Analysis of the cultivation of social responsibility of physical education students in the context of Healthy China

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Authors’ Contribution: A – Study design; B – Data collection; C – Statistical analysis; D – Manuscript Preparation; E – Funds Collection

Abstract

Background and Study Aim

‘Healthy China’ is an important symbol of China’s social development and national prosperity. As practitioners and disseminators of sports and health, physical education of students should actively play their own specialties in the process of ‘Healthy China’ construction. This study investigates the social responsibility and cultivation of college students so as to create a good atmosphere for educational groups from the four levels of society, family, school, and itself.

Material and Methods

The participants were 53 students (aged 19-21 years) from the College of Physical Education and Health of East China Normal University. The «Questionnaire on the Cultivation of Social Responsibility of Students Majoring in Physical Education» was used as a search tool. A total of 60 questionnaires were distributed using the online platform in this study, and 53 valid questionnaires were recovered after sorting and screening. Among them, 32 were male students and 21 were female students.

Results

Students lack enthusiasm and initiative in paying attention to national policies, learning health knowledge and technology, and participating in health education. There is also a lack of self-control and perseverance in physical exercise and healthy eating. Insufficient sleep and poor psychological state lead to low participation in social activities; College students have a low awareness of promoting sports spirit.

Conclusions

The findings of this study shed light on the crucial need to cultivate social responsibility among college students majoring in sports at multiple levels: society, family, school, and individual. To effectively promote «Healthy China» and maximize the potential impact of physical education students, concerted efforts must be made to address the identified shortcomings and foster a holistic approach to social responsibility.

Keywords: social responsibility, college students, sports major, Healthy China, society, family, school, individual.

Introduction

In October 2016, the Chinese government introduced the 'Health China 2030' planning outline, emphasizing health development and promoting health in all policies. This includes strengthening health education, acquiring scientific knowledge, fostering self-disciplined behaviors, and practicing rational nutrition. Additionally, health services optimization, comprehensive fitness campaigns, and improving health literacy are prioritized. Efforts are made to build a healthy environment, conduct patriotic health campaigns, and ensure all-round health maintenance [1]. Subsequently, the government issued successive policy documents to promote health.

Cultivating social responsibility awareness among college students occupies an important position in China’s educational development and is a key and important element in the construction of a healthy China. Undergraduates in physical education teacher training colleges have expertise and skills in physical education and health, so it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of social responsibility and behavior of physical education students in colleges and universities in the process of building a 'Healthy China' [2].

Chinese scholars’ literature on ‘sports’ and ‘social responsibility’ primarily focuses on teaching methods. For instance, Chen Yan [3] suggests that cultivating social responsibility in physical education enhances students’ social identity and belonging, boosting their confidence. Lin Hao and Jiang Zhiying [4] analyze the connection between physical education and fostering college students’ social responsibility, emphasizing its unique role. Other scholars [5, 6, 7, 8] explore the application of the «Teaching for Personal and Social Responsibility» (TPSR) model, offering new teaching methods for cultivating social responsibility. Zhang Min [9] integrates ecological civilization into physical education courses to develop students’ social responsibility. Li Baoguo [10] combines ecological civilization and physical education to cultivate social responsibility, proposing optimized physical...
education, personalized teaching, situational teaching, and social practice teaching to enhance social identity, sports morality, and adaptability among students [10].

Scholars have primarily focused on innovative physical education methods to cultivate students’ social responsibility, lacking specific and relevant strategies for physical education college students. As sports and health practitioners, these students should respond to the country’s call and actively contribute to building a healthy China. Therefore, analyzing the current situation and providing targeted suggestions for cultivating social responsibility among physical education college students will aid schools in promoting their development. Examining the current state of cultivating social responsibility and proposing tailored strategies based on survey results can serve as a reference for schools to enhance the cultivation of social responsibility and refine talent development strategies.

Healthy China and the Concept and Current Situation of Social Responsibility of College Students of Physical Education Department

Healthy China

Health is often compared to career, family, reputation, and wealth. To promote a healthy China, we should vigorously promote “patriotic health”, “fitness for all”, and “health promotion”. It is important to encourage the participation of non-governmental organizations in volunteer activities. Additionally, promoting the integration of national fitness and competitive sports and improving their overall level is crucial. We should also encourage universities, local governments, and society as a whole to actively participate.

Abiola Idowu emphasizes promoting Chinese sports spirit, culture, and innovation in national and folk sports [11]. Author suggests integrating sports into school assessment and enhancing sports culture cultivation.

Concept of college students’ social responsibility

College students’ social responsibility is a multifaceted concept. In Chinese, "responsibility" refers to obligations, including moral, legal, and psychological aspects. Social responsibility extends beyond business and encompasses various aspects. It can be divided into legal and moral responsibility based on social norms. From the perspective of responsibility object, it includes individual and social responsibility. For some, it is a significant aspect of life and the obligation to contribute to society’s improvement in a specific historical context.

Social responsibility encompasses the obligations and duties of individuals, groups, countries, and society within a specific timeframe [12]. It also includes personal obligations such as self-preservation. Wang Siqian [13] concluded that social responsibility refers to a specific period of time. It involves individuals or organizations fulfilling their due responsibility and obligation towards the state, society, family, and other aspects of survival and development (Figure 1). The sense of social responsibility entails individuals’ conscious recognition of their responsibilities towards the country, society, family, and school. It involves continuous learning and practice to achieve holistic personal development. Figure 2 provides an overview of the social responsibility theory, which scholars divide into realizing personal value, fulfilling family responsibilities, and contributing to the community and society [14, 15, 16].

Figure 1. Objects of social responsibility

The current situation of social responsibility of college students in physical education.

Physical education resources can be categorized into five areas: human resources, environment, technology, economy, and information. Currently, physical education teaching in Chinese colleges and universities is evolving to align with educational development, students’ and teachers’ needs for high-quality and diversified physical education. Thus, it is crucial to maximize the utilization of physical education teaching resources in universities [17]. The main problem in physical education at colleges and universities is the presence of both positive and negative factors [18]. Current college students prioritize utilitarian life ideals and lack a strong sense of social obligations. They struggle to distinguish right from wrong and lack practical social skills and a clear understanding of societal roles [18].

Wang Lixin [19] identifies four reasons for the problem of college students’ social responsibility: influence of Western values, family education
defects, school focus on exams, and individual factors. Western values lead to self-centeredness and irresponsibility, while family and school contribute to neglecting social responsibility education. Individual factors include subjective thinking, emotional instability, and poor self-control and practical skills. These factors result in a weak sense of social responsibility among college students [19].

Zhang Dan [20] believes that cultivating a sense of social responsibility among college students requires a multifaceted approach at all levels. He emphasizes the importance of social, family, school, and personal dimensions in fostering social responsibility (Figure 3). This entails strengthening moral education, enhancing teacher capabilities, and creating a positive campus environment. Furthermore, promoting a healthy lifestyle plays a vital role in improving health literacy among young individuals, reflecting their sense of social responsibility [21]. By emphasizing proper nutrition, responsible medication use, and seeking scientific medical care, we can enhance the overall well-being of the population [22]. Additionally, spreading knowledge about environmental and health protection is crucial for fostering a healthy environment and encouraging responsible
behaviors. Lastly, the promotion of sportsmanship and the cultivation of social responsibility within sports culture are interconnected. College students should actively engage in learning about sportsmanship, its values, and actively promoting sportsmanship through practical actions [23].

By implementing these strategies and approaches, colleges and universities can effectively nurture social responsibility among their students, contributing to a more responsible and engaged society.

**Materials and Methods**

**Participants**

Between October 8 and 15, 2022, a group of undergraduate students (aged 19-21 years) from the College of Physical Education and Health at East China Normal University participated in the study. The selection process involved random sampling. A total of 60 questionnaires were distributed online, and after sorting and screening, 53 valid questionnaires were collected. Among the participants, there were 32 male students and 21 female students.

**Research Design**

**Questionnaire**

For this study, a survey was conducted using a questionnaire developed by Wang Siqian [13]. The questionnaire used was titled «Questionnaire on the Cultivation of Social Responsibility of Students Majoring in Physical Education.» The primary objective was to assess the extent to which college students majoring in physical education are being cultivated for social responsibility by their teachers. The questionnaire design was based on an understanding of the concept and essence of the sports major. In this context, social responsibility for sports students is defined as assuming responsibilities towards oneself, others, organizations, and societal development. These responsibilities encompass the dissemination of sports knowledge, promotion of healthy lifestyles, fostering a healthy environment, and advancing sports development within the framework of a healthier China. The questionnaire demonstrated high reliability and validity, with a retest reliability exceeding 0.85, indicating a strong level of reliability and validity for the study.

**Interview method**

The interviews focused on the concept and content of social responsibility among sports majors and were conducted from September to November 2022. Due to the impact of the pandemic, online interviews were primarily conducted through experts’ WeChat and telephone. The interviews involved face-to-face interactions, recorded interviews, and online chats, and were conducted with teachers and students from the College of Physical Education and Health at East China Normal University. Each interview session lasted approximately 15 minutes. The gathered interview data was then summarized and analyzed to identify key themes and specific measures to cultivate social responsibility among physical education students in Shandong sports colleges.

**Statistical Analysis**

The collected survey questionnaire data was analyzed using software tools such as Excel and SPSS26.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies (N), were used to describe the qualitative data. The chi-square ($\chi^2$) test was employed to analyze the data, with statistical significance indicated by a $p$-value of less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$).

**Results**

**Disparities in the popularization of sports knowledge (tabl. 1).**

Table 1 indicates no significant gender-based difference in physical education knowledge popularity among college students majoring in physical education. The survey findings reveal that teachers actively encourage students to learn physical education and health knowledge, while schools implement measures like skills training courses and referee classes. However, students struggle with popularizing and learning health-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Male (n=32)</th>
<th>Female (n=21)</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actively learn and master physical education theory and skills in and out of class</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.644</td>
<td>0.200&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive attention to national policies in the areas of physical education and health</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.379</td>
<td>0.538&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning health knowledge and skills through books, internet and other sources</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.032</td>
<td>0.310&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active participation in school health education</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>0.359&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
related knowledge, lacking motivation to actively pursue it. Interviews with students highlighted their focus on acquiring professional sports knowledge and skills for future employment prospects, underestimating the importance of broader health information and social issues.

Differences in healthy lifestyle situations (tabl. 2).

Differences in promoting a healthy environmental situation (tabl. 3).

Table 3 reveals no significant gender-based differences in health-promoting environments among physical education college students. The survey highlighted the effective guidance provided by schools and teachers in this aspect. The active implementation of patriotic health campaigns during the pandemic, along with the promotion of epidemic prevention measures, has created a conducive health environment with the enthusiastic cooperation of students.

Differences in promoting the situation of sports spirit (tabl. 4).

Table 4 indicates no significant gender-based differences in promoting sportsmanship among physical education college students. The survey revealed that only 35.8% of students showed initiative in learning about sportsmanship, while the majority did not take the initiative to learn or promote it.

Table 2. Survey statistics of physical education college students of different genders on healthy lifestyles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Male (n=32)</th>
<th>Female (n=21)</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular physical exercise</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.398</td>
<td>0.528&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have good regular eating habits</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.782&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminder to minimize the time spent staring at the screen of electronic products</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.693</td>
<td>0.193&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain sufficient sleep time every day, do not stay up late, do regular work and rest</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.502&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers encourage students to actively participate in healthy and beneficial cultural, sports and social activities to relieve stress</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.978&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members have good behavioral habits</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.782&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Survey statistics of physical education college students of different genders on health-promoting environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Male (n=32)</th>
<th>Female (n=21)</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers educate students about environmental and health-related protection and response in the classroom</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.897</td>
<td>0.089&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined with COVID-19 outbreak protection requirements and related work</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.346</td>
<td>0.067&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating the requirements of the new era of campus patriotic health campaign into the curriculum and teaching materials system</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.150</td>
<td>0.283&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Survey statistics of college students of different genders majoring in physical education in promoting sportsmanship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Male (n=32)</th>
<th>Female (n=21)</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conducting lectures on the theme of learning socialist core values</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.978&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize the viewing of sports videos that reflect the spirit of patriotic dedication, truthfulness and compliance, and unity and hard work</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.773&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the initiative to learn and promote traditional sports culture through the Internet</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>0.757&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

Suggestions on the Cultivation of Social Responsibility of Physical Education Students

Strengthen school social responsibility education

The cultivation of social responsibility is a primary focus in physical education colleges, as it shapes students' growth, values, moral qualities, and knowledge and skills in relation to sports, health, social survival, and interpersonal relationships. Strengthening social responsibility awareness, emotional attitudes, and behaviors in colleges and universities is crucial for fostering a culture of social responsibility [24].

The results of this study indicate that schools and teachers play an active role in guiding the popularization of health knowledge and skills, as well as cultivating social responsibility among students in physical education universities. These findings align with the research conducted by Shi Benbiao [25].

To further enhance the sense of social responsibility among sports college students, it is essential to prioritize the cultivation of social responsibility awareness in universities and among physical education teachers. Additionally, improving the social responsibility education system for sports professionals is crucial. This can be achieved by integrating moral education and sports, improving curriculum quality, and promoting the development of social responsibility among sports talents.

In line with the recommendations of Li, Baoguo, and Peng, Zhouen [10], schools should actively engage in practical activities to deepen the sense of social responsibility. Creating a cultural environment that promotes «social responsibility» and actively conducting social responsibility education is highly recommended. Practical initiatives, such as organizing choral competitions and recitation contests during holidays, can effectively deepen college students’ sense of social responsibility and foster a strong sense of patriotism [26].

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of strengthening the physical education teacher team in the new era. This finding aligns with the conclusions drawn by Kenioua [27], which emphasize the high level of social responsibility among physical education teachers. It is crucial to enhance the ethics, morality, and social responsibility awareness of physical education teachers. By doing so, we can effectively cultivate a sense of social responsibility among students pursuing physical education in college.

College students enhance their social responsibility

Signorelli [28] conducted a study highlighting the importance of social responsibility perception and practice for students in teacher training colleges and universities. It is crucial for students to be aware of and adapt to the complexities of the external environment. Through comprehensive thinking, practical experience, and self-reflection, students can gain a deep understanding of social responsibility and effectively implement it. This process helps them develop outstanding qualities in terms of personality, character, skills, culture, and other aspects. Consequently, they can actively contribute to society's development and create a better future [29].

The findings of this study reveal that college students majoring in physical education exhibit poor eating habits and irregular sleep patterns. To enhance the social responsibility of these students, several factors need to be considered. First, developing self-discipline is essential, involving the ability to identify priorities, eliminate unnecessary tasks, and execute plans effectively. Second, cultivating competence, upholding correct values, formulating sustainable development strategies, maintaining good discipline, being helpful and willing to share, and actively participating in various activities are crucial. Additionally, promoting lifelong sports awareness is important. Lastly, fostering a strong sense of social responsibility is necessary, which includes actively participating in social activities, cooperating in organizing events, and engaging in public outreach. These efforts contribute to a positive psychological state.

By addressing these factors and encouraging students majoring in physical education to adopt responsible behaviors, their overall social responsibility can be enhanced, leading to personal growth and a greater impact on society.

Strengthen family social responsibility education

Previous studies have indicated the significant influence of family factors on college students' awareness, attitude, and behavior regarding social responsibility [13]. As college students, they rely on their families both financially and emotionally, and eventually establish their own families. Thus, improving their sense of responsibility towards their families becomes crucial for family stability, national development, and individual growth [30]. To achieve this, it is necessary to cultivate a strong sense of social responsibility within the family, foster a positive family atmosphere, guide and motivate family members, prioritize health, encourage scientific exercise, and develop good habits [31]. Additionally, this study found that family members' good living habits contribute to the development of social responsibility, aligning with the findings of Wang Siqian [13]. Parents of physical education college students should actively understand the social responsibility associated with their major, communicate and cooperate with them, serve as role models, and provide support to promote the formation and growth of their social responsibility.
Create a good social and educational environment

To strengthen sports-related social responsibility, it is important to establish correct values and beliefs [32]. Role models and ideal beliefs should be cultivated, fostering a sporting culture of patriotism, struggle, tenacity, and solidarity, while providing guidance and motivation to students [32]. This study’s results support the idea that creating a nurturing social environment is crucial for cultivating social responsibility in college students [33]. To achieve this, three approaches can be taken: strengthening ideological and political propaganda using the Internet, promoting sports awareness through online platforms and short videos, and creating an atmosphere conducive to sports promotion [33]. Additionally, a positive and healthy sports atmosphere and supportive policy environment are essential for the promotion of sports [34]. For physical education college students, it is crucial to establish an educational environment that clarifies responsibilities, encourages duty fulfillment, and familiarizes them with school regulations through effective communication and propaganda [34]. This will enhance their understanding of their obligations and expand their sense of responsibility.

Conclusions

The cultivation of social responsibility among college physical education students is crucial in the context of «Health China» construction. However, several challenges were identified, including a lack of enthusiasm in following national policies, limited engagement in health education, weak commitment to physical exercise and healthy diet, and insufficient awareness of promoting sports spirit within the college setting.

The study conducted at the School of Physical Education and Health of East China Normal University provided valuable insights into the current situation and cultivation of social responsibility. The research methods employed facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the students’ social responsibility.

To address these challenges and enhance the cultivation of social responsibility, a multi-level approach is recommended. Efforts should be directed towards creating a better social environment at the societal, family, school, and individual levels.

Strengthening the promotion of the family’s sense of social responsibility is crucial. Emphasis should be placed on raising awareness and encouraging active participation in health-related activities.

The school’s role in cultivating social responsibility should be reinforced through the implementation of effective educational programs and initiatives. These should focus on instilling a strong sense of social responsibility among students and fostering their engagement in health promotion. College students themselves should be actively involved in the cultivation of their own social responsibility. This can be achieved through self-reflection, self-discipline, and active participation in social activities, promoting a culture of sportsmanship and overall well-being.

In conclusion, by addressing the identified challenges and implementing the suggested strategies, it is possible to cultivate a stronger sense of social responsibility among college physical education students, ultimately contributing to the development of a healthier and more responsible society.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my alma mater, the College of Physical Education and Health of East China Normal University, and Mr. Xiong Deliang for his help and support, which allowed me to successfully complete the interview and survey

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.
References


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Cite this article as:

Li T. Analysis of the cultivation of social responsibility of physical education students in the context of Healthy China. Physical Education of Students, 2023;27(3):135–143.

https://doi.org/10.15561/20755279.2023.0306

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Received: 17.05.2023

Accepted: 16.06.2023; Published: 30.06.2023