

A Study on the Effects of Practicing Wushu on the Physical and Mental Health of Teenagers from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

Sile Wang^{1,2*}

¹ School of Physical Education, Anqing Normal University, Anqing, China

² Graduate School, Gyeongnam University, Changwon, Korea

Email Address

394816089@qq.com (Sile Wang)

*Correspondence: 394816089@qq.com

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Abstract:

A strong young generation brings a nation's lustihood. The establishment of the patriotism-centered national spirit and the physical and mental health of teenagers is the prerequisite of the future success, which are the main objectives and tasks of contemporary education. This article presents a brief review of current situation of cultivating Wushu in young generation, and then the data collected by literature review, on-the-spot investigation and expert interviews have been examined. The results show that practicing Wushu can help young people develop good living habits while achieving physical fitness; Wushu training can help young people develop good character qualities and promote the mental health. Suggestions: standardize the content of Wushu teaching in elementary and secondary schools; develop the value of wushu education; carry out Wushu publicity activities; "Holistic Education" - strengthen the skill training of Wushu teachers and improve their knowledge of Wushu. It is hoped that this article can provide reference for the better development of Wushu in the elementary and secondary schools stages and the further exertion of the active role of Wushu on the healthy development of teenagers.

Keywords:

Cultural Confidence, Wushu Practice, Physical and Mental Health, Teenagers

1. Introduction

Culture is the soul of a country and a nation. Without a high degree of cultural confidence and cultural prosperity, there would be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Xi Jinping pointed out: "Cultural self-confidence is more basic, broader, and deeper self-confidence." [1] As the foundation of the country, culture provides a steady stream of energy for national development and social progress. One of the important reasons why the Chinese nation is able to maintain its own right direction is that more than 5,000 years of profound history and culture provide us with spiritual guidance, which makes us more confident. As a representative of the five

thousand years of Chinese culture, Wushu has the value functions of self-defense, fitness, health preservation, and cultivation of the mind. It is the product of the development of Eastern culture over thousands of years. The future of the motherland depends on the physical and mental health of teenagers as the foundation for national rejuvenation. Xi Jinping once proposed to establish the educational concept of “Health First”. While cultivating teenagers’ professional cultural knowledge and skills, elementary and secondary schools must attach importance to their physical and mental health. Although schools, society, and families pay more and more attention to the physical and mental health of teenagers, the current state of physical and mental health of teenagers is still not optimistic. Therefore, actively promoting teenagers to maintain physical and mental health has become an important reform direction and focus of current elementary and secondary school education. Promoting the development of Wushu on the campuses is not only conducive to promoting the excellent Chinese traditional culture and revitalizing the national quintessence, but also further enriching the content of Wushu teaching in schools and strengthening youth exercise. Therefore, based on the status quo of the development of Wushu, this article explores the positive effects of the physical and mental health of teenagers practicing Wushu, so as to promote the better development of Wushu in elementary and secondary schools, so as to inspire national spirit and consolidate cultural self-confidence.

2. Current Status of the Development of Wushu in Elementary and Secondary Schools

Wushu emphasize both internal and external work. It represents the spirit of continuous self-improvement of the Chinese nation and has a broad mass and development foundation in the whole society. Therefore, there are endless calls for popularizing Wushu education on campus. But at present, in elementary and secondary schools, the situation of Wushu is nominal and not optimistic.

The article “Research on the Innovation and Development of School Wushu Education” found that most of the school students’ attitude towards Wushu is “like Wushu but don’t like Wushu class”; the proportion of teachers in Wushu majors is extremely small, less than 30%; and 70.3% of the schools did not offer Wushu courses, but opened taekwondo and Wushu projects in other countries. [2]

Cinematographic and television works of Wushu have changed the audience’s perception of Wushu. Before learning Wushu, people generally held admiration and respect for Wushu, but after the actual learning, their attitudes will change, resulting in Wushu classes not being welcomed by students on campus. In the 1960s, the Chinese school Wushu syllabus clearly included Wushu as one of the school sports, stipulating that school Wushu should be taught in accordance with the actual situation. In 1997, the “Chinese Wushu Rank System” was formulated and promulgated, which clearly stipulated the detailed rules for the approval, assessment, and grade standards of Wushu. In 2000, the “Guiding Outline of Wushu and Health Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools” “clearly made Wushu as one of the items of teaching in elementary and secondary schools” [3]. In 2007, the “Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Strengthening Juvenile Wushu and Strengthening the Physical Fitness of Teenagers” pointed out that strengthening the physical fitness of teenagers is related to the future of country and nation, and further clarified the national standards for Wushu classes in elementary and secondary schools. In 2014, the “The Promotion of Wushu Rank

System” plans to realize that more than 60% of elementary and secondary schools across the country will carry out the Wushu rank system into campuses and classrooms by 2020. However, there are still some problems when Wushu enter campuses: “At present, the development of Wushu in elementary and secondary schools is good, but it still needs to be popularized.” [4]. Although some elementary and secondary schools take Wushu as their main course, fewer young people take part in Wushu sports outside class; there are also fewer schools carry out campus Wushu publicity activities, which has not formed a good atmosphere of Wushu movement. Teenagers’ interest in Wushu movement has not been effectively cultivated, and their understanding of the connotation and positive role of Wushu movement is insufficient.

3. The Effect of Wushu on the Physical and Mental Development of Teenagers

The sudden COVID-19 has led to economic downturns around the world, and the national systems and comprehensive capabilities are facing a major test. China swiftly stopped the spread of the epidemic, which embodies Chinese wisdom, and entering the post-epidemic era has strengthened the strategic importance of Chinese cultural self-confidence. As one of the outstanding Chinese cultural representatives, Wushu has been trusted by people since ancient times, and its fitness and self-defense values are beyond doubt. Cultivating the personality charm of teenagers is the pursuit of today’s young Wushu practitioners. Due to various factors, the current physical and mental health of teenagers needs to be improved. On the one hand, in recent years, many Chinese adolescents have failed to meet the standards for their physical fitness and health indicators, and they have suffered from obesity, overweight, low blood sugar, thinness, and multiple diseases, and even sudden deaths during long-distance running. On the other hand, due to academic pressure and the influence of the social environment, adolescents have frequent psychological problems, prone to anxiety, depression and other unhealthy emotions, and some also have abnormal psychological behaviors. If psychological problems cannot be solved in time, it may lead to serious consequences, and may affect the formation of adolescents’ healthy personality and their long-term development in the future. By consulting related literature and research practice, and conducting interviews with school Wushu teachers, students and related research scholars, the author summarized the positive effects of Wushu on the physical and mental health of teenagers, including the following aspects.

3.1. Promote the Development of Good Exercise Habits and Enhance Physical Fitness

As a traditional event, Wushu has accumulated a deep national cultural essence and has a strong sense of identity. On the one hand, as a collection of sports events, Wushu are rich in content, diverse in forms, and have low requirements for venue equipment. It is suitable for young people with different physical conditions and sports levels to participate. In Wushu teaching, coaches usually emphasize “morality” and “persistence”, which means that Wushu not only uphold personal morality, but also pay special attention to persistence in training. However, an important reason for the poor physical health of young people is that they have not developed good exercise habits. Teachers lack the correct cognition of Wushu, and fail to bring Wushu into the classroom, family and extracurricular. “Interest is the best teacher”. Interest is also a direct source of motivation for people to take the initiative to carry out an activity. Wushu teaching in elementary and middle schools has problems such as

backward methods and unattractive teaching content, which fails to stimulate students' interest in learning. Therefore, the development of Wushu in elementary and secondary schools can enrich the teaching content, expand the training methods of teenagers, stimulate sports interest, and cultivate sports habits. The goal requirements of "high, difficult, beautiful, and new" have led to Wushu exercises that have a high degree of appreciation, and the amount of exercise can be controlled by the teenagers, which has a good fitness effect.

3.2. Promote the Mental Health of Teenagers

Under the influence of environment and study pressure for a long time, individual teenagers will have depressive mood or abnormal behavior. Therefore, when the negative emotions appear, teenagers need to take a reasonable way to adjust, timely restore the emotional and psychological balance. American scholar Cox has theoretically explained that wushu training has positive effects on people's mental and physical health, and pointed out that long-term wushu training affects the mechanism of mental and physical health. Yin Hengchan and Chen Shu and other experimental intervention to elementary school students, found that such as Wushu, rope skipping and other sports to the physical and mental health of elementary school students and mental health has a significant role in promoting [6,7]. In the process of practicing Wushu, teenagers can transfer their attention and release pressure through the teaching methods of coaches. For example, Tai Chi, which emphasizes even breathing, has slower movements, and the training features and breathing rhythm of qigong (Eight-Section Brocade Exercise, Five-Animal Exercise) , which is also a form of Wushu, are even, and the breath is guided by the mind, very similar to the physical relaxation therapy in psychology, it can relieve the anxiety and tension of teenagers. On the other hand, the cultural value of wushu is profound, such as "the unity of knowledge and practice", "the combination of external and internal cultivation", "the combination of form and spirit" and other cultural values. In the process of practicing, teenagers can feel the connotation of wushu imperceptibly, thus their outlook on life, values to get sublimation, improve personal cultivation and resist bad information and temptation ability.

Wan Yu, Yan Jun, Qin Jianbo and others believe that Qigong exercise can promote students' mental health. This result is consistent with the viewpoint of this article. The reason may be that Wushu training program is characterized by strength, softness, rigidity and spirit. During the exercise, the accumulated bad emotions can be released through practice, and the tense and negative emotions can be gradually forgotten; with the increase of training years, the development of good Wushu training habits is more conducive to the establishment of a reasonable time allocation for young people. Through the training and improvement of mentality and ability, we cultivate healthy and sunny contemporary teenagers.

3.3. Develop a Good Character of Adolescent

"Not afraid of hard, not afraid of tired, sweat and blood to adhere to training," this is a Wushu coach often said the slogan. It can be realized that the most fundamental function of wushu training is to cultivate students' perseverance and willpower. The students with excellent character are also excellent in their study and life. Good character is the key to the success of contemporary adolescent in their studies. At present, some adolescent have weak anti-frustration ability, weak psychological pressure ability, and weak willpower. Develop good Wushu habits, so that adolescent

can develop their own perseverance mentality and will, but also improve self-confidence and self-esteem. In addition, as an excellent traditional Chinese culture, the intrinsic value of Wushu includes the positive enterprising, indefatigable, brave and tenacious qualities. Therefore, adolescent's participation in long-term Wushu helps to develop good character qualities, improve their competitive awareness, dare to challenge difficult problems, and cultivate perseverance, aggressiveness, and courageous struggle.

4. Countermeasures to Promote the Development of Martial Arts in Primary and Secondary Schools

4.1. Standardize the Content of Wushu Teaching in Elementary and Secondary Schools

Whether the implementation of Wushu curriculum is standardized or not will directly affect the future development of campus wushu. At present, a large part of the elementary and secondary school campus Wushu curriculum chaotic and arbitrary, no standard outline and lesson plan. In view of the above phenomena, it is suggested that Tai Chi, Primary Long Punch, Five-Step Routine, Juvenile Boxing and Wushu Rank Boxing should be taken as the main courses for one semester. Set up the outline and check the lesson plan in time, adopt the teaching method from simple to difficult step by step. From the basic hand type, the basic step type, the basic skill movement, the single movement, the combination movement, then to the brief Wushu routine movement, gradually increases the difficulty, has the step to carry on the teaching systematically and purposefully. One side, it can improve the students' cognition and interest in wushu, and promote the healthy development of young people. The other side, it can enrich the methods and means of wushu teaching in elementary and secondary schools, enhance the teachers' ability to understand wushu, promote the students' value to the connotation of Chinese Wushu culture, and further promote the development of wushu on campus.

4.2. Carry Forward the Value of Wushu Education and Actively, Carry out Wushu Publicity Activities

Jaspers pointed out in "What is Education": "Our moral and spiritual future, as well as the value of national existence, are in our own hands. Therefore, the most meaningful thing the country can do is still education". [11] Through extensive publicity, the influence of Wushu in middle and elementary schools can be further expanded, so that it can be inherited and developed for a long time. This requires the attention of school leaders and teachers' active promotion of Wushu. For example, in the classroom, teachers can popularize the chivalry, martial ethics, etiquette and excellent Wushu film and television works contained in Wushu; carry out various group activities such as school Wushu competitions, Wushu cultural festivals, collective Wushu performances, and Wushu interest groups to attract active youth participate; actively encourage and support the establishment of youth Wushu teams, Wushu performance teams and other clubs in elementary and secondary schools; class teachers guide students to organize Wushu activities to create a strong school Wushu atmosphere.

4.3. Strengthen the Training of Wushu Teachers, Improve their Wushu Knowledge Level

Jaspers believes that professional training is only one aspect of education, training for specific occupations that require specialized knowledge and skills. The “Holistic education” not only needs professional skills, but also overall knowledge [12]. Encourage teachers to improve their skills and tie the class Wushu skills to the teacher’s promotion. An important restricting factor of Wushu in elementary and middle schools is the shortage of professional teachers. Therefore, for one thing, increase the positions of Wushu teachers in the recruitment of Wushu teachers in elementary and secondary schools; for another, introduce professionals with Wushu backgrounds or Wushu professors as part-time teachers.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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