, accountability and professionalism to improve the table tennis system, in the hope of providing some references for future research. The implications of my research are as follow:

5.4.3.1 Transparency

Firstly, amateur athletes need to fully understand the advantages and disadvantages of the current national sports system, which helps them judge whether they have made the right choice for further professional training and competition. Amateur athletes are not directly affected by the Whole Nation System, but their nationalist sentiment is the highest. They can only see the bright side of sports in their daily lives, but they rarely know the inside stories. It is important for the country to raise the nationalism of all people, especially for amateur athletes.

Secondly, professional athletes are important participants in the national sports system. It is

worrying to train professional athletes with winning gold medals in sports competitions as the only goal in mind. There are two main problems: (1) In the process of sports education in various provinces and cities, the concept of promoting cultural education for professional athletes has not been effectively implemented, and cultural education is simply understood as cultural teaching. (2) Faced with the current economic situation, professional athletes are easily tempted by personal interest. It is easy for them to spend excessive amounts of time relaxing and enjoying life in their spare time. In light of this, the administrator should not only manage the training and sports performance of professional athletes, but also their daily lives. Great importance should be attached to the supervision, as well as the education of cultural knowledge. The successful implementation of these two aspects requires joint effort and coordination of individuals, families, schools, society and the state. Only by doing these can athletes improve and develop at the spiritual and cultural levels, and in their sports performance. It is crucial to improve the current education system for Chinese professional athletes and broaden the school management thinking in the conditions of the market economy. It is necessary to fully take advantage of the existing educational institutions of physical education, build a multi-cultural education system, and further increase the channels for professional athletes to receive cultural education. In addition, cultural education is a systematic project that requires a structured and planned teaching system. In the teaching process, we must strengthen cultural education supervision and improve the management system.

5.4.3.2 Accountability

The Whole Nation System does not run as smoothly as it used to, with problems emerging from its operation, such as the unsound mechanism of supervision and security. Along with

the fast development of the socialist market, some sports management centers are established, by which cultural education for athletes is planned and implemented. Since then, sports management centers have been responsible for the cultural education of athletes. However, due to the ultimate goal of training athletes, there is a wide divergence between the cultural education and sports departments, in terms of values and behavioral patterns, which gives rise to the in-coordination of different goals. When they do collide with each other, sports performance will be given higher priority than cultural education, and such contradictions can hardly be eradicated. With the problems analysed above, including the lack of coordination between the cultural and sports systems, the lack of assurance and emphasis on cultural education, and the poor implementation of supervision and security mechanisms, the cultural education that professional athletes receive is very unsystematic, resulting in an exacerbated lack of cultural quality and nationalist sentiment in athletes. Besides, the teaching quality cannot be guaranteed because of the desultory attendance of athletes.

It is significant that physical culture institutes and sports schools fully undertake their work and help with the implementation of responsibilities. First, the cultural education system needs to be improved. After the reform and opening-up of China, the socialist economic system has been established and gradually enhanced. It is also the sports system that has been in charge of athletes' training and education, which may easily lead to the isolation of cultural education for athletes, who thus receive special but unsound education. Second, as such a system develops, professional athletes trained and educated under it are basically separated from fundamental cultural education, not to mention the promotion of their nationalist sentiment. Third, the mode of cultural education should be explicit. At present, due to the unsound education system, it is hard for athletes to get complete curriculums covering lower

to higher levels, thus they can hardly adapt themselves to the social development, which also places limits on China's competitive sports development. In conclusion, in order to make full use of the Whole Nation System, it is necessary to give higher priority to cultural education and build a more applicable education system. With better education, Chinese professional athletes will also get respect and praise for their high cultural quality when they win gold medals. Such measures will carry our national sporting spirit forward, and reinforce the sustainability of China's sports education.

5.4.3.3 Professionalization

Firstly, the sports system in China is not specialized in management, thus, in terms of the teaching management competence and professionalism of staff working in it, many factors are at work. Problems of present physical education can be explained, among other things, by a shortage of teaching resources, such as backward teaching facilities, a lack of education funding and qualified teachers, a lack of richness in the courses, out-of-date teaching methods, as well as poor teaching quality, which is caused by low-paid teachers and their difficulty in gaining access to vocational studies. Secondly, without systematic basic education and a strict examination system, it is impossible to fully implement compulsory education, so higher and professional education are less likely to be guaranteed. We should make use of all possible teaching resources to support the cultural education the professional athletes. On the one hand, we should reform the sports system built by a State Sports General Administration, and provide courses like non-professional adult higher education that athletes need for profession choices after retirement and help them possess more knowledge and skills. On the other hand, the school-based model needs improvement. We should encourage colleges to open up to more athletes, if colleges could open more enrolment channels and recruit more athletes, both

in service or retired, and engage in sports team-building in colleges, it will be easier for athletes to get a higher education.

In addition, except for the professional education for athletes, the coaches' comprehensive qualities also needs to be reinforced, since their guidance and training are essential for athletes to fully exert their strength and improve their skills. Advanced science and technology have promoted the fast development of sports, which requires more competent coaches. Nowadays, what makes a qualified coach is not only good professional skills, theoretical knowledge and rich practical experience, but also other aspects like psychology and training study. A coach's main educational responsibilities are teaching and management, he should also provide moral education with no short cuts. According to government requests and sports traits, and taking a practical perspective, a coach should combine moral with physical education to realize athletes' potential, as well as spark their nationalist sentiment. Aimed at adjusting to social development and promoting the overall quality of grassroots coaches, related departments have strengthened the training of these coaches. A coach should adhere to the people-oriented training principle, strengthen his own professional theoretical knowledge and fully consider growing athletes' qualities, then adopt a scientific and reasonable method to improve athletes' skills and extend their athletic longevity.

Thirdly, the development of competitive sports is limited by a lack of professionalism in the current system. When discussing the merits and demerits of the current system, the head of the China football association has summarized the following, "under the planned economic system, some associations and government departments, though with different names, are

actually the same institutes, which are in charge of both making policy and handling daily affairs. On the one hand, people benefit from such a system, because it is easier to get things done with a government service, but on the other, the government is stuck in specific routines and cannot focus on its macroscopic administrative function, nor can it realize functions of associations.” As the initiator and advocator of competitive sports reform, the General Administration of the Sport of China has gained great achievements under the Whole Nation System, and has enjoyed benefits of its power, which make them reluctant to give up the system during the promotion of professional clubs. Therefore, in structural reform, a specialized management organization should be set up to handle all work with coordinated and unified management. To guarantee the proper functioning of this specialized management system, a good management mechanism and higher management competence are required. Along with social development, competent administrators are needed, especially those with more careful and delicate management skills.

5.4.3.4 The reform direction of Chinese table tennis clubs

Since the "reform and opening up" of New China, the sports reform has been deepened in an all-round way, the level of sports public service has been continuously improved, the national fitness has been vigorously developed, the achievements of competitive sports have been significantly improved, and the sports industry has been growing. Table tennis, as a national sport, has attracted much attention in its reform and development. Some of the leading reforms have achieved remarkable results. For example, since 1994, China has started to establish a table tennis club, and in December 1995, the first Chinese table tennis club competition began in Guangdong. At the National Table Tennis Coaches Working Conference held in Hefei, Anhui Province in 1999, the Chinese Table Tennis Association launched the adjustment of the domestic competition system of table tennis in 2000, upgrading the First

Division to the Super League, which is the beginning of the Chinese Table Tennis Super League.

At the same time, compared with the requirements of building a strong sports country in the world, the insufficient development of sports in China is still prominent. The development of sports among regions, urban and rural areas, industries and groups is not balanced, the development of national fitness, competitive sports and sports industry is not coordinated, the development of different sports is not balanced, and the public uniform of national fitness is not balanced. The imperfect administrative system, the inadequate role of sports in promoting the health of the whole people, the irregular development of sports social organizations, the inadequate supply of sports products and services, and the imperfect institutional mechanism for the establishment of sports in the whole society cannot meet the diverse and multi-level sports needs of the people. These problems are more prominent in table tennis clubs, such as:

1. The development of provinces is unbalanced. At present, there are 10 men's teams and 10 women's teams in the Chinese Table Tennis Super League, which means that less than one third of 36 provinces in the country are involved, and 26 provinces are not involved.
2. There are few sports products and services in the clubs. The Chinese Table Tennis Super League only stays in holding competitions. Every match is watched live. There are no better, sustainable and participatory sports products and services for the vast number of table tennis fans.

The above national and historic problems have been highly valued by the leaders of the state and effective measures have been taken. On August 10, 2019, the General Office of the State

Council officially issued the Outline for the Construction of a Sports Powerful Country. The release of the Outline fully reflects the Party's and the state's great attention to sports, in order to give full play to sports. It plays an important role in the new journey of building a socialist modern country, and strives to make sports construction a symbolic cause of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, providing a policy guarantee. With the support of such a large national policy, the reform of table tennis clubs will inevitably follow the trends and make great progress. This research tries to put forward the following reform details for reference:

First, the management system of club athletes should be reformed.

At present, the high-level athletes of Chinese table tennis clubs are all multi-management systems, according to the management level from high to low: China National Team, provincial professional teams, clubs. In fact, the club has only the "right of use" and no "ownership" for its high-level athletes. In the actual management, the high-level athletes seldom train in the club, but focus on the training and management of the national team. They just come to the club in a hurry and leave at the end of the game. The time is first subject to the unified arrangements of the national team, encounters with the national team's competition (all kinds of world competitions, major domestic competitions) are first subject to the national team's competition, provincial professional team's competition arrangements, and then to the club's competition. The club has absolutely no autonomy in the management of high-level athletes.

Second, the brand management of clubs should be strengthened.

Club brand management is the whole process of establishing, maintaining and consolidating a brand. By effectively supervising and controlling the relationship between brand and consumers through brand management, the competitive advantage of the brand will be formed. Enterprise behavior will also be more loyal to the core value and spirit of the brand, so that the brand will maintain its sustainable competitiveness. However, there are many deficiencies in the construction of professional table tennis clubs in China, especially in brand management. Compared with well-known foreign clubs, the construction of professional table tennis clubs is dwarfed. The main problems and reform proposals are as follows: (1) Since the establishment of the table tennis club in 1994, it has gone through 25 years to develop into the current Chinese Table Tennis Club Super league. However, up to now, no table tennis club has been listed successfully, which is contrary to the law of market operation. It is the most important thing to reform. (2) The financial situation of all clubs is very tense. The investment is much higher than the income, and the income structure is unreasonable. The source of income depends on the "congestion" of the shareholders' capital injection. There will be a higher operational risk if they keep losing money. (3) Thanks to the favorable external environment and conditions of politics, economy, society and technology, table tennis clubs in China is in an ideal market environment. However, clubs should adopt a growth-oriented market strategy and actively promote a fan-centered brand management strategy, which should be constructed from four aspects: brand positioning, brand communication, brand extension and brand internationalization. Furthermore, it promotes the diversification of table tennis clubs, expands revenue channels, and improves the reputation and loyalty of the club brand, thereby enhancing the brand influence and brand value of the club.

Third. The successful experience of Japanese table tennis clubs is worth learning.

(1) Japanese Table Tennis Clubs are good at improving the audience's enthusiasm for table tennis. In all kinds of world competitions or local leagues, at every match of the Japanese team the clubs will organize nearly 5,000 spectators to wear uniform T-shirts to cheer for the club members. At the same time, entertainment stars have been found to explain table tennis events, which are rare in the world. For example, in the five recent consecutive Olympic Games, Sakurai, a member of the Japanese super popularity group ARASHI, has been found to explain the competition, and it is the fifth consecutive Olympic Games. ARASHI members even interviewed Fukuhara before the Rio Olympics. Japan's largest grain and oil company, All Agricultural Enterprises, is the main sponsor of the World Table Tennis Championships and a partner of the Japan Table Tennis Association. People can think of table tennis when they eat rice and fry saury.

(2) The sports products and services of Japanese table tennis clubs are very diversified.

As early as 1996, the cartoon "Table Tennis" with a fairly high level of table tennis theme was produced. It was popular all over the world. Japanese girls wearing kimonos to play table tennis are well-known in the global animation industry. It is another masterpiece after other sports cartoons such as slam dunker, football player and tennis prince. This cartoon won the Tokyo Animation Award for animation of the year.

Japanese toy company Happinet has developed an "exciting table tennis" video game, which consists of motion sensors and speakers. Players can play the game by themselves only using the speakers to make the sound of a table tennis ball bouncing around the table tennis table. A

spokesman for Happinet said that the goal of the game was to create a more authentic sense that once people started entering the game, they would want to win just like real games. In 2014, a Japanese electronics manufacturer demonstrated a new type of robot, which has powerful motion ability, can skilfully hit the ball to an opponent, and accurately determine the direction and position of each hit. Before the Tokyo World Table Tennis Championship, it was reported that the Japan Table Tennis Association participated in the development of the robot, hoping to include the data of Chinese athletes, so that the Japanese players can compete with the world's top players.

5.5 Conclusion

Under the current management model of the “Whole Nation System” with Chinese characteristics, the conflict between specialization and the Whole Nation System needs to be considered and explored. The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games is a successful example of the full utilization of timing, location, and human resources that the current system can possibly provide. It reached the nationally acclaimed achievement of winning 51 gold medals. After the Beijing Olympic Games, however, the high cost and outstanding achievements of the Whole Nation System have become an issue for concern and reflection by the general public. The Whole Nation System and the specialization of competitive sports are results of the two distinct cultural backgrounds of China and western countries. Specialization should be developed within the Whole Nation System. It is inevitable that conflicts will occur and one source of conflict is the difference in training athletes between China and western countries. Under the Whole Nation System, the training of athletes is restricted by the allocation of administrative resources, which has made the attribution of athletes very clear. In that system,

athletes are almost completely under the control of the state because they only receive investment from the country. The country provides full support of the athletes in almost every stage of their life including moving from amateur sports schools to the provincial team and finally entering the national team, studying technical skills and cultural knowledge in the professional team, resettling of study and work, and even life after retirement. Having been supported by the state for such a long time, athletes who grow up in this collective cradle will obey the will of the state and play for the country. This has become a matter of course. These athletes who rely on the state's Whole Nation System and taxpayer's money might as well be called "state-owned assets". In contrast, the sports system in western countries is mainly dominated by the market, government and society, and is subject to their rules. The training process of athletes is more dependent on individuals, families or commercial sponsorship. The athletes are usually free from the management of the state.

China's economic development has created advantageous conditions for the promotion of professional sports in China, provided guarantees for professional athletes training to a certain extent, and also created more career choices for young people. The marketization and socialization reform of sports have attracted a large amount of investment from social capital, and making the investment channels of competitive sports increasingly diversified. Instead of relying on government support, athletes can stand on their own feet and develop independently. When the athletes' competitive ability and professional skills reach a certain height, they may enter a professional sports club to seek better personal development opportunities. There have been precedents set in China's sporting world, such as the billiards athlete Ding Junhui, who did not spend a penny of the taxpayer's money in his career path and developed into a truly professional athlete. Another example is Yuan Meng, a

professional Chinese tennis player. Since 2000, she has relied on private sponsorship to conduct competition training, imitating the mechanism of international professional players. Sun Jinfang recognized Yuan Meng's model and concurred that it was not in conflict with the Whole Nation System. Obviously, under the current sports system and economic conditions in China, this model of the independent training of athletes is not suitable for all projects. A lot of sports types under the Whole Nation System still need to be improved such as track and field, swimming, gymnastics and other national key projects, and these sports need to maintain their competitive edge and claim glory for the country. Such sports still need to rely on national co-ordination to maintain a high competitive level. However, general investment sports projects that mainly rely on social input can explore and utilize social resources as much as possible and train athletes independently, especially non-Olympic projects or individualized projects within Olympic projects, such as billiards, golf, figure skating, sports dance, tennis, and so on.

Training competitive sports talents is a systematic project. It is crucial to choose an effective training mode in line with the cultural traditions and economic development of the country, as well as the value orientation of sports. Mere imitation of others may definitely not work well. In order to build a more flexible, sustainable, individualized, and humanized athlete training model, China still needs to take a long journey of exploration and reform. Rather than tools to obtain interest, gold medals should be used to interpret the true meaning of sports, to transform the enormous pressure faced by athletes under the Whole Nation System into a dynamic self-driving force, and to awaken their subjective consciousness. In that way, athletes will truly enjoy the high quality of life that is brought about by taking part in competitive sports. Currently, the Whole Nation System follows the principle of “nation

investment benefiting the whole nation”. However, due to the influence of the market economy and diversified values, the output of competitive sports must not only protect national interest, but also protect the personal interests of athletes and coaches. Both professional sports and non-professional sports should promote the concept of “people come first”.

At present, sports clubs in China are divided into amateur and professional clubs. Amateur sports clubs provide sports venues and equipment for amateur athletes, which are generally financed by collecting rental fees for sports facilities and membership fees, as well as by trade unions. Professional sports clubs employ or rent professional athletes to participate in competitions and performances, in order to earn profits or publicize and advertise certain enterprises. Such clubs are funded mainly by large entrepreneurs or joint-stock companies. In some provinces, from primary school to university, students participate in sports training in amateur sports clubs, and then join professional sports clubs to improve their skills until they become nationally or globally famous athletes.

In recent years, the reform of the national fitness and sports industry has gained higher priority. In October 2014, the State Council issued "Some Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption", which upgraded national fitness to a national strategy, supported the sports industry as a green and sunrise industry, and strived to make the total worth of the sports industry exceed 5 trillion yuan by 2025. How to change the management mode of China's sports development rapidly has become an important factor in the development of China's sports industry.

Enterprises or individuals in China want to hold an ordinary folk sports event, which needs to go through various levels of approval and overcome many obstacles, which to some extent affects the enthusiasm of private capital to participate in the sports market. This shows that the current management system of China's sports clubs also have a certain "duality of officials and people". However, in developed countries such as the United States, there are a large number of market-oriented sports organizations, such as enterprises and sports clubs; for instance the NBA. Competition is under perfect, transparent and operable market rules, and has a good legal system and mechanism environment. Governments and capital operating agencies have a group of enterprise-oriented operations. Weaving provides various conveniences.

Therefore, the primary task of the reform is to "bureaucratize" the management system of China's sports clubs, change the centralized allocation of resources from the original administration to the flexible allocation of resources from the market, maximize the mobilization of forces from all sectors of society, and make the field of competitive sports form a joint force throughout the country, along a more market-oriented path. This would be a more professional and correct direction, with healthy development. That is to say, associations need to focus on market demand and arrange sports activities and business activities. Compared with the Whole Nation System in the past, the market-oriented association aims to obtain the satisfaction of table tennis athletes and coaches, and to improve the development of a competitive sports level, so as to maximize the participation of the masses and maximize market profits.

The biggest disadvantage of the Whole Nation System (table tennis) is that it sacrifices the interests of the vast majority of athletes who participate in the sport and wins very few high-level athletes (world champions). Developing the club system of nationwide sports can solve this problem very well. Only if the market capacity is large enough, can the long-term survival of most participants be solved. Although the Whole Nation System will not be replaced in China in the short term, the market-oriented model of clubs or associations is gradually changing China's sport development system. Whether the further marketization of competitive sports is suitable for China's national sports system is worthy of more and deeper discussion in the future.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Hello! This is a questionnaire upon the relationship between table tennis and nationalism in sports science, an anonymous questionnaire without right or wrong answer. It is used for doctoral thesis only, so I sincerely invite you and thank you for taking the time to fill out the following questionnaire truthfully. I promise you: the information you provided is and will be completely confidential, and all the data of this questionnaire will be thoroughly applied to the research! Please fulfill the questionnaire after reading the instructions. The questionnaire is multiple-choice question, and some of them could be more than one answer. Be careful not to miss the questions. Thank you for your participation and cooperation!

Part I. Please select one of the most suitable personal information or wills of you.

1. Your gender:

- A. Male; B. Female.

2. Your age:

- A. Under 18; B. 18-30; C. 31-45; D. 46-60; E. Above 60.

3. Your nationality:

- A. Han; B. Man; C. Hui; D. Zhuang; E. Others_____.

4. Your highest education level (studying or obtained):

- A. High school or below; B. Technical secondary school; C. Junior college;
D. Bachelor degree; E. Master degree; F. Doctoral degree; G. Other_____.

5. Your occupation:

- A. Student; B. Professional table tennis athlete; C. Table tennis coach;
D. Public servant; E. Management staff; F. Others_____.

6. Your politics status:

- A. Party member; B. League member; C. Democratic parties member; D. Masses.

7. Have you studied abroad? (Excluding Hongkong, Macao, Taiwan)

- A. Yes; B. No.

8. Family monthly income per capita (RMB):

- A. 6,000 and below; B. 6,001-9,000; C. 9,001-12,000; D. Over 12,000.

9. While visiting the media for information, you wish to know first is:

- A. Political news; B. Financial and economic news; C. Sports news;
D. Entertainment news E. Others_____.

10. What will you do when the individual interest, the national interest and the group interest are in conflict?

- A. Individual interest has priority; B. National interest has priority;
C. Group interest has priority; D. Try to strike a balance between them;

Part II. Please select one of the most suitable table tennis situations or wills of you.

1. Which kind of table tennis player are you?

- A. Amateur player; B. Professional player; C. Coach; D. Others_____.

2. How long have you been playing table tennis?

- A. Less than 5 years; B. 6-10 years; C. 11-15 years; D. Over 15 years.

3. Have you been participated in professional training for table tennis? (If choose A, please go ahead with question 4 and follow up questions; if choose B, please answer question 5 and follow up questions directly.)

- A. Yes; B. No.

4. When is the first time to participating the formal training?

- A. 6 years old and under; B. 7-10 years old;
C. 11-15 years old; D. 16 years old or above.

5. Have you participated any types of competitions? (Multiple choices)

- A. Inter school competition; B. City competition; C. Provincial competition;
D. National competition; E. World-class competition; F. Never.

6. What is your purposes of participating the training? (Multiple choices)

- A. Keep fit; B. Improve technical level; C. Win glory for the team;
D. Pecuniary benefit; E. Others_____.

7. Have you watched any types of table tennis competitions? (Multiple choices)

- A. City and below competition; B. Provincial competition; C. National competition;

D. World-class competition; E. Do not watch.

8. How often will you watched table tennis competition including in site and via media?

A. Everyday; B. Once a week; C. Once every two weeks;
D. Three or more times a month; E. Do not watch

9. Do you know about the history of table tennis?

A. Pretty well; B. Not much; C. Whatever; D. Barely no; E. No.

10. Do you know about the knowledge of table tennis? (like table tennis instruments, rules and major international competitions)

A. Pretty well; B. Not much; C. Whatever; D. Barely no; E. No.

11. Do you agree that table tennis is called “National Ball” ?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

12. What you do you think is the most that table tennis brings to the whole nation? (Multiple choices)

A. Keep fit; B. Improve technical level; C. Win glory for the team;
D. Pecuniary benefit; E. Others_____.

Part III. Please select one of the most suitable nationalism situations or wills of you.

1. What embody yourself as one of the Chinese Nations ?

A. Language; B. Culture; C. Blood relationship; D. System of government;
E. Award of major sports competition; F. Others_____.

2. How do you know about Chinese history after the founding of China?

A. Pretty well; B. Not much; C. Whatever; D. Barely no; E. No.

3. Do you glad to be one of the Chinese nation?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

4. Do you agree to celebrated the Chinese traditional festival? (Spring festival, mid-autumn and so on)

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

5. Do you agree that Chinese identity has a positive influence on your life?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

6. Do you agree to participated the activities organized by the Chinese compatriots?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

7. Do you agree to actively introduce your national situations to foreigners?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

8. Do you agree that the meet of Chinese people abroad makes you feel more cordial?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

9. Do you agree that you are proud to be one of the Chinese nation?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

10. Do you agree that China is a nation with comprehensive development in the field of economy politics and sports?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

Part IV. Please select one of the most suitable situations on the table tennis and nationalism or wills of you.

1. Do you proud when the 2008 Summer Olympics is successfully held in Beijing?

A. Very proud; B. Proud; C. Whatever; D. Slightly proud; E. Not proud.

2. Do you proud to know that Zhangjiakou won the right to host the 2020 Winter Olympics?

A. Very proud; B. Proud; C. Whatever; D. Slightly proud; E. Not proud.

3. Do you proud and more patriotic when Chinese table tennis players win championships in international competitions?

A. Very proud and patriotic; B. Proud and patriotic; C. Proud but not patriotic;

D. Not proud but patriotic; E. Neither proud nor patriotic.

4. Do you agree to sing the national anthem together when Chinese table tennis players win the

championship in the international competition and carry out the flag-raising ceremony?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

5. Do you agree that Chinese table tennis players have the highest winning percentage in international competitions?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

6. Do you agree that Chinese table tennis has increased its influence in today's international table tennis due to its high winning rate in international competitions?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

7. Do you agree that the table tennis players awarded in the Olympic Games enable people from other countries to know China?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

8. Do you agree that table tennis player awarded are the way for competitive athletes achieved self-value?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

9. Do you agree that taking stimulants is acceptable because the table tennis player needs to win the glory and good result for the country?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

10. Do you agree that table tennis players should take the risk of taking stimulants to get good results, even if the stimulants cause certain damage even death to the athletes themselves?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

11. Do you agree that the announcement and reward of the first-class merits from Guangdong Provincial People's Government for Liu Shiwen, who won the gold medal in the women's table tennis team in the 31st Summer Olympics, is conducive to her more active training, and create new achievements?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

12. Liu Guoliang was shifted from the head coach of China Table Tennis National Team to vice chairman of China Table Tennis Association, (hereinafter referred to as “Liu Guoliang Event”). Do you agree that Chinese athlete cultivating mode is transferred from the Whole Nation System

to market-orientation associations or clubs?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

13. In the 2017 Men's World Cup Table Tennis Tournament, neither Ma Long or Lin Gaoyuan was entering the finals, the national table tennis team missed the eight consecutive championships of the Men's World Cup. Do you agree this is connected with "Liu Guoliang Event" since Liu is no longer coached and influenced the competition result of the national table tennis team?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

14. The "Liu Guoliang Event" was controversial among the people in China. Do you agree this is the relationship between national interests and personal interests?

A. Yes, totally; B. Agree; C. Whatever; D. Disagree; E. Strongly disagree.

15. Do you think it is the practical significance of promoting the patriotic spirit that dares to consecrate and sacrifice even we are in a peaceful era?

A. Very significance; B. Comparative significance; C. Significance;

D. Not much meaning; E. Meaningless.

16. What do you think of the measures of strengthening the nationalism of athletes and coaching staffs? (multiple choices)

A. Set patriotic and political courses

B. Cultivate nationalism of players through social practice activities;

C. Set up forums and picture exhibition on nationalism education;

E. Through social media in campus, set up talks and club activities, etc.;

F. Use the leading role of the Party and League member;

G. Other_____.

Here is the end of the survey. Thanks again for your patient and assistance!

Appendix 2: In-depth Interview (Amateur Athletes)

1. Do you often play table tennis? Could you please tell us your experience on playing table tennis?
2. Why do you like to play table tennis? What do you do to improve your playing skills?
3. As a Chinese, do you love your country? If yes, please explain in details.
4. Do you pay attention to the table tennis competitions? Hearing the good records of Chinese players, will you be proud as a Chinese?
5. Do you agree that playing table tennis has influence on your nationalism? If yes, please explain in details.
6. As you said that playing table tennis has influence on your nationalism. Is there any other kind of sports has influence on your nationalism?
7. Besides technique and physical skills, do you think mental quality matters in table tennis sports?
8. By playing table tennis, what do you gain?
9. Through the perspective of amateur players, what do you think the effects made by the government on the sports education?
10. Does the government's policy and the work of all kinds of table tennis association do any help in your playing table tennis? If yes, please explain in details.
11. Recently, Liu Guoliang was appointed as the vice chairman of the Chinese Table Tennis Association instead of the head coach of China's National Team. What do you think of this transfer? Do you think it means that it will change from "the Whole Nation System of sports" to "marketing association or club mode"?
12. Do you think the post change of Liu Guoliang will have effects on the daily training and competition results of the China's National Team?
13. The post change of Liu Guoliang caused heat discussion in our country. Though this incident, what do you think about the relationship between national interests and person interests?

Appendix 3: In-depth Interview (Professional Athletes)

1. Do you often play table tennis? Are you a table tennis player or a retired one? Could you please tell us your experience on playing table tennis?
2. As a Chinese, do you love your country? If yes, please explain in details.
3. When you performed well in international competitions, did you think that you've won the glory for the country? Meanwhile, did you think it proud to be a Chinese?
4. Do you agree that playing table tennis has influence on your nationalism? If yes, please explain in details.
5. As you said that playing table tennis has influence on your nationalism. Is there any other kind of sports has influence on your nationalism?
6. During the competitions, which are the social factors that affect your mental state?
7. During the training and competitions, how do you adjust your mental state to overcome the difficulties?
8. Besides technique and physical skills, do you think mental quality matters in table tennis sports? If it is true that the core of sports education is patriotism education, and player's mental quality is enhanced by the patriotism education. And how do you think that the player's nationalism is enhanced in this process? Or can we say that the mental quality of Chinese table tennis players is strong enough to keep the good records?
9. Through the perspective of professional players, what do you think the effects made by the government on the sports education?
10. Is the establishment of nationalism influenced by the government's policy and the work of all kinds of table tennis association? If yes, please explain in details.
11. Recently, Liu Guoliang was appointed as the vice chairman of the Chinese Table Tennis Association instead of the head coach of China's National Team. What do you think of this transfer? Do you think it means that it will change from "the Whole Nation System of sports" to "marketing association or club mode"?
12. Do you think the post change of Liu Guoliang will have effects on the daily training and competition results of the China's National Team?
13. The post change of Liu Guoliang caused heat discussion in our country. Though this incident, what do you think about the relationship between national interests and person interests?

Appendix 4: In-depth Interview (Coaches)

1. How long have you been the coach of table tennis? Could you please tell us your experience on coaching table tennis?
2. Why do you like to coach table tennis? What do you do to improve your students' playing skills?
3. As a Chinese, do you love your country? If yes, please explain in details.
4. Do you pay attention to the table tennis competitions? Hearing the good records of Chinese players, will you be proud as a Chinese?
5. Do you agree that playing table tennis has influence on your nationalism? If yes, please explain in details.
6. Do you think that being the coach of table tennis enhances your nationalism? Is there any other kind of sports has influence on your nationalism?
7. Besides technique and physical skills, do you think mental quality matters in table tennis sports? How do you train and improve the mental quality of your students in daily training?
8. If it is true that the core of sports education is patriotism education, and player's mental quality is enhanced by the patriotism education. And how do you think that yours and your player's nationalism is enhanced in this process? Do all sports have influence on the nationalism of coaches and players?
9. Does the government's policy and the work of all kinds of table tennis association do any help in the training of players? If yes, please explain in details.
10. Through the perspective of coaches, what do you think the effects made by the government on the sports education?
11. Recently, Liu Guoliang was appointed as the vice chairman of the Chinese Table Tennis Association instead of the head coach of China's National Team. What do you think of this transfer? Do you think it means that it will change from "the Whole Nation System of sports" to "marketing association or club mode"?
12. Do you think the post change of Liu Guoliang will have effects on the daily training and competition results of the China's National Team?
13. The post change of Liu Guoliang caused heat discussion in our country. Though this incident, what do you think about the relationship between national interests and person interests?