

Mechanisms and Pathways for Empowering the Cultivation of Chinese National Community Consciousness in Universities through Sports Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract: Universities play a pivotal role in fostering Chinese national community consciousness. The utilization of sports intangible cultural heritage to promote the development of united front education in universities has emerged as a critical issue in the field of educational united front work in the contemporary era. This study offers a systematic analysis of the intrinsic mechanisms by which sports intangible cultural heritage contributes to cultivating Chinese national community consciousness within university settings. It underscores the significant role of sports intangible cultural heritage in enhancing cultural identity, evoking emotional resonance, and nurturing a spirit of unity and cooperation. Additionally, the study suggests practical approaches in areas such as curriculum design, campus cultural activities, and faculty development, providing theoretical insights for local universities to further their efforts in advancing united front education.

Keywords: Sports intangible cultural heritage; Chinese national community consciousness; Universities; Pathways

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1. Introduction

The cultivation of Chinese national community consciousness is a core task of the Party's ethnic work in the new era and a key element in advancing high-quality development within university united front work ^[1]. National policies such as the "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage" and the "Guiding Opinions on Sports Promoting the Solidification of the Chinese National Community Consciousness" have shifted sports culture from a purely competitive expression to a vital medium of cultural identity and national unity. As a central hub for knowledge innovation and talent development, universities play a crucial

role in fostering national identity, cultural awareness, and a sense of responsibility in young students. Sports intangible cultural heritage, an essential aspect of China's traditional culture, is characterized by distinct rituals, ethnic features, and physical practices. Through collective participation and physical engagement, it strengthens emotional bonds and promotes national identity^[2-3]. In terms of enhancing individuals' understanding, recognition, and engagement with traditional culture, sports intangible cultural heritage subtly contributes to this process^[4]. Especially within universities, it integrates into campus life through classroom teaching, cultural activities, clubs, and festivals, effectively stimulating students' emotional connection with Chinese culture and deepening their understanding of the Chinese nation's diverse yet unified structure, thereby fostering and solidifying community consciousness.

However, the functional development of sports intangible cultural heritage in universities still faces significant challenges, including unclear educational pathways, insufficient integration of university and local resources, low student engagement, and traditional dissemination methods. These issues urgently require systematic research and resolution. While Previous studies have explored the relationship between sports and the consolidation of Chinese national community consciousness, they tend to treat sports as a generalized concept, often overlooking the specific role of sports in intangible cultural heritage^[5-6]. This heritage is not only a physical activity but also a living tradition that carries historical memories and cultural codes, the educational values of which remain underexplored. Furthermore, most research focuses on social or regional levels, with a lack of systematic analysis on how sports intangible cultural heritage can contribute to cultivating community consciousness among university students.

This study, therefore, focuses on sports intangible cultural heritage, analyzing its mechanisms for empowering the cultivation of Chinese national community consciousness in universities. The study also explores practical pathways for integrating sports intangible cultural heritage into university settings, aiming to provide theoretical insights for local universities to advance their united front education efforts.

2. Empowerment mechanisms of sports intangible cultural heritage in cultivating Chinese national community consciousness in universities

2.1. Stimulating cultural identity

Cultural identity is central to the Chinese national community consciousness^[7]. Sports intangible cultural heritage, with its unique cultural appeal and deep historical roots, effectively fosters university students' sense of connection to Chinese national culture. University students, at a critical stage in the development of their values and cultural identity, are characterized by curiosity and a desire for exploration. Activities within sports intangible cultural heritage, such as various forms and routines in Chinese martial arts, as well as traditional ethnic sports like horse racing and archery, capture students' attention and ignite their interest in ethnic culture. As students explore the historical origins, cultural meanings, and processes of inheritance and development of these traditions, they begin to recognize the vast depth and diversity of Chinese culture, thereby enhancing their identification with both their own ethnic culture and the collective culture of the Chinese nation. For example, learning Tai Chi enables students not only to master traditional martial arts techniques but also to deepen their understanding of the philosophical concepts embedded in Tai Chi.

2.2. Evoking emotional resonance

Sports intangible cultural heritage often embodies the emotional memories and values of various ethnic groups,

and can evoke emotional resonance among university students, strengthening their sense of belonging to the Chinese nation ^[8]. Many sports intangible cultural heritage projects are closely tied to traditional ethnic festivals and celebratory events, creating a rich cultural atmosphere. For instance, Dragon Boat races during the Dragon Boat Festival are not just sporting events but also a tribute to the patriotic poet Qu Yuan, infused with national sentiment ^[9]. When university students participate in these races, they directly engage with this vibrant cultural experience and gain an appreciation for the patriotic spirit and national values it embodies, thereby fostering emotional resonance. This emotional connection enables students to deeply recognize their identity as members of the Chinese nation, reinforcing their sense of belonging.

2.3. Cultivating the spirit of unity and cooperation

Many projects within sports intangible cultural heritage, such as dragon and lion dancing, tug-of-war, and others, require close coordination and collaboration among team members to succeed. Engaging in the teaching and practical activities related to these projects in universities effectively fosters students' spirit of unity and cooperation, promotes interaction among students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and strengthens the foundation for consolidating Chinese national community consciousness. During team activities, students must communicate, coordinate, and work together to overcome challenges and accomplish tasks. In this process, students from different ethnic groups develop mutual understanding and trust, break down ethnic barriers, and form lasting friendships. For instance, in organizing a dragon dance team, students from various ethnicities take on different roles—such as the head, body, and tail of the dragon—and must continuously adjust and train together to achieve synchronized movements. Through this experience, students not only enhance their teamwork abilities but also facilitate cultural exchange and emotional integration among ethnic groups, gaining a deeper appreciation of the importance of unity and collaboration across all ethnicities, thereby reinforcing their consciousness of the Chinese national community.

3. Paths for empowering the cultivation of Chinese national community consciousness in universities through sports intangible cultural heritage

3.1. Integration path within the curriculum system

Universities should, based on their unique circumstances and local ethnic cultural characteristics, develop targeted and systematic courses on sports intangible cultural heritage. The curriculum can be divided into two main components: theoretical and practical courses. Theoretical courses should introduce the history, cultural connotations, classification features, and the current status of protection and inheritance of sports intangible cultural heritage, enabling students to gain a comprehensive understanding. Practical courses, on the other hand, focus on students learning and mastering the techniques of sports intangible cultural heritage projects. Through hands-on practice and training, students can directly engage with and appreciate the cultural heritage. For example, practical courses in martial arts, dragon and lion dancing, and traditional ethnic fitness routines can be offered, with professional inheritors or experienced instructors guiding students to ensure they learn the techniques correctly. In designing the course content, it is essential to integrate sports intangible cultural heritage projects with modern sports education principles, tailoring the teaching content and methods to students' physical conditions and interests to enhance the course's appeal and effectiveness.

Moreover, ideological and political education should be integrated into the teaching of sports intangible cultural heritage courses. Instructors should explore the ideological and political elements embedded in these

projects, such as patriotism, collectivism, ethnic unity, and cultural confidence, and subtly weave them into various aspects of the curriculum. For instance, in martial arts instruction, teachers can highlight the historical role of martial arts in defending the nation and resisting foreign invaders, stimulating students' patriotic feelings. In teaching traditional ethnic sports, instructors can emphasize the shared history of ethnic groups in creating and inheriting sports intangible cultural heritage through cultural exchange and integration, fostering students' awareness of ethnic unity and cultural confidence. Additionally, instructors should focus on enhancing their own ideological and political qualities, leading by example and guiding students to develop correct values and perspectives on ethnicity.

3.2. Pathways for campus cultural activities

Universities should actively organize a range of sports intangible cultural heritage-themed events to provide students with platforms for showcasing their skills and exchanging ideas, thereby sparking their interest and enthusiasm for participating in such activities ^[9]. These events could feature various sports intangible cultural heritage projects, such as university-wide martial arts competitions and dragon and lion dance contests. In organizing these events, attention should be given to their standardization and entertainment value, including the formulation of clear competition rules and the establishment of diverse awards to attract more student participation. Additionally, professional judging panels could be invited to ensure fairness and impartiality in the competitions. The events could also be paired with cultural exhibitions. For example, a dedicated exhibition area for sports intangible cultural heritage could be set up at the event site, displaying relevant historical artifacts, photographs, traditional clothing, and props, enabling students to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of sports intangible cultural heritage while enjoying the competitions.

Moreover, to offer students a more direct experience of the charm of sports intangible cultural heritage, universities can organize a variety of hands-on activities. For example, workshops can be arranged where sports intangible cultural heritage practitioners teach skills on-site, allowing students to create traditional sports equipment, such as embroidered balls. Universities can also host folk culture experience activities related to sports intangible cultural heritage, where students wear traditional ethnic costumes and participate in traditional games and activities, such as jumping the bamboo pole or playing "Touhu", thus immersing themselves in the cultural customs of various ethnic groups. Additionally, modern technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) can be used to create immersive sports intangible cultural heritage experiences, allowing students to feel as if they are traveling through time and space to experience the allure of ancient sports culture.

3.3. Pathways for building the teaching staff

Universities should prioritize the development of specialized teachers in sports intangible cultural heritage, enhancing their professional skills and teaching capabilities through various means ^[10]. On one hand, universities can send teachers to domestic and international academic conferences, training programs, workshops, and other events to keep them informed about the latest research and developments in the field of sports intangible cultural heritage, broadening their academic perspectives. For example, universities can organize teachers' participation in national academic conferences on sports intangible cultural heritage to foster exchanges and learning with both domestic and international experts and scholars. Teachers can also be sent to inheritance bases for practical training, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the current status of these heritage projects and learn through hands-on teaching experiences. On the other hand, universities can encourage teachers to engage in

research projects related to sports intangible cultural heritage, improving teaching quality through research. Special research funds can be established to support teachers in areas such as the protection and inheritance of sports intangible cultural heritage, exploration of its cultural meanings, and innovation in teaching methods. Additionally, universities can invite experts and scholars in the field to deliver lectures and provide guidance, encouraging collaborative research with internal faculty to enhance research capabilities and professional expertise.

Introducing inheritors of sports intangible cultural heritage into university teaching is a crucial step in enriching teaching resources and improving teaching quality. As direct inheritors, these individuals possess substantial practical experience and advanced skills. Universities can invite them to campus, either through part-time teaching roles or other arrangements, to offer courses and lead practical sessions. During teaching, these inheritors can impart their years of accumulated experience and unique skills to students, providing them with an in-depth understanding of sports intangible cultural heritage knowledge and techniques. Furthermore, these inheritors can share their personal stories and experiences in the process of inheritance, helping students appreciate the significance and value of preserving cultural heritage, thus fostering a sense of responsibility for safeguarding ethnic culture. Universities can also collaborate with inheritors on teaching, research, and curriculum development, jointly writing textbooks and syllabi with local characteristics and practical guidance, promoting the standardization and scientific advancement of sports intangible cultural heritage education.

4. Conclusion

This paper systematically analyzes the mechanisms through which sports intangible cultural heritage fosters Chinese national community consciousness in universities. The paper highlights its significant role in stimulating cultural identity, evoking emotional resonance, and nurturing the spirit of unity and cooperation. Furthermore, the paper proposes practical pathways in areas such as curriculum systems, campus cultural activities, and teaching staff development, offering theoretical guidance for local universities to advance their united front education efforts.

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