

Dragon Dance: Reintegrating a Traditional Chinese Sports Event in Physical Education Teaching

Chen Yanhong

Student, Adamson University

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the status of using dragon dance as a tool in teaching physical education at the College of Science and Technology of Jiangxi Normal University. The output proposed a strategic plan for the integration of dragon dance into physical education. This study was conducted in 2022/2023 academic year. The study purposively sampled two groups of respondents who are teachers and students belonging to the College of Science and Technology of the mentioned Chinese institution. The perceptions of both of the student-respondents on the integration of dragon dance in teaching physical education was assessed, with students' information interpreted quantitatively through the gathering of the responses of the students using survey questionnaire. The teachers were interviewed about their perception pertaining to integrating the dragon dance in teaching physical education. Hence, the study utilized the descriptive-comparative correlational research design. Based on the study findings, The students perceived dragon dance to be useful at a high level in its cultural significance, usefulness for physical health and wellness, and for social entertainment and leisure. Students assessed dragon dance to be high-level useful for creative and cultural value, physical education, and for its collaborative use with technology. Female students have higher level of perception in terms of social entertainment and leisure compared to male students. There are no significant differences in the students' assessment on the status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education among levels of age, sex, and year level in terms of usefulness to physical education, creative and cultural value, and collaborative use with technology. There are no significant relationships between the students' perception on dragon dance during sports events and status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education. Finally, the strategic plan for the integration of dragon dance into physical education aimed to improve courses, stimulate students' interest in dragon dance, adapt modern-day technology into dragon dance, use dragon dance to promote cultural value and significance, and to promote fitness and teamwork among students.

Keywords: Dragon dance, traditional Chinese sports, integration, cultural value

Introduction

The dragon dance is a traditional Chinese dance performance that is also known as “longwu” or “longdeng” (Meiyu, 2016). This unique cultural act involves a group of performers that gracefully maneuver a prepared dragon through the use of poles. This is commonly done in a few celebrations throughout the year, such as the well-known Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival in China. Furthermore, the celebration makes use of a dragon, which is believed in Chinese culture to represent power, strength, and

fortune. Thus, performing the dragon dance is further believed to repel or cast away evil spirits and draw in fortune and blessings. Due to the extensive significance that this event has on Chinese culture and representation, Chan (2020) has mentioned that some forms of dragon dance, like the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance in Hong Kong, are part of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This entails that this part of Chinese culture is actively being conserved and further promoted by political, cultural, and tourism organizations.

Despite understanding the significance that dragon dances have on Chinese culture, due to the popularization of Western culture, the celebration involving these have decreased (Yaohui, 2018). This then further negatively affects traditional sports in China as well as hinders the development of their traditional cultures in contemporary times. In addition to this, it is also mentioned that in campus culture, there are only a few academic institutions that perform dragon dances, with the popularity and individuals participating in these remaining low. Another study by Yuan and Peng (2021) had also mentioned that in current times when there are many changes occurring in social structures, many traditional practices face challenges, including cultural performance like the dragon dance. This then indicates that there is a need for government and cultural organizations to enrich and promote the conservation of this traditional practice through improving national policies, enhancing sports events, and further including dragon dance in campus sports and culture.

Integrating dragon dance in physical education is not just for the purpose of sports; moreover, it will help to build harmony among students and teachers. Building a harmonious campus is not only the foundation of building a harmonious society, but it is also an internal need to promote the comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable development of various undertakings in colleges and universities, as well as an important goal of college and university construction, reform, and development. As a result, creating a harmonic campus has become a new responsibility for schools and universities, with the creation of a harmonious campus culture serving as the key content. Understanding the importance of dragon dance in encouraging the development of harmonious campus culture in colleges and universities would serve to boost the school's sports work and enhance national unity, therefore fostering the development of a harmonious campus.

With understanding the information presented above, it can be understood that there is a problem existing between the incorporation of the traditional aspects of dragon dances in sports education to further celebrate, conserve, and embody these. It can also be seen that dragon dance is important as it is related to both material and spiritual Chinese culture. Hence, this study aims to contribute to providing a solution to this research gap by assessing the status of integrating dragon dance in teaching physical education and sports in Jiangxi Normal University. The study will then also look into the relationships between the perceptions of students in making use of dragon dance in teaching physical education and the status of this in schools. By doing so, it has the general goal of providing information on the current situation of incorporating dragon dance in Chinese campus culture. With this, the study then aspires to propose a plan on how to reintegrate dragon dance into the physical education curriculum to enhance the learning outcomes of students and as well as promote and conserve traditional Chinese culture.

Statement of the Problem

This study assessed the status of using dragon dance as a tool in teaching physical education at the College of Science and Technology of Jiangxi Normal University. The output of the study was to propose a strategic for the integration of dragon dance into physical education. This study was conducted in 2022/2023 academic year.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
 - 1.1. Sex,
 - 1.2. Age, and
 - 1.3. Year Level?
2. What is the perception of the student respondents on dragon dance during sports events in terms of:
 - 2.1. Cultural Significance,
 - 2.2. Physical Health and Wellness, and
 - 2.3. Social Entertainment and Leisure?
3. Is there a significant difference in the student respondents' perception on dragon dance during sports events when compared according to their demographic profile?
4. What is the status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education in terms of its:
 - 4.1. Usefulness to Physical Education,
 - 4.2. Creative and Cultural Value, and
 - 4.3. Collaborative Use with Technology?
5. Is there a significant difference in the status of the use of dragon dance for physical education when compared according to the demographic profile of the respondents?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the students' perceptions on dragon dance during sports events and the status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education?
7. What are the perceptions of teachers regarding integrating dragon dance into physical education teaching?
8. What plan can be proposed to enhance the integration of dragon dance for teaching physical education?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Cultural Significance

The Chinese dragon dance is understood to be a significant part of China's intangible heritage. A study by Choi, Couto, and Imon (2020) compared the attitudes and perspective of older and younger generations of attendees in dragon dance performances. It was found that older attendees were more interested in the event and valued the cultural contribution of festivals that included dragon dances. On the other hand, younger attendees needed persuading to participate in the event, further highlighting the need to integrate dragon dance into education and teaching as to encourage cultural appreciation, ensure inheritance, and safeguard the heritage.

Furthermore, another paper by Tan (2021) explained the cultural value and significance of Shaanxi folk dances, which include the Chinese dragon dance as well. One significance that these dances hold is their influence on cultural construction; contributing to the character, lifestyle, and material culture of the people practicing this culture. Then, dragon dance is also important to inherit as this contributes to nationalism and the development of positive national cohesion. Then, it is significant to conserve the

practice of the Chinese dragon dance as this will maintain cultural diversity and also protect the intangible cultural heritage of the Chinese people. Lastly, Chen (2022) has also found that intangible cultural heritage has a role in promoting tourism, which is that this enriches local cultural experiences and inspires future tourist visit intentions.

Social Entertainment and Leisure

In the case of social entertainment and leisure, many Chinese provinces make use of leisure sports for tourism development (Liu, Lai, & Yuan, 2020). Many of these make use of cultural resources to provide physical and mental pleasure to visitors, such as dragon dance, which further promotes tourism in rural areas of China. Furthermore, many traditional leisure sports like dragon dance, dragon boat racing, and Hydrangea throwing receive support from the government, schools, and other institutions for their organization and management as mentioned in a paper by Xu et al. (2020). This aid with organization allows rural village sports to revitalize and become popular, which were then also further explained to improve levels of competition and development of various activities. This information states that traditional leisure sports are widely being focused in Chinese society as these not only give economic benefit through tourism, but as well as allow rural villages to flourish while inheriting cultural traditions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive comparative -correlational approach as its research design. The quantitative approach aims to uncover how many individuals believe, behave, or feel in a particular manner. Particularly, a quantitative approach will be done when collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from the student respondents.

Sample and Sampling Technique

For the sample of the study, the selected student-respondents from the College of Science and Technology at Jiangxi Normal University will be assessed on their perceptions on the use of dragon dance in teaching physical education.

Table 1 Population and Sample

Respondents	Population	Sample	Percentage
Male	358	135	60%
Female	178	90	40%
Total	536	225	100%

This college has a total population of 536 students, but using raosoft calculator, the study will include a 50% response distribution. Hence, 225 students will be involved in the sample of the study. This sample size was then determined as it accepts a 5% margin of error while maintaining a 95% confidence level. For the criteria of the students, they must be currently enrolled at Jiangxi Normal University during the second semester school year and mid-year term of school year 2022 – 2023; and the student respondents must belong to the College of Science and Technology.

For teacher respondents, 10 of these will be carefully selected by the researcher from the College of Science and Technology. For their selection criteria, they must be a current faculty or staff at the College of Science and Technology in Jiangxi Normal University. They may either be from the administrative

office or teaching staff of the said college. It is also required from the researcher that both students and teachers have knowledge about dragon dance and have participated in events involving this in the past as the questions of the study center on their perspectives and experiences on this.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

1. Profile of the Respondents

Out of 225 student-respondents, the results show that majority or 59.1% of the student-respondents are male, while 92 (40.9%) of them are females. In terms of age, majority or 52.9% of the respondents are 19 years old, and based on the respondents' year level, majority of them are sophomores (53.8%).

2. Perception of the Student Respondents on Dragon Dance During Sports Events

Based on the the perception of the students on dragon dance during sports events, the students perceived it to be useful at a high level (3.03). The highest ranked dimension is its high level of usefulness in cultural significance (3.18), this is followed by high level of usefulness for physical health and wellness (2.98), and high level of usefulness for social entertainment and leisure (3.03).

3. Significant Difference in the Student Respondents' Perception on Dragon Dance During Sports Events When Compared According to Their Demographic Profile

There are no significant differences on the students' perception on dragon dance during sports events in terms of cultural significance, physical health and wellness, and overall perception among levels of age, sex, and year level. Similarly, there are no significant differences on the students' perception on dragon dance during sports events in terms of social entertainment and leisure among levels of age and year level.

4. Status of the Use of Dragon Dance for Teaching Physical Education

Based on the status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education, its usefulness for creative and cultural value is ranked at high level with a mean of 3.25; followed by its usefulness to physical education (3.09), and its collaborative use with technology (2.83) which is also at a high level. Overall, the students assessed the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education to be at a high level (3.06).

5. Significant Difference in The Status of The Use Of Dragon Dance for Physical Education When Compared According to The Demographic Profile Of The Respondents

There are no significant differences in the students' assessment on the status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education among levels of age, sex, and year level in terms of usefulness to physical education, creative and cultural value, and collaborative use with technology.

6. Significant Relationship between The Students' Perceptions on Dragon Dance during Sports Events and The Status of The Use of Dragon Dance for Teaching Physical Education

There are no significant relationship between the students' perception on dragon dance during sports events and status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education.

7. Perceptions of Teachers Regarding Integrating Dragon Dance Into Physical Education Teaching

Challenges emerge in the process of teaching the dragon dance within educational institutions. A shortage of qualified instructors poses a potential obstacle, potentially affecting the effectiveness of teaching and training. Additionally, issues related to curriculum design, student engagement, and the availability of resources need to be addressed to maximize the impact of the dragon dance integration. To overcome these challenges, universities should prioritize recruiting and training skilled instructors, refining the curriculum to resonate with students, and ensuring ample resources for optimal practice.

Conclusion

1. Out of 225 student-respondents, majority are males, 19 years old, and mostly sophomores.
2. The students perceived dragon dance to be useful at a high level in its cultural significance, usefulness for physical health and wellness, and for social entertainment and leisure.
3. Female students have higher level of perception in terms of social entertainment and leisure compared to male students. Meanwhile, there are no significant differences on the students' perception of dragon dance during sports events in terms of cultural significance, physical health and wellness, and overall perception among levels of age, sex, and year level.
4. Students assessed dragon dance to be high-level useful for creative and cultural value, physical education, and for its collaborative use with technology.
5. There are no significant differences in the students' assessment on the status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education among levels of age, sex, and year level in terms of usefulness to physical education, creative and cultural value, and collaborative use with technology.
6. There are no significant relationships between the students' perception on dragon dance during sports events and status of the use of dragon dance for teaching physical education.
7. The integration of the dragon dance into higher education exemplifies the harmonious blend of cultural heritage, physical well-being, and student engagement. This dynamic fusion bridges tradition and modernity, offering students not only a chance to enhance their physical fitness and teamwork but also a deeper connection to their cultural roots.
8. The strategic plan for the integration of dragon dance into physical education aims to improve courses to stimulate students' interest in dragon dance, adapt modern-day technology into dragon dance, use dragon dance to promote cultural value and significance, and to promote fitness and teamwork among students.

Recommendations

1. Investigate effective strategies to train and equip qualified dragon dance instructors with both technical proficiency and effective teaching skills.
2. Develop a comprehensive curriculum that integrates historical context, cultural significance, and artistic nuances to make dragon dance education engaging and adaptable.
3. Explore innovative promotional techniques, such as social media campaigns, workshops, and community collaborations, to raise awareness and generate interest in dragon dance among students.
4. Research funding avenues and partnerships to secure necessary resources, including dedicated training spaces, authentic costumes, and equipment, to support the successful implementation of dragon dance programs.
5. Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the lasting impact of integrating dragon dance on students' physical fitness, teamwork skills, cultural awareness, and overall well-being, contributing to the preservation of traditional culture and broader educational goals.

Proposed Plan

This study assessed the status of using dragon dance as a tool in teaching physical education at the College of Science and Technology of Jiangxi Normal University. The output of the study was to propose a strategic for the integration of dragon dance into physical education.

Table 17 Strategic Plan for the Integration of Dragon Dance into Physical Education

Areas of concerns (based on the lowest mean value per indicators in the tables)	Rationale/ Objectives	Activity/ Strategy	Target Schedule	People Involved	Budget	Expected Outcome
Low assessment on courses and lack of interest	Improvement of courses to stimulate students' interest in dragon dance.	Curriculum Development: Make changes to the curriculum to reflect the current situation of physical education.	2024/2025 academic year	P.E students, P.E teachers, Deans curriculum makers, officials in ministry of education, athletes, sports enthusiasts, dragon dance aesthetes	Meetings and Discussions =3,000 RMB	Improved curriculum that reflects the modern-day needs of the students in P.E and stimulates their interest in dragon dance.
Use of modern-technology in teaching and learning dragon dance	Adaptation of Modern-Day Technology into Dragon Dance	Inculcate modern technologies for training, learning, teaching, and performing dragon dances since technology attracts the	2024/2025 academic year	P.E students, P.E teachers, Dean of PE Dept.	Tech Adaptation =8,000 RMB	Utilization of technology in dragon dance performances and learning.

		viewership and participation of millennials and Gen-Z who need more involvement in dragon dance.				
For the promotion of cultural value	To use Dragon Dance to Promote Cultural Value and Significance	Allot time for dragon dance performances in school events and out of school programs so as to enrich the students' attention to the traditional Chinese culture.	School Year 2023/2024	Deans, PE teachers, PE students, other sports teachers, event organizers	Dragon Dance Performers =3,000 RMB	Enhance cultural value and significance of dragon dance
For the promotion of physical fitness and teamwork	To promote fitness and teamwork among students	Encourage learning and participation in dragon dance classes since it helps to build teamwork and coordination among students.	School Year 2023/24	Deans, PE teachers, PE students, other sports teachers.	Dance Training =5,000 RMB (EST)	Improved teamwork and physical fitness and wellness of students.

	TOTAL				19,000	
					RMB	

The strategic plan for the integration of dragon dance into physical education aims to improve courses to stimulate students' interest in dragon dance, adapt modern-day technology into dragon dance, use dragon dance to promote cultural value and significance, and to promote fitness and teamwork among students.

Dragon dancing's moderate exercise intensity strikes a balance, allowing students of varying fitness levels to participate and reap its benefits. This inclusive nature ensures that every student can improve their physical well-being regardless of their starting point. Moreover, the teamwork intrinsic to dragon dance cultivates interpersonal skills, as participants synchronize their actions and movements, fostering cooperation, communication, and collaboration among students. Incorporating dragon dance into physical education not only enhances physical fitness but also introduces an enjoyable and culturally rich activity that can stimulate students' interest and motivation to stay active.

Moreover, reintegration of dragon dance into the physical education subject may contribute to the promotion of Chinese traditional culture and increase engagement in sports. The integration of dragon dance into physical education holds immense value as a means to highlight and preserve Chinese culture. Dragon dance, being an integral part of China's intangible cultural heritage, finds its true essence when it is embraced and practiced within the educational context. Its presence in physical education classrooms serves as a powerful tool for the inheritance and development of this unique tradition. The intricate artistry of dragon dance, deeply rooted in Chinese folklore, reflects the diverse regional flavors of the country. Each locality boasts its own distinct dragon dance characteristics, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity for educators to convey the richness of this cultural heritage.

REFERENCES

1. Chen, L., Liu, Y., Zuo, T., Meng, T., Xu, Y., Luo, P., & Huang, M. (2022). Teaching Practice of Dragon and Lion Dance in Colleges and Universities with the Support of Big Data Technology. *Wireless Communications and Mobile Computing*, 2022.
2. Chen, Z. (2022). Visualizing experiencescape—from the art of intangible cultural heritage. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(4), 559-578.
3. Choi, S. H., Couto, U. S., & Imon, S. S. (2020). Resident attendees of Macao's Drunken Dragon Festival: a cluster analysis. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 11(3), 375-393.
4. Liu, Y., Lai, L., & Yuan, J. (2020). Research on Zhanjiang's Leisure Sports Tourism Development Strategy in Coastal Recreational Areas. *Journal of Coastal Research*, 111(SI), 248-252.
5. Tan, B. (2021). Thoughts on the Inheritance of Shaanxi Folk Dance in Universities. *The Educational Review, USA*, 5(7), 208-212.
6. Xu, S., Luo, G., Xie, Y., & Liang, J. (2020). Research on the Influence of Systematization Degree on the Rise and Fall of Minority Village Sports.