

Research on the Paths of Integrating Chinese Sports Spirit into Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: In the current complex educational landscape characterized by the intertwining forces of globalization and digitalization, ideological and political education in higher education institutions faces practical challenges, including singular approaches to value dissemination and difficulties in translating learning into behavioral changes among students. The Chinese Sports Spirit, a cultural essence forged through the long-term sports practices of the Chinese nation, advocates values such as striving for excellence, adherence to rules, and teamwork. These principles demonstrate a high degree of inherent compatibility with the goals of ideological and political education. Grounded in the theory of "all-round human development," this study systematically analyzes the intrinsic connections, contemporary relevance, and integration pathways between the Chinese Sports Spirit and ideological and political education in universities. It proposes a new two-way integrated educational paradigm through a four-dimensional approach: restructuring curriculum and teaching; infusing campus culture; expanding practical platforms; and improving institutional safeguards. This research aims to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

Keywords: Chinese Sports Spirit; ideological and political education in higher education institutions; research on pathways; cultural integration; educational mechanism

Introduction

Amid social transformation and evolving educational environments, ideological and political education in higher education institutions must break through the limitations of traditional theoretical indoctrination methods and explore more impactful and effective educational pathways. The Chinese Sports Spirit, with its inherent striving ethos, respect for rules, and team spirit, provides rich cultural resources and methodological insights for this endeavor. Research on integrating the Chinese Sports Spirit into ideological and political education in universities not only responds to contemporary demands for innovative educational vehicles but also represents an essential requirement for deepening the educational philosophy of "integrating knowledge with action" and promoting students' all-round development. By analyzing the intrinsic logical connections between these two domains and examining the contemporary value of their integration, this paper ultimately aims to construct systematic implementation pathways, thereby providing theoretical foundation and practical framework for optimizing the educational system in higher education institutions.

1. The Intrinsic Connection between Chinese Sports Spirit and Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions

1.1 The Connotation and Essence of Chinese Sports Spirit

The Chinese Sports Spirit is a synthesis of values and spiritual pursuits forged through the long-term sports practices of the Chinese nation. Its connotation and essence transcend the mere competitive level, sublimating into a cultural philosophy and behavioral norm of universal significance. From a philosophical perspective, it embodies the traditional thoughts of "vigorous action" and "harmony between man and nature," emphasizing the individual's relentless self-cultivation to achieve harmony and unity of body and mind. In the value dimension, it advocates an enterprising consciousness of transcending oneself and pursuing excellence, containing a reverence for rules and

order, as well as the collectivist ethos of unity and cooperation, respect for opponents, and the concept of fair competition. This spirit closely links the individual's physical shaping with character cultivation, becoming a dynamic, embodied carrier of moral education, with its core lying in achieving the tempering of the spirit and the perfection of personality through physical practice, thereby providing unique spiritual resources for the all-round development of the individual.

1.2 The Core Objectives of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions

Ideological and political education in higher education institutions is a systematic and forward-looking educational activity. Its core objective lies in guiding college students to develop comprehensive qualities that align with societal development trends and the progress of human civilization. This process focuses on fostering a sound personality structure in students, cultivates their capacity for rational thinking and value judgment, and stimulates their intrinsic moral sensibilities and sense of social responsibility. Its target extends beyond mere knowledge transmission to the shaping of worldview, philosophy of life, and values, committed to cultivating mature individuals who can achieve self-realization, possess humanistic care, and courageously undertake social responsibilities. Within this framework, the effectiveness of education is ultimately reflected in the enrichment of students' inner spiritual world and the refinement of their external behavioral patterns, emphasizing the unity and coordinated development of multiple dimensions including knowledge, emotion, will, and action^[1].

1.3 The Theoretical Foundation of Their Compatibility

The intrinsic connection between the Chinese Sports Spirit and ideological and political education in higher education institutions is rooted in their shared theoretical foundation of "all-round human development." Human existence constitutes a unity of physiological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, making it difficult for any single-dimensional education to achieve genuine educational purposes. Ideological and political education in universities focuses on ideological guidance, moral cultivation, and value shaping, belonging to the realm of "spiritual cultivation." In contrast, the Chinese Sports Spirit utilizes physical activities as a vehicle to transform abstract qualities such as perseverance, striving, cooperation, and respect for rules into embodied and perceptible behavioral experiences, falling within the domain of "physical cultivation." Both operate upon the same subject, mutually reinforcing the holistic improvement of individual qualities from the two dimensions of inner thought and outward behavior. The sports spirit provides a vivid and profound practical annotation for ideological and political education, while ideological and political education imbues the sports spirit with higher-level value orientation. Thus, they form a dialectical relationship of complementarity and reinforcement in their educational functions.

1.4 The Practical Manifestation of Intrinsic Connections

In practical educational activities, the intrinsic connection between these two domains demonstrates multidimensional practical manifestations. The requirement to abide by rules and accept referee decisions in competitive sports represents concrete practice of the spirit of rule of law and contractual consciousness within micro-level contexts; the emphasis on tactical coordination and collective honor in team sports effectively cultivates collectivist concepts and collaborative skills; maintaining composure and engaging in reflection when facing victories or defeats genuinely embodies resilience training and rational attitudes. These repeatedly reinforced behavioral patterns and value orientations within sports contexts demonstrate a high degree of isomorphic correspondence with the social norms, civic virtues, and psychological qualities advocated by ideological and political education. By utilizing sports as a dynamic practical platform, ideological and political education in higher education institutions can transform abstract values into action directives that students find easier to accept and more willing to participate in, thereby achieving effective transformation of educational content from cognitive understanding to identification, and from emotional acceptance to behavioral implementation, ultimately enhancing the vibrancy and effectiveness of the educational process.

2. The Contemporary Value of Integrating Chinese Sports Spirit into Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions

2.1 The Practical Demands of Ideological and Political Education in the New Era

The macro-environment and micro-foundation of contemporary ideological and political education in higher education institutions are undergoing structural evolution. The dual waves of globalization and digitization have not only expanded students' cognitive horizons but also introduced challenges including the diversification of values and the fragmentation of information choices. Within this context, traditional educational models relying on theoretical explanation and classroom instruction demonstrate certain limitations in guiding students to achieve value identification and behavioral transformation. Students' cognitive habits now lean more toward embodied participation, situational experience, and autonomous construction, which necessitates innovation in the discourse system and communication paradigms of ideological and political education^[2].

This demand for innovation points toward a re-examination of educational carriers and methods. The educational process needs to transition from one-dimensional knowledge transmission to multi-dimensional literacy construction, particularly requiring effective media that can connect with students' life experiences and stimulate their intrinsic motivation. An ideal educational carrier should integrate cultural depth, emotional warmth, and practical strength, capable of transforming abstract value principles into perceptible, comprehensible, and actionable daily logic. Therefore, exploring and integrating such inspiring and operable educational resources has become a crucial pathway for enhancing the affinity, targeting, and effectiveness of ideological and political education, representing an inherent requirement for its adaptation to contemporary development.

2.2 The Contemporary Significance of the Chinese Sports Spirit

As an enduring cultural gene, the Chinese Sports Spirit has experienced significant expansion and deepening of its significance in contemporary society. It no longer merely represents value norms within the competitive arena but has evolved into a social culture and life philosophy with universal referential meaning. Its advocated enterprising consciousness of transcending the self and pursuing excellence highly aligns with the era of innovation-driven development's call for individual agency and creativity; its inherent spirit of the rule of law, which respects rules and fair competition, forms the cornerstone for the orderly operation of modern civil society; its collectivist ethos emphasizing teamwork and sharing weal and woe constitutes an essential core competency for addressing increasingly complex systemic challenges.

More profoundly, the sports spirit's emphasis on physical-mental harmony and willpower accurately responds to contemporary society's deep concern for individual physical-mental health and all-round development. Under fast-paced, high-pressure living conditions, the qualities of perseverance, optimism, and resilience inherent in sports activities form crucial psychological capital and spiritual bulwarks for individuals. This elevates the Chinese Sports Spirit beyond the scope of mere physical education, sublimating it into a contemporary wisdom concerning character building, lifestyle, and value choices, thereby providing profound meaningful support for its integration into broader educational fields.

2.3 The Multidimensional Value of Integration Work

The systematic integration of the Chinese Sports Spirit into ideological and political education in higher education institutions can generate synergistic multidimensional value. From the micro-level perspective of individual development, this integration realizes the embodiment and contextualization of educational influence. Within the authentic and challenging context of sports activities, students internalize rule awareness, temper their willpower, and acquire collaborative skills through firsthand experience, thereby effectively bridging the gap between moral cognition and moral behavior and promoting the formation of a personality trait characterized by the unity of knowledge and action. This constitutes a subtle and imperceptible process of internalizing literacy^[3].

Examining the meso-level of campus culture, the infusion of the sports spirit can greatly enrich and activate the connotation and forms of campus culture. The value elements it advocates, such as vitality, health, fairness, and striving, contribute to creating a positive, uplifting, open, inclusive, and dynamic campus cultural atmosphere. This cultural environment not only enhances students' sense of collective

belonging and honor but also functions as an implicit educational force, continuously nurturing and guiding students' behavioral choices and value orientations. It effectively complements explicit ideological and political education courses, jointly constructing a comprehensive cultural field for education.

2.4 The Contemporary Manifestation of Educational Function

Through organic integration, the inherent educational function of the Chinese Sports Spirit becomes fully activated and manifested within the contemporary higher education context. Its educational effectiveness directly enhances the core competencies students require to navigate future society. For instance, the striving spirit of pursuing excellence forges students' innovative DNA, characterized by courage to explore and rejection of mediocrity; the sense of fairness rooted in rule adherence solidifies their legal literacy and contractual consciousness as modern citizens; while the collaborative mutual assistance in team sports directly cultivates the communication skills and leadership essential in a highly interconnected society.

Confronted with the uncertainties and challenges of future society, the resilient psychological qualities, positive and optimistic mindset, and strong resilience cultivated through students' long-term engagement in sports activities constitute crucial safeguards for their sustainable career development and personal well-being. Therefore, the integration of the Chinese Sports Spirit essentially involves its systematic transformation from a potential cultural resource into a vibrant educational force that directly contributes to the cultivation of students' comprehensive qualities. This approach not only strengthens the practical orientation of ideological and political education but also prominently demonstrates its unique contemporary value in cultivating modern talents with sound character, robust spirit, and exceptional competence^[4].

3. Pathways for Integrating Chinese Sports Spirit into Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions

3.1 Curriculum and Teaching Integration Pathway

As the primary channel for fostering virtue and cultivating talents, curriculum teaching serves as the core domain for the knowledgeable and systematic dissemination of the Chinese Sports Spirit. Its integration pathway should transcend simple content addition, striving instead for deep integration within the existing framework of ideological and political theory courses. For example, within teaching modules addressing outlooks on life and values, classic discourses and philosophical connotations from the Chinese Sports Spirit concerning striving, perseverance, and self-transcendence can be systematically introduced, elevating them from the level of behavioral norms to the height of value concepts. Through theoretical analysis, students can be guided to understand its profound connections with cultural traditions and modern society. This integration requires teachers to possess interdisciplinary knowledge and the ability to accurately identify logical convergence points between the sports spirit and the theoretical knowledge points of ideological and political education^[4].

To achieve deep integration, it is necessary to further develop specialized and modular auxiliary teaching resources. A series of micro-courses or thematic lectures can be designed around themes such as "Awareness of Rules and Modern Society," "Team Collaboration and Leadership," and "Perspectives on Success/Failure and Mental Health," combining typical cases from the sports domain with universal life issues. Regarding teaching methods, the adoption of case analysis, situational simulation, and value clarification methods should be advocated. These methods guide students to cognitively understand, comprehend, and identify with the values embodied in the sports spirit through critical thinking, thereby unifying the explicit objective of value guidance with the implicit goal of quality cultivation within the main curricular channel.

3.2 Campus Culture Integration Pathway

Campus culture, with its unique pervasive and immersive qualities, provides fertile ground and broad space for cultivating the Chinese Sports Spirit. Its construction pathway should focus on transforming elements of the sports spirit into visible, perceptible, and participatory campus cultural symbols and activity systems. Through various channels including campus landscape design, communication vehicles (such as university media and online platforms), and ceremonial activities

(such as opening ceremonies and award ceremonies), value concepts related to the sports spirit should be continuously disseminated to create a campus cultural atmosphere that celebrates sports, respects striving, and promotes health, thereby allowing students to be subtly influenced within their daily environment.

Branded campus sports cultural activities serve as effective carriers for conveying and transmitting the sports spirit. Higher education institutions should consciously provide cultural enrichment to traditional sports events, focusing not only on competitive results but also emphasizing their underlying educational significance. This can be achieved through methods such as establishing a "Sports Ethics Award" and sharing stories of athletes' perseverance, thereby strengthening the educational function of these events. Simultaneously, innovative creation of campus cultural festivals, forums, or workshops themed around the sports spirit can be pursued, inviting sports figures to share insights and encouraging student clubs to organize creative activities around relevant themes. This forms a multi-level, three-dimensional activity matrix, thereby extending the cultivation of the sports spirit from the sports field to the entire campus life and constructing a vibrant cultural educational environment with clear value orientation^[5].

3.3 Practical Education Integration Pathway

The Chinese Sports Spirit is fundamentally a philosophy of action, whose essence can only be fully comprehended and internalized through embodied practical experience. Therefore, constructing diversified platforms for practical participation is crucial. Higher education institutions should systematically plan and expand the scale and quality of sports-related student clubs and societies, supporting them in conducting daily training, competitive exchanges, and thematic activities. This enables these organizations to become micro-level entities where students autonomously practice the sports spirit and achieve self-education and peer motivation. Through firsthand participation in these self-organized activities, members can most profoundly appreciate the true meaning of teamwork, the weight of responsibility, and the necessity of rule constraints.

The construction of practical pathways must also break through campus boundaries to explore open models that integrate social resources. Institutions can organize students to observe high-level sports events in an orderly manner, guiding them to examine the event organization, spectator etiquette, and athlete performance from a cultural perspective, followed by writing observation reports and conducting discussion sessions. Furthermore, social research projects or volunteer service activities related to the sports spirit should be designed, encouraging students to engage deeply with communities and sports institutions to investigate the role of sports in social governance, public health, and youth education. Such social practices prompt students to connect the abstract sports spirit with the broader social landscape, allowing them to verify, reflect upon, and sublimate its value connotation through service and research, thereby completing the progression from perceptual cognition to rational identification, and ultimately to the sublimation of social responsibility.

3.4 Mechanism Safeguard Integration Pathway

Sustainable integration work relies on a sound mechanism safeguard system, which forms the foundational support for ensuring the smooth operation and long-term effectiveness of all pathways. The primary task is to establish a cross-departmental collaborative linkage mechanism that breaks down functional barriers between ideological and political education and systems such as physical education teaching, student affairs, and logistical management. This can be achieved by forming specialized working groups or establishing regular joint meeting systems to coordinate the planning of integration objectives, content, and plans, clarify the rights and responsibilities of all parties, achieve information exchange and resource integration, and ultimately form a synergistic educational force where all parties share responsibility^[6].

Scientific evaluation incentives and professional development safeguard mechanisms are crucial for driving the continuous deepening of this work. It is necessary to research and develop a set of evaluation indicator systems capable of reflecting the effectiveness of integrating the Chinese Sports Spirit. This system should incorporate both process and outcome evaluations, focus on positive changes in students' values, behavioral patterns, and mental outlook, and utilize evaluation results for feedback and work optimization. Simultaneously, it is essential to strengthen the integrative capacity building of the teaching faculty. By organizing interdisciplinary teaching research activities, specialized training, and experience exchange sessions, we can enhance the understanding and application ability of

ideological and political theory course teachers and physical education teachers regarding each other's fields of knowledge. This will cultivate a group of key teachers who can consciously and effectively achieve the integration of both domains, thereby providing solid talent support for the long-term implementation of the integration pathways.

Conclusion

This study, through systematically demonstrating the intrinsic connections, contemporary value, and integration pathways between the Chinese Sports Spirit and ideological and political education in higher education institutions, constructs a four-dimensional integration model. This model positions curriculum teaching as the core guide, campus culture as the immersive carrier, practical platforms as the extension and expansion, and mechanism building as the sustainable safeguard. It emphasizes the organic unity of theoretical cognition and behavioral cultivation: curriculum teaching achieves the systematic transmission of value concepts; campus culture creates a subtle educational atmosphere; practical platforms facilitate embodied experience and internalization; and institutionalized safeguard mechanisms ensure the continuous deepening of the integration process. This multi-level, three-dimensional integration pathway can effectively overcome the disconnection between knowledge and action often found in traditional ideological and political education, achieving a positive interaction between value guidance and behavioral shaping.

Future research should further focus on three dimensions: first, in-depth exploration of differentiated implementation strategies for different types of higher education institutions, particularly designing customized plans for specialized institutions versus comprehensive universities; second, constructing a scientific evaluation system for integration effectiveness, establishing quantifiable and trackable outcome assessment indicators; third, exploring new models where digital technology enables the integration process, researching how to use emerging technologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence to create immersive educational scenarios. Through such deepened research, the integrated practice of the Chinese Sports Spirit and ideological and political education will be continuously advanced towards refinement and scientific development, ultimately establishing a new pattern of higher education that embodies Chinese characteristics and meets the demands of the times.

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