

Challenges Confronting Local Vocational Colleges in Ethnic Traditional Physical Education and Strategies

Guo long Yin

Heyuan Polytechnic, Heyuan, Guangdong, 517000

Keywords: *higher vocational colleges, ethnic traditional sports, physical education*

ABSTRACT The paper investigated the current situation of ethnic traditional physical education based on a questionnaire survey among six higher vocational colleges in the northeast of Guangdong province, in combination with the advanced experience of traditional sports development in other areas and expertise in this field, to analyze the challenges confronting local higher vocational colleges in ethnic traditional physical education and the causes, and propose strategies from the perspective of teaching qualification, funds, management and the concept of industrialization development put forward the corresponding countermeasure as a reference for the development and spread of ethnic traditional sports in higher vocational colleges.

1. Introduction

As an important part of sports culture, ethnic traditional sports offer a distinct perspective to understand social and cultural life, with national and traditional characteristics [1]. The principle of local higher vocational colleges, “based on local to serve the local”, helps incorporate the ethnic traditional sports into physical education in school, which not only enriches the curriculum but also boosts interests among students in sports cultural activities, thus promoting the pass of traditional culture and the development of local sports industry as well as local social and economic development. Therefore, local higher vocational colleges should attach great importance to the development of traditional ethnic sports and incorporate ethnic traditional sports into the teaching of physical education as part of the efforts to cultivate students.

2. SUBJECTS AND METHOD

2.1 Subjects

Six higher vocational colleges in the northeast of Guangdong Province were included in the study, from which 18 PE teachers, 6 administrative officials and 300 undergraduate students were selected as the subjects.

2.2 Method

2.2.1. Questionnaire survey

The questionnaires were divided into two versions: one for teachers and the other for students. PE teachers and school administrative officials shared the same version of questionnaire. A total of 24 questionnaires were issued, 22 were recovered, among which 22 were valid with a valid rate of 91.6%. 300 questionnaires were distributed to students and 289 were recovered, among which 285 were valid, accounting for 95% of the questionnaires.

2.2.2. Expert interview

Experts from the physical education department of Shaoguan, Qingyuan, Heyuan, Jieyang and Shanwei in Guangdong Province were interviewed on issues like the development of ethnic traditional physical education in colleges and universities as well as the feasibility of offering ethnic traditional sports programs in colleges and universities.

2.2.3. Literature

The study referred to relevant papers on traditional ethnic sports in China as well as relevant materials on the development of traditional ethnic sports in Guangdong province.

3. Current Situations of Ethnic Traditional Physical Education and Challenges

3.1 Current situations of ethnic traditional physical education

The survey among six higher vocational colleges in northeast Guangdong (Guangdong Songshan Polytechnic College, Qingyuan Polytechnic, Heyuan Polytechnic, Jieyang Vocational & Technical College, Chao Shan College, and Shanwei Polytechnic) found that all the six colleges offered traditional sports classes, especially martial arts. Traditional sports including the Fire cracker ball, pearl ball, ball-kicking, shuttlecock kicking, swing, penetrating crossbow shooting, gyro, yajia, dragon-boat race, running on the stilts, board-shoe racing and Wushu, etc. In the investigation of six colleges and universities, only two schools offer shuttlecock kicking and gyro courses in addition to Wushu, and the other programs are not involved in the curriculum[2]. From the perspective of course design, all the six colleges and universities offer the sports courses in the form of elective courses. The teachers focus mainly on techniques without stressing the connotation of ethnic traditional sports, for which the students are not interested in the traditional sports. In addition, the courses are equipped with facilities that merely meet the basic requirement of the traditional sports, as most Wushu classes are presented in the playground and shuttlecock in badminton courts. The absence of sports venues and equipment demands the need for improvement of sports facilities as part of the school's overall development plan. As to teachers' qualification, among the six colleges and universities, only two schools (Jieyang Vocational & Technical College and Heyuan Polytechnic) set up sports programs as a discipline with professional sports teachers and specialized research teams while the other schools simply offer general physical education, which is far from professional. As to the social context of ethnic traditional sports development, Outline of Building a Strong Sports Country, issued by the General Office of the State Council on August 10, 2019, stressed the need to pass on Chinese traditional sports culture. The document clarified the attention attached to the ethnic traditional sports by governments at various levels. Guangdong Province has always been valuing ethnic traditional sports, and the cities where the six universities in the paper are located have been following the principle and actively participating in sports competitions of ethnic minority. For example, Qingyuan hosted the Sixth Ethnic Minority Traditional Sports Games of Guangdong in 2018. The local physical education authorities generally support and encourage the development of ethnic traditional physical education in local vocational colleges. Overall, the development of ethnic traditional physical education in local vocational colleges is faced with both opportunities and challenges.

3.2 Analysis of challenges confronting ethnic traditional physical education

3.2.1 *The absence of professional teachers*

Teachers play an important role in the course of teaching, who form the backbone of ethnic traditional physical education and college physical education [3]. The comprehensive discipline not only contains sports techniques but also carries rich cultural connotation, demanding teachers to be qualified enough for the delivery of the courses. Few of the six universities have teachers qualified for the teaching of ethnic traditional physical courses. The shortage of teachers is caused by both historical and practical factors. Historically, most universities recruit teachers based on the development of competitive sports. The teachers are mainly majoring in football, basketball, volleyball, track and field, without background of ethnic traditional sports. Secondly, cultural differences between regions form another limitation in the recruitment of teachers. Most teachers from other parts of the country lack a decent understanding of local culture and cannot fully grasp the cultural connotation of the traditional sports of local ethnic groups. Thirdly, as most of the higher vocational colleges haven't set up majors in physical education, scientific researches on physical education lack a solid foundation without specialized research teams, hampering in-depth research on the development of ethnic traditional sports. Practically, the development of colleges and universities are posing increasingly strict limitations in the recruitment of personnel, preventing the introduction of professionals in ethnic traditional sports. Secondly, due to the limitations of

professional background, culture and family background, physical education teachers tend not to be enthusiastic about learning ethnic traditional sports.

3.2.2 Shortages in fund and facilities

Capital and equipment are necessary for course delivery. There are a lot of traditional sports programs, and there are huge differences in capital and equipment requirements between different sports. Taking the Guangdong Province as an example. There are 12 competitive programs and 2 performance programs in the provincial competition, among which Wushu, shuttlecock, gyro have a relatively low demands for funds and space, making it possible to develop these programs in the six higher vocational colleges in the northeast of Guangdong province, while dragon-boat race, swing and kickball that have a high demand for fund and space are impossible to carry out in colleges and universities. The feedback from the surveyed students reveals the shortages in basic equipment and venues for Wushu and other sports. The lack of funds and equipment is mainly caused by ineffective planning of the school as most schools are not interested in the development of ethnic traditional sports, preventing the ethnic traditional sports from being included in the school's overall development plan. Therefore, the schools have no specific budget nor plans for the construction of venues for these sports. On the other hand, although the sports authorities of local governments support the development of ethnic traditional sports in local colleges and universities, they have not provided substantial financial or policy supports, making it difficult to obtain external fund.

3.2.3 The lack of interests in ethnic traditional sports

The lack of interests in ethnic traditional sports are reflected in the following two aspects. The ethnic traditional sports tend to be undervalued by school administrative officials, who fail to clarify support for the establishment and development of such sports programs as the necessity for the development of these sports. For students, many of them are disappointed at the development of ethnic traditional sports. Among the 300 investigated students, 207 of them said they chose ethnic traditional sports programs because they were interested in them in the first place. However, during the course delivery, the oversimplified teaching method proved boring and disappointing, making the classes a burden for them. The lack of interests in ethnic traditional sports originates from insufficient understanding of the sports themselves. On the one hand, the ethnic traditional sports are undervalued. The establishment of ethnic traditional sports in higher vocational colleges advocating for "serving the public" not only helps enrich the physical education system, but also proves helpful in improving the qualities of PE teachers and popularizing traditions and culture, which are significant to the promotion of student qualities and career planning. On the other hand, there is a lack of understanding in the education principles. Generally, colleges and universities are attaching too much importance to competitive sports, posing restraints on the reform of ethnic traditional sports programs, which are delivered in a boring way because the courses and tests focus mainly on techniques without adjustment to the needs of ethnic traditional sports for competition and culture. Such a superficial understanding of these sports would make the courses boring, failing to arouse interests among students.

3.2.4 Unsustainability in curriculum design

The major and curriculum design is a significant influencing factor of students' career. [4] The location of local higher vocational schools makes it a must to link school majors and curriculum to the needs of local economy, especially the local need for employees. The reform of higher vocational education should be employment-oriented and based on specific programs. Compared with the design of other majors and curriculum, the ethnic traditional sports are usually offered in the form of general courses aiming at improving the overall qualities of students without much help in their career. Among the 300 investigated students, 257 of them claimed that ethnic traditional sports had no contribution to their career. The sports development in the area where the six colleges are located offers few jobs related to these sports. Therefore, for higher vocational schools that are employment-oriented, the lack of career guidance in the design of the curriculum could weaken the values and prospects of these courses.

4. Strategies Targetting Ethnic Traditional Sports Education

4.1 Internal staff training and external introduction of talents

The development of teachers mainly relies on internal training and external introduction. The restrict on the recruitment could be tackled by hiring local experts as an assistant or advisor who could share their understanding of the connotation of ethnic traditional sports and help students explore the relationship between the sports program and local history, geography, economy and society; on the other hand, these externally introduced experts could serve as a model of these sports to ensure its passing on. For internal staff training, it is necessary to encourage the young and middle-aged teachers to receive further training and improve their teaching techniques. They should be encouraged to take more social practices and enhance exchanges with teachers from other colleges and universities. Meanwhile, supports should be offered to the scientific researches on ethnic traditional sports by taking advantage of internal and external expertise. The experiences and expertise of external staff could serve as a guide in the construction of a theoretical system. The development of teaching staff should rely on internal teachers with external expertise as a supplement so as to ensure the stability of the teaching staff.

4.2 Greater investment in fund and sports facilities

The funds for the development of ethnic traditional sports in higher vocational school mainly come from the school budget. The physical education department should carry out full investigation of the feasibility of ethnic traditional sports development. The selection of programs should be based on the orientation and capacity of the school. By exploring the values of the sports programs to the school and students, the school could establish a better decision-making system in the selection of sports programs for its PE curriculum and corresponding investment. In addition, the colleges and universities could establish contact with the physical education department of local government by volunteering services to obtain financial support from local government. The establishment of traditional sports programs could help acquire investment from outside while offering internships for both teachers and students.

The teachers should conduct in-depth investigation of the spread of ethnic traditional sports in public. By analyzing differences of sports programs between the school curriculum and public events, the colleges could better plan the venues in which the ethnic traditional sports classes take place. It could also encourage the innovation and adjustment of related facilities and equipment to endow it with greater flexibility to adapt to the general teaching principle[5].

4.3 Enhance the appeal of ethnic traditional sports

To arouse people's interests in ethnic traditional sports, exploration of their value and reform the teaching approach could be the starting point to address the problem. Firstly, the development of ethnic traditional sports should be combined with the construction of campus culture. Courses of ethnic traditional sports on campus is conducive to improving students' humanistic quality and moral sentiment, enriching campus life and strengthening ethnic unity. The role of ethnic traditional sports in the construction of campus culture fully reflects its value. PE teachers should actively participate in the construction of campus culture by promoting ethnic traditional sports to make it more appealing to school administrative officials, who would in turn increase policy and financial supports. Secondly, reforms of teaching approach should be actively carried out. Unlike project-based teaching of most majors in higher vocational colleges, the ethnic traditional physical education makes few direct contributions to the cultivation of professional skills despite its role as a project carrier. The complex attributes of ethnic traditional sports determine the generalized teaching methods, which is different from competitive sports. In addition to skills and competitive theories, culture and traditions should play an important role in the teaching of ethnic traditional sports to enrich the teaching curriculum and arouse interests. Furthermore, teaching and community cultural activities can be combined in the form of sports associations. By encouraging students to

publicize ethnic traditional sports, such sports programs would gradually expand influences on campus [6].

4.4 Development of ethnic traditional sports as an industry

Sports in China should be industry-oriented for long-term sustainable development. By sticking to the path of industrialization, ethnic traditional sports can give a full play to its economic functions, reduce its dependence on government at all levels, cultivate and develop the market for the sports programs by establishing an operation mechanism that conforms to local economic and social development and realize sustainable development[7]. Currently, the development of ethnic traditional sports in higher vocational colleges is highly dependent on the school planning, especially in curriculum planning, basically in the form of public courses without connections with local economic and social development. The curriculum lacks a clear aim, and student are unable to evaluate the abilities acquired through the courses or discover its specific values in students' future career planning. For these reasons, these sports programs are not that popular among students. In the context of vigorous development of sports industry, higher vocational colleges should learn from the experiences of university-enterprise cooperation in carrying out ethnic traditional physical education. By clarifying the orientation of the curriculum, the cultural and technical values will be incorporated into the development of sports industry so that the students can obtain clearer career planning and ultimately ensure the sustainability of ethnic traditional sports courses in higher vocational colleges.

5. Conclusion

Ethnic traditional sports serve as a reflection of local culture, society and geographical environment. Various sports programs represent local people's efforts in adapting to the surroundings, behaviors in transforming the nature and pursuit of values. Through ethnic traditional sports education, people can not only obtain the fitness skills, but also further understand local cultural characteristics to determine the trend of local socioeconomic development, consistent with the principle of "based on local to serve the local" advocated by the higher vocational colleges. All these efforts are elevating the status of ethnic traditional sports education in higher vocational colleges. Compared with highly-developed cities, the backward local economic and social development of regions where the local higher vocational colleges are located is posing ever greater challenges for the development of ethnic traditional sports in terms of education ideology, teaching staff and funds. To tackle these challenges, these sports programs should strive to gain support from government and schools while on the other hand, the curriculum should be consistent with the employment-oriented principle of higher vocational education. In the future, we should give a full play to the role of the market, and conduct in-depth research on the integration of ethnic traditional sports education and the sports industry.

References

- [1] Luosangrenze, Organic Combination of National Traditional Sports and Physical Education Teaching in Colleges [J]. *Education Modernization*, 2019, 6 (60): 150-151+156.
- [2] WANG Hao LIN Long-kai, Review and Outlook of the Guangdong Province Minority Traditional Sports Meeting[J]. *Journal Of Huizhou University*, 2016,36(03):89-93.
- [3] Huang He, Explore and Analyse of Fusion Development pf National Traditional Sports and School Physical Education[J]. *Sports*, 2019(03):59-60.
- [4] Wang Huan, On the Difficult Position of Physical Teaching Reform in Higher Vocational Colleges from the Career-oriented Perspective and the Construction of Guarantee Mechanism[J]. *Science & Technology Information*, 2018,16(14):157+159.

- [5] Jiang Wei, Thinking and Practice of National Traditional Sports in High Vocational Sports Education. *Contemporary Sports Technology*. 2019,9(20):194-195.
- [6] Zhang Yan & Zhang Lei, On the Integration of National Characteristic Sports into the Reform of Physical Education in Higher Vocational Colleges --- Taking Southeast Guizhou Vocational and Technical College for Nationalities as an Example. *Wushu Studies*. 2019,4(08):103-105.
- [7] Yin Cheng, The Chinese Traditional Sports Industrialization and Regional Economic Interaction Analysis [J]. *China Market*. 2019(32):66-67.