

# A Study on the Impact of Dragon and Lion Dance Instruction on Adolescents' Awareness of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Sports



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**Abstract:** As a sports non-heritage program, dragon and lion dance is of great significance to the youth's recognition and inheritance of sports culture. This paper analyzes the influence of dragon and lion dance teaching on the youth's knowledge of non-heritage sports. It reveals its positive role in enhancing cultural cognition, promoting the development of sports skills, cultivating social skills, and stimulating the awareness of inheritance and innovation. To promote the popularization and development of the dragon and lion dance among young people, we can build an all-round and multi-level teaching and practice system by focusing on policy leadership, teacher training, teaching mode innovation, social support, and cooperation. The implementation of these strategies can not only enrich the sports and cultural life of young people, enhance their physical quality and cultural self-confidence, but also effectively promote the living inheritance of sports non-heritage culture, and inject youthful vigor into the promotion and development of Chinese outstanding traditional culture. The teaching of dragon and lion dance, as a link between the past and the future, has inestimable value for the comprehensive development of youth and cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** dragon and lion dance; youth; traditional sports; intangible cultural heritage; cultural inheritance

## Introduction

Sports intangible cultural heritage is an important part of national culture, carrying a deep historical heritage and national spirit. As the future and hope of the country, the knowledge and attitude of young people towards sports intangible cultural heritage are directly related to whether these cultural heritages can be passed on in a living state and sustained development. Therefore, in the fast-changing modern society, how to effectively pass on these valuable cultural heritages and revitalize them in the youth group has become an urgent problem to be solved. Dragon dance and lion dance are some of the treasures of traditional sports non-heritage in China. Exploring the path of integrating dragon dance and lion dance into pro-youth sports teaching can not only enhance

young people's understanding of and interest in sports non-heritage but also stimulate their sense of inheritance, to make the continuation and innovation of these ancient sports skills in the younger generation.

## 1. Cultural Connotation and Social Function of Dragon and Lion Dance

Dragon and lion dance has rich cultural connotations. Dragon dance symbolizes auspiciousness and power, the dragon body winding, clouds and fog, implying the wind and rain, the country and the people in peace, is the people's wish for a better life and the worship of the power of nature. The lion dance is modeled after the mighty lion, showing the lion's courage and agility through vivid movements such as jumping and rolling, winking and flinging the tail, symbolizing the expulsion of evils and avoidance of harm, good luck, and sending people's wishes for good luck and

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disaster relief. In terms of social function, dragon and lion dances are not only an indispensable folkloric performance in festivals but also a reflection of community cohesion and cultural identity. During traditional festivals such as the Spring Festival and the Lantern Festival, dragon and lion dance teams travel through the streets and alleys with the sound of gongs and drums and laughter, which not only adds to the festive atmosphere but also promotes exchanges and mutual assistance among neighbors. In addition, dragon and lion dances also undertake the important mission of cultural inheritance, passing on skills and spirit from generation to generation through master and apprentice and word of mouth, so that young people can feel the charm of traditional culture and cultivate their love and respect for national culture through participation, thus upholding and promoting the excellent traditional Chinese sports culture in the context of globalization.

## **2.The Current Situation of Dragon and Lion Dance Teaching**

The current teaching of Dragon and Lion Dance is developing in parallel with the inheritance and innovation, and its teaching content covers basic movement training, routine choreography, drumming cultural theory learning, etc., aiming at comprehensively improving students' skill level and cultural literacy. In terms of teaching methods, both traditional oral teaching and modern technological means such as video teaching have been incorporated to enhance the fun and interactivity of teaching. The participation and interest of young people in dragon and lion dance has shown a positive trend, especially after the Ministry of Education included dragon and lion dance in the compulsory education curriculum, which further stimulated the enthusiasm of young people to learn. Take Tongqin Town Central Primary School in Wuyi County, Zhejiang Province as an example, the dragon and lion dance club class has become a popular choice, with more than 150 students actively participating in it, which demonstrates the youth's strong interest in traditional

culture and willingness to inherit. At the same time, the challenge of standardization and individualization of teaching is still significant, and the question of how to maintain the traditional essence while adapting to the learning needs of different students has become an urgent issue to be solved. There are also regional differences in the development of dragon and lion dance programs, with some remote areas or urban schools having difficulties in effectively teaching dragon and lion dance due to limitations in teachers' qualifications and venues.

## **3. The Influence of Teaching Dragon and Lion Dance on the Cognition of Non-heritage in Youth Sports**

### **3.1 Enhancement of cultural cognition and sense of pride**

The far-reaching impact of dragon and lion dance teaching on youth sports non-heritage cognition is mainly reflected in the significant enhancement of their cultural cognition and sense of pride. Through the systematic study of the historical origin, cultural connotation, and artistic characteristics of dragon and lion dance, young people can not only deeply understand the backstory of this traditional sports program, but also deeply appreciate the national spirit and cultural values contained therein (Zhou et al., 2023). In the process of participating in the practice, every dancing dragon body and jumping lion shadow is a vivid interpretation of traditional culture, so that young people can feel the profundity of Chinese culture in their personal experience. This kind of immersive cultural learning greatly enhances the youth's sense of identity and pride in local culture, prompting them to become active disseminators and guardians of traditional culture, and injecting fresh blood and strong impetus into the living inheritance of sports non-legacy. Through the teaching of dragon and lion dance, young people not only learn the skills but also plant the seeds of cultural confidence deep in their hearts and minds, laying a solid foundation for building a strong cultural country.

### **3.2 Promote the development of sports skills and**

### physical quality

The teaching of dragon and lion dance plays an indispensable role in promoting the development of physical skills and physical quality among young people. This traditional sport requires participants to have high physical coordination, flexibility, and endurance. During the dragon dance, young people need to master the complex movements of the dragon's body such as undulating and flipping, which not only exercises their muscle strength and body control but also greatly improves their sense of balance and spatial perception. The lion dance, on the other hand, further strengthens the youth's explosive force, agility, and flexibility by imitating various movements of the lion, such as jumping and tumbling (Wang & Xue, 2020). Long-term adherence to dragon and lion dance training has significantly enhanced the cardiorespiratory function of adolescents and improved their physical fitness level as a whole, laying a solid foundation of physical fitness for their healthy growth. More importantly, the learning and enhancement of these sports skills inspired the youth to love and pursue sports, cultivated the habit of lifelong exercise, and contributed to the youthful power of building a healthy China. In this process, the teaching of dragon and lion dance, with its unique charm, has become an effective way to improve both the awareness and physical fitness of youth sports non-heritage.

### 3.3 Cultivate teamwork and social skills

The teaching of dragon and lion dance shows unique advantages in cultivating the social skills of young people. Although this traditional sport emphasizes teamwork, it also provides a wide range of social platforms for young people on an individual level. In the process of learning and performing dragon and lion dances, young people need to communicate and cooperate with peers and coaches from different backgrounds. This cross-disciplinary interaction not only hones their communication skills but also teaches them how to respect others and understand differences in a diverse environment. By participating in cultural activities together, young people can build deep friendships, broaden their

social circles, and enhance their social adaptability. In addition, dragon and lion dance performances often attract a large number of spectators, and young people learn how to express themselves confidently in front of the public while displaying their skills, which is beneficial to improving their social self-confidence and public speaking ability (Liu & Luo, 2024). Therefore, the teaching of dragon and lion dance is not only the teaching of sports skills but also an important way to cultivate the social skills of adolescents, which lays a solid foundation for their overall development.

### 3.4 Stimulate the sense of inheritance and innovation

The teaching of dragon and lion dance plays a key role in stimulating young people's awareness of the inheritance and innovation of intangible cultural heritage in sports. Through learning this ancient and vivid sports program, young people not only deeply understand the historical culture and folklore's significance behind it, but also are attracted by its unique artistic charm, thus developing a strong interest in traditional culture and a sense of responsibility for protection and inheritance (He et al., 2024). In the teaching process, young people are encouraged to make innovative adaptations of traditional routines, incorporating modern elements or personal style, which not only preserves the traditional flavor of dragon and lion dance but also gives it a new vitality. This kind of fun and educational approach not only exercises the creativity and imagination of young people but also cultivates their innovative thinking based on respect for tradition. In the practice of dragon and lion dance, young people gradually realize that they are both inheritors and creators of culture, and this dual identity awareness greatly inspires their enthusiasm and determination for the inheritance and innovation of sports, injecting youthful vitality into the sustainable development of the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

## 4. Paths for Sustained Promotion of the Popularization and Development of Dragon and

## Lion Dance Teaching in Youth Sports

### 4.1 Policy leadership and curriculum integration

To promote the popularization and development of dragon and lion dance teaching in youth sports, the first task is to strengthen policy leadership and curriculum integration. The education department should issue a clearer guiding policy to formally incorporate traditional sports non-heritage programs such as dragon and lion dances into the school sports teaching system as compulsory or elective courses, to ensure their status in youth education. At the same time, in conjunction with the requirements of the Compulsory Education Curriculum Program and Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition), the teaching content of dragon and lion dance is standardized and designed to retain its traditional essence while adapting to modern educational needs. In terms of curriculum integration, the interdisciplinary integration of dragon and lion dance with other subjects can be explored, such as combining with music to create music of dragon and lion dance with local characteristics; and combining with history and geography to tell the regional culture and historical stories behind the dragon and lion dance. In addition, schools should be encouraged to develop school-based teaching materials, closely integrate the teaching of dragon and lion dance with local characteristics and culture, and form a unique physical education curriculum, to stimulate students' interest in and love for traditional sports non-heritages, and to lay a solid policy and curriculum foundation for the popularization and development of the dragon and lion dance among young people (Yang, 2024). In addition to being part of the school physical education curriculum and allowing students to learn the basic skills and cultural connotations of dragon and lion dance in physical education classes, the dragon and lion dance program can also be incorporated into the extracurricular activity system, and dragon and lion dance clubs or interest groups can be set up to provide students with more practice opportunities. At the same time, in the campus cultural festival and other activities, set up a dragon and lion dance performance link, so that

students can experience the charm of traditional culture in the display, and enhance cultural self-confidence. This initiative not only enriches campus cultural life but also effectively promotes the knowledge and inheritance of sports non-legacy among young people and contributes to the promotion of Chinese outstanding traditional culture. Through policy leadership and curriculum integration, it can not only enhance the systematic and standardized teaching of dragon and lion dance but also effectively promote the youth's cognition and inheritance of sports non-heritage, contributing to the passing on of Chinese excellent traditional culture.

### 4.2 Teacher training and professional certification

The construction of teachers and the improvement of professionalism are the keys to continuously promoting the popularization and development of dragon and lion dance teaching in youth sports. To cultivate more dragon and lion dance teachers with professionalism and teaching ability, a multi-level and multi-channel teacher training system should be established. On the one hand, higher education institutions can offer dragon and lion dance majors or related courses to cultivate professionals with profound theoretical foundations and rich practical experience; on the other hand, existing physical education teachers can be trained in dragon and lion dance skills through training courses and workshops to enhance their teaching and instructing abilities. At the same time, it is crucial to establish a professional certification system for dragon and lion dance teachers. Through the development of scientific certification standards and assessment processes, teachers' professional skills, teaching methods, cultural inheritance ability, and other aspects of a comprehensive assessment to ensure that each teacher engaged in the teaching of dragon and lion dance has the appropriate qualifications (Zhu et al., 2024). Professional certification can not only effectively guarantee the quality of teaching, but also enhance the sense of professional honor and social recognition of teachers, thus attracting more excellent talents to devote themselves to the cause of dragon and lion dance

education. In addition, teachers should be encouraged and supported to participate in academic research and exchange activities of dragon and lion dance, constantly update teaching concepts, explore innovative teaching methods, apply the latest research results in teaching practice, promote teaching with scientific research, bring scientific research with teaching, and form a virtuous circle. Through the dual drive of teacher training and professional certification, it will provide solid talent support for the popularization and development of dragon and lion dance teaching in youth sports, and help the inheritance and innovation of Chinese excellent traditional culture.

#### 4.3 Innovative teaching mode and means

In the process of continuing to promote the popularization and development of dragon and lion dance teaching in youth sports, innovative teaching modes and means are an important way to stimulate young people's interest in learning and enhance the teaching effect. Modern information technology, such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and other high-tech means, should be fully utilized to create an immersive learning experience, so that young people feel as if they were in the lively atmosphere of the traditional festivals, and experience the charm of dragon and lion dance. Through digital teaching resources, such as online video tutorials and interactive simulation software, the limitations of time and space are broken to make learning more flexible and convenient and to meet the learning needs of different young people. At the same time, educators should also explore the "online + offline" hybrid teaching mode, online theoretical learning and demonstration of basic movements, while offline focus on practical guidance and teamwork training, to realize the organic combination of theory and practice. In the teaching process, game elements are introduced, such as designing challenging tasks and competitions on the theme of dragon and lion dance, to increase the fun and interactivity of learning, and to stimulate the enthusiasm of young people to participate. Through interdisciplinary fusion teaching, combining dragon

and lion dance with dance, music, fine arts, and other art disciplines to create new and unique performance forms will broaden the artistic horizons of young people and cultivate their comprehensive literacy. Based on the innovative teaching mode, schools can also build cultural bases for dragon and lion dances. These bases can not only serve as a place for teaching and practice but also display the history and culture of the dragon and lion dance and organize exhibition activities, so that young people can experience and learn deeply in an immersive environment, further promoting the inheritance and development of this non-heritage project (Wu & Lu, 2024). Through continuous innovation of teaching mode and means, the teaching of dragon and lion dance will gradually be close to the life of young people, more in line with their learning habits and points of interest, to effectively promote the widespread popularization and in-depth development of this traditional sports non-heritage program among young people.

#### 4.4 Social support and cooperation

Continuously promoting the popularization and development of dragon and lion dance teaching in youth sports cannot be separated from extensive social support and cooperation. The government should increase its support for dragon and lion dance and other sports non-heritage programs, provide policy guidance, financial support, and venue protection, and create a good external environment for youth to participate in dragon and lion dance learning. At the same time, all sectors of society, including enterprises, social groups, and non-profit organizations, are encouraged to actively participate in the promotion and practice of dragon and lion dance education in the form of sponsorship, cooperation, and volunteer services, to form a diversified support system led by the government and involving the society. Schools and communities should strengthen the linkage and jointly build a practical platform for teaching dragon and lion dance. Schools can make use of community resources, such as cultural centers and stadiums, to carry out off-campus practice activities, invite folk artists to campus, perform and teach dragon and lion dance, and let students experience the charm of traditional culture up close (Gao & Zhang, 2024). The community, on the other hand, can rely on the school faculty to organize dragon and lion dance training



courses, cultural festivals, and other activities to attract more youth and families to participate, and promote the dissemination and inheritance of dragon and lion dance culture in the community. In addition, the media should give full play to their communication advantages and increase publicity for the teaching of dragon and lion dance through a variety of channels, such as television, the Internet, and social media, to show the achievements of young people in learning dragon and lion dance and tell the stories behind them, to enhance the public's awareness of and concern for the culture of dragon and lion dance, and to create a good atmosphere for the whole society to care about and support young people's participation in the learning of dragon and lion dance. By strengthening social support and cooperation, and gathering the strength of all parties, we will jointly promote the popularization and development of the teaching of dragon and lion dance in youth sports, so that this traditional sports non-heritage project will shine more brightly in the new era.

#### Conclusion:

The teaching of dragon and lion dance has a far-reaching and positive impact on the awareness of youth sports non-heritage, which not only enhances the cultural awareness and pride of youth, but also promotes the overall development of their sports skills and physical fitness, cultivates teamwork and social skills, and stimulates the sense of inheritance and innovation. Looking ahead, it is recommended that the dragon and lion dance be further integrated into the education system, and be incorporated into the school physical education curriculum, extracurricular activities, and campus cultural festivals to form a regularized teaching and practice mechanism. This will not only provide young people with more opportunities to contact and inherit traditional culture but also enhance their cultural self-confidence and sense of national identity subtly, contributing to the cultivation of a new era of young people with a deep cultural heritage and all-around quality. As a treasure of Chinese excellent traditional culture, the dragon and lion dance will surely take on new vitality and vigor in the inheritance and innovation of young people.

#### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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