

# The Thought on Square Dancing Heat in China

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**ABSTRACT.** According to statistics, in 2017, there were about 100 million square dance enthusiasts in China. With the continuous development of the national fitness heat, square dance has become a social and cultural phenomenon and is becoming increasingly popular. It is loved by the majority of the elderly and spreads rapidly. The development of square dance is closely related to the social environment and cultural needs. It not only is beneficial to the physical fitness and entertainment, but also has a deeper meaning in maintaining social harmony and stability and improving the aesthetics of the entire people. This article attempts to elaborate on the square dance risen in the past ten years, and analyzes it from four levels, namely national policy support, the artistic feature of square dance, the impact on the physical and mental health of the elderly, and the impact on society. The author also gives advice on the current situation of square dance, and makes predictions to the development and changes of square dance.

**KEYWORDS:** Square dance; Artistic feature; The elder dance

## 1. Introduction

With the development of Chinese society, the government has given more space for the development of folk and community art activities, and the demand for cultural life has increased. Against this background, square dance has emerged as the times require, and the problems caused by the imperfect management of square dance are also emerging too. In 2017, the General Administration of Sports issued the Notice on Further Regulating Square Dance Fitness Activities, which requires to standardize the national fitness activities. This article will start from the current situation of square dance, and analyze the development of square dance. Thereby, we can better understand the national fitness heat and the square dance. Healthy China 2030 outlines the deployment of universal healthy life, optimization of health services, and the construction of a healthy environment, and strives to make people healthy and improves the quality of life. From a national perspective, national fitness is a project that requires long-term adherence. Square dance is a form of improving the health of the entire population. As an important branch of the national fitness system, square dance is both performance and entertainment, integrating multiple functions such as art, sports, and entertainment. It has become a key component of the current community cultural activities and public art forms. It is important for the construction of urban spiritual civilization, a harmonious society, enriching the spiritual life. Square dance is a special phenomenon in contemporary society. It comes along with the social development and changes in the social environment. Today, it has become one of the most popular ways of fitness and entertainment. However, while paying attention to the square dance, people focus more on the objective influence of social environment. But there lacks adequate research on dance itself. Therefore, the artistic characteristics of square dance should be analyzed in depth to promote the innovation and healthy development of square dance.



Figure.1 Square Dance Competition (Picture from the Internet)



*Figure.2 Square Dance (Picture from the Internet)*

## **2. The Artistic Characteristics of Square Dance**

The nature of the square dance is a mass performance. Square dance is a social public art and community mass culture. Its form and content reflect the artistic characteristics of the public. It is mainly performed in parks and squares, so it is called “square dance”. Compared with other fitness activities, it does not have high requirements on physical condition and fitness. It is well liked by middle-aged and old people. Compared with other art forms, the current square dance requires fewer professional skills of dancers, and its artistic and aesthetic qualities are easy to understand. In terms of dance attributes, square dance is not restricted by dance types, and can be arranged individually or in group. In terms of movements and postures, square dance originates from life. Its movements and postures are relatively natural and simple, and it also has artistic value and beauty. It is a dance combination form that shows daily movements and postures in art forms.

In terms of performance content, square dance has the characteristics of self-entertainment and non-utility. Its performance content includes both traditional folk dances and social dances. It even includes Shuffle dance. But they all have one trait in common, which is that the content is simple and entertaining. In terms of background music, it is not restricted by music, but mainly by its rhythms.

In terms of square dance expression, compared with other dance types, the square dance is diverse and free, utilitarian and competitive. It is often shown in a group dance. The participation of the square dance is very high, and the number of participants is not limited. It may be as little as three or five people, or as many as several thousand. And the scale is relatively large. In terms of square dance performance venues, there are many choices. There is no obvious division of venues and areas, and the square dance venue can be shared with other fitness and entertainment activities.

There are a large number of square dance participants. These enthusiasts are all over China and they become the carrier and motivation for the spread of square dance. At the same time, the lack of related regulations and inadequate management, the square dance enthusiasts' behavior, the development of square dance is in struggle, suffering from controversies and questionings. In particular, accusations of noise are common. Therefore, the square dance “aunts” are scolded often. The main square dance enthusiasts, are verbal. The government are bothered too, and local governments have to implement some management programs and have introduced measures such as time limit and venue regulations to regulate the square dance. The policy makers need to have enough understanding of square dance, considering the development of square dance critically. The government should not only emphasize its strengths, but also take care of its weaknesses.



Figure.3 Square Dance on Tv (Picture from the Internet)



Figure.4 Square Dance App (Picture from the Internet)

### 3. The Influence of Square Dance on the Physical and Mental Health of Middle-Aged and Elderly People

Good health. Square dance is an entertainment and fitness activity that is not restricted by age and gender. It can make people exercise and cultivate their mental health. Square dance is a kind of aerobic exercise, which is different from the traditional fitness exercise and dance art. It has low exercise intensity, being easy with flexible participation. It is very suitable for middle-aged and elderly people. Middle-aged people are the backbone of the family, the work unit, and society. They are taking more and more responsibilities, and the number of sub-healthy people in the middle-aged population has increased year by year. The elderly not only shoulder the task of taking care of the third generation, but also take care of their own children. So, their health conditions cannot be ignored. Frequent square dances can prevent the occurrence of high blood sugar, high blood pressure, and high blood lipids. It can also improve the flexibility, coordination, and balance of the elderly and reduce the risk of falling.

Mental health. With aging, many retired elderly people begin to leave the society, and their children are also absorbed in their own family construction or career development. The children do not have enough time to accompany the elderly, therefore the elderly will become lonely. Feeling lonely, they need to have new activities to help them get rid of loneliness, to ensure that psychological problems will not occur. Middle-aged people are experiencing work, economic, social, and family pressures, and need to find a suitable way to release their emotions. Through the collective activity of square dance, the dance movements and the rhythm of music are merged, and the mood is positively affected. It can cultivate the confidence, strengthen good interpersonal relationships, and improve their social skills among middle-aged and elderly people. The square dance improved the happiness index of middle-aged and elderly people and effectively prevented the occurrence of depression.

### 4. The Impact of Square Dance on Society

Promote social harmony: With the continuous development of the economy and the society, people's pace of

life is getting faster and faster. Most office workers often work overtime, and there is less communication between neighbors. In addition, square dance is conducive to the establishment of harmonious social relations between retired and unemployed people, strengthens social solidarity, promotes living harmony, coordinating personal relations and maintaining vitality and passion. It can also alleviate the problems of social aging. China's population ageing is getting worse and worse. On October 18, 2017, President Xi Jinping pointed out in the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that the government should actively cope with population ageing.

The main conflict in an ageing society is the cost brought by physical and mental health of the elderly, the problem between raising children and pursuing career for the middle-aged, and the will to remain single among young people. The square dance can protect the physical and mental health of middle-aged and elderly people in a degree. It can mitigate the aging. It has promoted the development of social culture, art and Chinese traditional culture. With the well-developed square dance, the number of square dancers continues to increase, and the speed of the spread of the dance species accelerates, which has played a positive role in the spread of Chinese dance. Square dance competitions at all levels have been held successively throughout the country. And these competitions have promoted social entertainment culture to some extent.

The square dance can promote economic benefits. There are many square dance apps, such as Qiaqia Square Dance, Candy Bean Square Dance, Popcorn Square Dance and so on. According to the Daily Economic News report in 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, the square dance app has created over 100 million yuan. And the market has a promising future. According to Securities Times, in 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan, 2018, it reported that based on the large number of the elderly, the square dance economy supported by hardware, software and accessories can reach 2 billion. The traffic of live TV and internet square dances broadcast have also increased year by year. In addition, the population base of square dance has continuously expanded. So, the returns are going to be better, and the economic benefits will continuously develop.

## 5. Conclusion

The square dance is helpful to the physical and mental health of middle-aged and elderly people, and greatly solves the problems caused by the aging. Although some square dancers make noise which disturbs the people. The development of square dance is inseparable from the impact of society. It needs good policy guidance, perfect system to guarantee, and orderly environment. With the continuous improvement of people's quality, the gradual standardization of management and further guidance from government, square dance will continue to improve in the process in today's society. We should try to avoid disadvantages and promote the positive aspects. Square dance is unique in the society and has accumulated a huge group of enthusiasts, becoming a social and cultural phenomenon that attracted much attention. The square dance is a national sport that is worthy of people's respect that integrates fitness, art, entertainment, and personal interaction.

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