



The Development Trend and Inspiration of Physical Education in Taiwan Under the Influence of the Concept of Whole-Person Education

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Abstract. Whole-person education is an educational philosophy that aims at the complete and harmonious development of human beings. Under the influence of this, philosophy, school sports, competitive sports and social sports in Taiwan are all coincidentally oriented towards the development of physical and mental health and harmonious personality development. On the contrary, the development of sports in mainland of China is seriously detached from sports and education, with excessive emphasis on athletic achievements and an obvious tendency of utilitarianization of social sports. With reference to the value of the concept of whole-person education, mainland sports should actively advocate sports culture, effectively put people first, build a harmonious sports concept, and promote the harmonious development of sports while cultivating harmonious people and promoting harmonious social progress.

Keywords: whole-person education · sports in Taiwan · inspiration

1 Introduction

Engels once said, “Since life, there is education.” [1] With the evolution of human civilization, the role of education in promoting the development of human society has been increasing, and the effectiveness of education has become an important benchmark to measure the degree of social civilization of a country or a period of history. As a human culture, sport has a very close relationship with education, and its development is largely influenced and conditioned by the corresponding educational philosophy.

Although there is no consensus in the academic community on whether education is a superstructure, the characteristic that education is obviously subject to ideology is certain. History has created different political ideologies between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, and as a result, there are significant differences between the education systems of the mainland and Taiwan.

In recent years, the concept of whole-person education that has been emerging and practiced in Taiwan has had a significant impact on the development of education in Taiwan. And this concept has also influenced the development trend of sports in Taiwan which is a rare and valuable revelation for sports in the mainland, and it deserves in-depth study and exploration.

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2 Overview of the Development of the Concept of Whole-Person Education in Taiwan

2.1 Explanation of the Concept of Whole-Person Education

The concept of whole-person education refers to the development of a complete personality with high moral character, sound intellect and physical fitness. In other words, this concept is the educational ideal and pursuit of cultivating the “whole person” with a complete knowledge structure, correct values, positive human attitude, healthy body and sound personality development by returning to the essence of education and working for the harmonious development of human beings [2]. The concept of whole-person education, originated in ancient Greece with the educational ideals of Plato and other sages, has been passed down for thousands of years. It was developed by Japanese educator Kuniyoshi Ohara in the mid-20th century. After the 1980s, “whole-person education” flourished in North America and elsewhere and became a worldwide educational trend [3].

2.2 The Rise of the Concept of Whole-Person Education in Taiwan

Taiwan, a region of China, has moved toward independent economic development since it broke away from Japanese rule in the middle of the last century. Taiwan’s political, economic, and educational development under the Kuomintang (KMT) fell into difficulties in the 1970s, and the need for economic take-off led to an urgent desire for political democracy, economic liberalization, and educational reform. As a result, the Taiwanese authorities have undertaken a number of reforms since then, among which “the strategy of prioritizing education has made a prominent contribution to Taiwan’s economic take-off, and education itself has made significant progress, accelerating the process of democratizing education in Taiwan.” [4]. In order to counteract the erosion of education development by over-utilitarianization of education, the whole-person education boom emerged in Taiwan in the 1990s, and the concept of whole-person education was officially noticed and promoted in Taiwan.

3 Trends in the Development of Physical Education in Taiwan Under the Influence of the Concept of Whole-Person Education

3.1 School Sports Oriented to Harmonious Human Development

Since the concept of whole-person education aims to cultivate educated people with sound and harmonious development in various aspects such as morality, intellect and physicality, and emphasizes the comprehensive, holistic and balanced development of human beings, this educational theory and practice initiative’s high attention to human beings themselves immediately draws the attention of many educators. Since the history of education development has been deeply influenced by Japan, North America and other places, in 1997, Taiwan’s education sector proposed to take whole-person education as the direction of targeted education reform. At one time, schools at all levels in Taiwan, from kindergarten to university, were all branded with the slogan of whole-person

education in their founding purposes. For example, the mission of the famous Fu Jen Catholic University is to become an education for the whole person in pursuit of truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness, and to cultivate students to attain knowledge of man, knowledge of things, and knowledge of heaven. Someone has proposed five principles of whole-person education: balance between technology and humanities, balance between professionalism and liberalism, equal emphasis on diversity and consensus, integration between individuals and groups, and complementarity between creativity and heritage [5].

School sports under the influence of the concept of whole-person education is seen as a necessary part of education for the natural human being in the process of growing into a “complete human being” in society, which is on a par with other educational contents such as moral, intellectual and aesthetic education. Sports is not aimed at simply training a strong body, it is a necessary requirement for the physical and mental perfection of people. In the face of people growing up in the information age, when people pay too much attention to the creative role of brain power, there is a risk of neglecting the importance of their own physical strength. In social life, people mostly see people as instrumental human beings, but often ignore the natural attributes of human beings, and hope that education can focus comprehensively on human beings themselves, as well as the harmony and integration of human beings with others, society, and the natural environment. As early as during the reign of Chiang Ching-kuo, as a “military leader”, he expressed his views on sports, advocating the coexistence of “moral, intellectual, physical and social” education and the concept of “unity of civil and military”. He criticized the idea of sacrificing physical education for physical education, and believed that “education should be developed in a balanced manner and not be neglected” [6, 7]. More than thirty institutions of higher learning in Taiwan, such as Chung Yuan University and Fu Jen Catholic University, have put the concept of whole-person education into educational practice, [8] a new educational philosophy has changed the traditional direction of school sports, and the idea of educational orientation and humanistic concept has allowed sports to escape from its previous marginalized situation and become an integral part of the core value system of “whole-person” training.

3.2 The Goal of Competitive Sports to Pursue a Sound Life Through Sports

If we compare the development of competitive sports between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in terms of athletic performance, it is obvious that Taiwan’s athletic performance is dwarfed, however, “Taiwan’s athletic performance is not as good as that of the mainland, but their club system started much earlier than that of the mainland. The selection, training and management of athletes in Taiwan are very different from those in mainland China [9]. In contrast to the “national system”, which places a high value on the political role of sports, the pursuit of gold medals and championships, and the neglect of individual health, competitive sports in Taiwan under the concept of whole-person education have long been concerned with the human being as an athlete, seeking harmony and consistency between the pursuit of athletic performance and social development. Associate Professor Pi-Ching Lu of Taiwan University pointed out that “athletes are never simple-minded, limbless martial artists, let alone the property of the state or coaches” and that athletes “have the right to receive a whole-person education that prepares them

for a sound and virtuous life [10]. In the concept of whole-person education, athletes must not sacrifice their health and make themselves indulge in monotonous, mechanical physical training with the ultimate goal of winning the standard. Neglect their physical and mental harmony and social adaptability.

3.3 Social Sports with the Real Purpose of Health for All

The reality of socio-economic development in Taiwan has made the overall level of social sports foundation in Taiwan higher than that of the mainland, and the number of people participating in sports and exercise is also higher than that of the mainland. A series of related measures were introduced early on to promote the development of social sports in Taiwan, such as planning for community sports and opening school sports venues to encourage mass participation in sports activities. Throughout the development process of social sports in Taiwan, its real implementation stage coincides with the rise of the concept of whole-person education, especially in 1987, Taiwan's Ministry of Education issued the Follow-up Plan for Strengthening the Promotion of Community Sports for All, actively advocating "one person, one sport" and "sports for all, sports all the time, sports everywhere" [11]. This guarantee of social sports development in the form of establishing laws and regulations has advanced the institutionalization and standardization of social sports. Since then, unlike on the mainland where sports are seen as a window to spiritual and civilized activities on a national scale, social and popular sports in Taiwan are characterized by the creation of cooperation and collective spirit to migrate to other social endeavors, and the promotion of the ability to be self-motivated and self-protective [12]. At the same time, the Taiwanese authorities focus on the discovery and protection of distinctive types of sports in the region, strengthen the links between sports organizations, schools and social forces, and develop a variety of social sports activities for the real orientation of the health of all people.

4 Insights into the Development of Physical Education in Taiwan Under the Concept of Whole-Person Education

4.1 Promoting the Concept of Sports Culture

In the concept of whole-person education, sport is ultimately a glorious cultural aspect of human society. Whether it is physical education, which is closely linked to human development, the Olympic movement, which is primarily competitive or social sports, which are growing in popularity, the cultural appeal is self-evident. Holistic education believes that there are six aspects of human culture, namely, learning, morality, art, religion, the body, and life, and that one cannot be absent [13]. Physical education and other educational elements such as moral, intellectual, and aesthetic educations, as well as labor education, are unified as a whole in the philosophy of whole-person education. Sports are used to improve people's health and physical fitness and refine people's will and make them "physically and mentally fit". They are used to cultivate people's noble moral sentiments and build their aesthetic sense as well as shape qualified workers in society. Holistic education has always believed that a sound body breeds a sound spirit, and the philosophy of holistic education firmly promotes physical activity.

Only when we consider sports as the sports of culture, it is possible for us not to favor one over the other in education, and not to forget the important role of sports for people and focus only on further education and exams. In addition, in physical education we will not only care about technical progress and forget the importance of cultural literacy for the development of people throughout their lives, in order to achieve a true combination of physical education and sports Kokuyoshi Ohara proposed that in athletics, “no matter what, we should play with integrity and purity”, “we should be polite and cheerful”, “we should not be complacent and proud when we win”, “we should be broad-minded”, and we should “spread culture” in the games [14]. Respecting for culture and concerning for people themselves are rational choices to avoid the alienation of athletics. Social sports is one of the important elements of social civilization, and by taking into account the importance of “community” in the concept of whole-person education, we will understand the importance of paying attention to the development of social sports. When the splendid culture created by sports for human society is confronted, many problems that plague our current sports work are solved, and sports become a perfect whole from the foundation to the top, and the theory and practice of sports are combined more perfectly.

4.2 Introducing the Concept of Human-Centered Sports

The understanding of “people” in the philosophy of whole-person education reflects the ideal of “putting people first. Throughout the theory and practice of the philosophy of whole-person education, the “people-centered” perspective is everywhere. The goal of cultivating the “whole person” is in fact a new understanding of the dignity of the human being and the value of human life. As early as the humanists pursued the educational concept of “the whole person,” they affirmed that sports are human-centered sports; in advocating the freedom of the human will and the liberation of personality, they recognized that sports can promote the all-round development of the human body and mind; in denouncing asceticism and advocating earthly pleasures, they recognized that sports are a means to pursue happiness and satisfy human needs. In criticizing asceticism and advocating earthly pleasures, they realized that sport is a means to pursue happiness and satisfy human needs. The advocacy of the philosophy of whole-person education always maintains the importance of and respect for the human body, hoping that sports will create people who are full of spirit, physically dexterous and agile.

“People-oriented” emphasizes the understanding and respect for human nature, which requires starting from human nature, facing the dignity of the human body, treating people as subjects of physical education, and being able to arrange physical education or physical exercise according to the actual ability of individuals. In the relationship between people and sport, it is important to understand that people are the end, not the means, of sport. The help of technology, political participation and commercial support are all for the purpose of serving sports, not for the pursuit of profit that marginalizes people in sports. In recent years, the core concept of the scientific concept of development proposed by our government is “people-oriented”, which guides the development direction of every aspect of our society. The Beijing Olympic Games has called the slogan of “Humanistic Olympics” and successfully presented and passed on the connotation of humanism in sports. We hope that under this opportunity, human can realize

and promote humanistic sports by combining the “people-oriented” concept of physical education in the philosophy of whole-person education.

4.3 Building a Harmonious Sports Concept

The “whole” of whole-person education lies in harmony, and this concept of harmony permeates the theory and practice of whole-person education. Following the guidance of this view, sports should achieve the harmony of people themselves and the harmony of sports and other cultural elements. The huge character “和” that appeared three times in the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games is a high recognition of the harmony thought in contemporary times, and at the same time, it highlights the pursuit of harmony in its sports thought. China wants to “rise peacefully” and build a “harmonious society”, and of course sports must also “develop harmoniously”. Therefore, sports should be able to achieve harmony in the human being itself. The vision of a harmonious “whole person” created by sports, as desired by whole-person education, is most likely to be realized in the present day, when technology is developing at a rapid pace and civilization is highly developed. The modern Olympic spirit of “Higher, Faster, Stronger” and the new Olympic motto of “Cleaner, More Human, More Unity” proposed by the new Olympic Committee President Rogge reflect the pursuit of harmonious development of sports and the pursuit of harmonious development of human beings themselves. The future of international sport will place more emphasis on the humanistic value of sport, on the truth, goodness and beauty of sport and on the fact that sport should serve the harmonious development of human beings. It can be seen that sport is expected to play a more important role in the harmonious development of society in the future.

5 Conclusions

Under the influence of the concept of whole-person education, school sports, competitive sports, and social sports in Taiwan are all coincidentally oriented toward the development of the physical and mental health of people themselves and the cultivation of a harmonious personality. People should face up to the positive significance of the concept of whole-person education and truly implement “people-oriented” into sports, as well as pay attention to discovering the humanistic value and cultural connotation of sports, and let sports contribute to the cultivation of a complete and harmonious society. All people in society can enjoy the health and happiness of sports equally. We hope that the whole society can also develop in a scientific, comprehensive, sustainable and harmonious way under the promotion of harmonious development of sports.

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