

ARTICLE

Educational Value and Campus Dissemination Path of Martial Arts Spirit in Shaping Students' Personality

ZHAO Beibei¹ LIU Nichen¹ GUO Yinghao¹ ZHANG Jieying²

1.School of Martial Arts, Guangzhou Sport University, Guangzhou 510500, China;

2.College of Leisure and Digital Sports, Guangzhou Sport University, Guangzhou 510500, China)

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 22 September 2025

Accepted: 15 December 2025

Published Online: 30 December 2025

Keywords:

martial arts spirit

Personality shaping

Educational value

Student development

transmission route

ABSTRACT

By using literature review and induction methods, this article deeply analyzes the core elements of martial arts spirit, such as “emphasizing martial virtue, respecting teachers, and cultivating both internal and external aspects”. Combining with the characteristics of students’ physical and mental development and educational needs, it elaborates on the unique educational value of martial arts spirit in cultivating students’ moral spirit, willpower, social communication ability, and provides some references on how martial arts spirit can be incorporated into school education and dissemination paths.

Introduction

In the context of today's rapidly evolving era, fostering students' holistic development and nurturing their core competencies have emerged as pivotal objectives in education. Personality cultivation, as a central mission of education, is intricately linked to numerous facets, including students' future life trajectories and social adaptability. Martial arts, a vital component of traditional Chinese culture, embody profound cultural essence and distinctive spiritual values. They transcend mere physical exercise, serving as a potent means of education and personal development. The myriad of exemplary qualities inherent in the spirit of martial arts align closely with the comprehensive quality cultivation advocated by contemporary edu-

cation, offering significant educational value in shaping students' characters. Consequently, conducting thorough research on the educational significance and dissemination strategies of the spiritual essence of martial arts in personality development holds immense importance for enriching educational resources, fostering students' mental well-being, and innovating pedagogical approaches.

1. Analysis of the Connotation of Martial Arts Spirit

1.1 The Spirit of Valuing Martial Arts and Virtue

“Shangwu” can cultivate the spirit of self-improvement and perseverance; ‘Upholding virtue’ can cultivate the

*Corresponding Author:

Zhao Beibei (1996-), female, from Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province, China, Education: Master's degree, Vocational: Teacher; Research direction: Martial arts teaching and training , Email 1432291456@qq.com, Address: 1268 Guangzhou Avenue Middle, Tianhe District, Guangzhou City, Postal code: 510500.

demeanor of ‘carrying things with great virtue’. Learning martial arts requires moral conduct first. Emphasizing martial ethics is a distinctive feature of martial arts culture”^[1]. It emphasizes the need for a strong physique and, more importantly, a noble moral pursuit. ‘Shangwu’ does not advocate violence, but rather the pursuit of the spirit of ‘brave martial arts’ - it includes both physical function training and emphasizes the cultivation of perseverance and the courage to strive through martial arts practice. Compared to the physical benefits of strengthening the body, the core value of martial arts education lies more in its unique educational function, cultivating the sound personality and noble character of martial artists. “Since ancient times, there has been a tradition of emphasizing etiquette in martial arts, which starts with etiquette and ends with etiquette. Through martial arts education, people are trained to be courteous, patient, just, tenacious, friendly, and compassionate, thus reflecting its practical significance”^[2]. Therefore, it advocates that martial artists should not only improve their physical fitness, but also deeply cultivate the spirit of martial arts with integrity, character, and demeanor, temper fearless courage, and dare to take responsibility in times of danger; Adhering to the path of moderation requires both internal and external cultivation in order to inherit the essence of martial arts, promote the spirit of martial arts, and nourish the pure spring of positive personality.

1.2 Inheritance culture of respecting teachers and valuing morality

In the thousands of years of inheritance of Chinese martial arts, respecting teachers and valuing morality have always played a crucial role, emphasizing the concepts of “being a teacher for a day, being a father for a lifetime” and “having strong martial arts skills, never forgetting the hard work of teachers”. Respecting teachers and valuing the Way is not only a necessary spiritual quality for martial artists, but also a profound inner cultivation. It is related to individual personality and determines their future patterns and achievements. Furthermore, “those who do not respect their teachers and the Way will not be able to receive true teachings from their teachers. Even with the careful guidance of their teachers, without the moral character and ethics of respecting their teachers and the Way, they cannot understand and comprehend the truth and beauty of martial arts”^[3]. It reflects respect for teachers and emphasis on knowledge inheritance. In Chinese martial arts, the teacher-student relationship is very important. It is not only the transmission of skills, but also the inheritance of spirit. In martial arts teaching, the master not only imparts skills, but also undertakes the responsibility

of transmitting martial ethics and shaping personality, as the saying goes, ‘A teacher imparts knowledge, imparts knowledge, and dispels doubts. Under the guidance of their teachers, students learn to balance skills and morality through rituals such as apprenticeship and daily rituals, cultivating a sense of awe and gratitude. This is the foundation of education - it not only cultivates a strong body and spirit, but also cultivates a benevolent and virtuous character.

1.3 Attitude towards life with both internal and external cultivation

The spirit of “self-improvement” derived from the Book of Changes has always been regarded as a standard in the martial arts world. Martial arts practitioners emulate the strength of the Heavenly Way and view cultivation as an endless process of self-improvement. As the level of practice continues to improve, martial artists will shift their focus from external physical movements to pursuing inner technical insights and the sublimation of life spirit, achieving internal transcendence from the technical level to the spiritual and cultural level. This process gradually reflects the cultivation concept of unity of body and mind, and internal and external coordination. ‘External cultivation’ refers to the physical training that enhances physical fitness and mastery of skills through techniques, routines, and equipment; Internal cultivation “refers to the spiritual level, including the refinement of the mind, the cultivation of consciousness, and the elevation of the realm. This holistic cultivation method breaks the separation between “physical training” and “spiritual cultivation”, helps students realize the unity of physical and spiritual development, and guides them to form a healthy attitude towards life that is not biased, extreme, and pursues comprehensive development.

2. The Educational Value of Martial Arts Spirit in Shaping Students’ Personality

The spirit of martial arts, as an important carrier of traditional Chinese culture, has its educational value deeply integrated into the entire process of shaping students’ personalities. It breaks through the limitations of simply imparting skills, not only enhancing students’ physical fitness through practice, but also cultivating students’ moral qualities based on cultural connotations. Through this method, students’ willpower and spirit are exercised, and their communication skills are improved through collaborative practice, forming a unique educational function that combines physical exercise and spiritual shaping, providing key support for students’ sound personality construc-

tion. Its educational value is reflected in the following three aspects.

2.1 Cultivate moral qualities and establish correct values

Teenage students are in a critical period of value formation and have strong plasticity and imitation tendencies. Integrating the spirit and culture of martial arts into school teaching can use its profound ethical connotations to subtly guide students in cultivating moral consciousness and correct life values. "In the teaching of martial arts, the uniqueness of its content and methods also presents rich humanistic spirit and value connotations: adhering to etiquette and rules, advocating the consciousness of harmony and unity, reflecting the spirit of unity and cooperation; cultivating morality and benevolence, consolidating the foundation of personality shaping, highlighting the lofty ideal of life; working hard, honing the will to be tenacious, honing the perseverance to be tenacious; balancing courage and righteousness, cultivating the dignity of personality, and sublimating the value of life"^[4]. This value system provides students with clear value demonstrations and behavioral frameworks through concrete behavioral guidelines.

At the same time, teenagers' thinking is also easily influenced by the external environment, and their judgment of right and wrong, good and evil, still needs to be actively guided. "The martial ethics of traditional martial arts have a transfer effect on public morality, and the moral education value of martial arts ranges from the basic norms of social morality to national righteousness. Throughout history, martial artists have practiced the value pursuit of "upholding justice, eliminating violence, and protecting the country" through their actions"^[5]. In specific classroom teaching, students can establish a clear understanding of justice and evil by understanding the historical allusions and martial arts rules, and combining them with real-life illegal cases and campus bullying incidents, under the spiritual influence of "chivalry and righteousness". This kind of cognition helps them distinguish between the mistake of ignoring bystanders and the correctness of proactive intervention in the face of campus bullying, based on the principle of "supporting the weak and suppressing the strong" in martial arts. This further proves that the inheritance and education of martial arts spirit can effectively cultivate students' moral qualities.

2.2 Refining willpower and inspiring pioneering spirit

"Kung Fu lies in diligence, perseverance, accumulation

over time, and perseverance. Only with such a spirit of Kung Fu can one master solid skills and have sufficient confidence in future martial arts training, learning, and work"^[6]. In ancient times, martial artists often stood at stakes before dawn, practiced breath in the quiet of the night, and shed sweat with the perseverance of "practicing three nines in winter and three fu in summer". They honed their fists and feet with the attitude of "not afraid of knowing a thousand moves, but afraid of mastering one move", practicing the spirit of perseverance and continuous progress in martial arts. Accumulating focus and resilience in time is precisely the most scarce spiritual resource for young people today.

Currently, young students are generally impatient and lack perseverance, making them prone to superficial learning and difficulty persisting. And martial arts training precisely provides an effective solution to this problem in its unique way. In the practice of martial arts, basic skills training is particularly emphasized, including repeated kicking and combination exercises, continuous standing and footwork exercises, often accompanied by boredom and physiological fatigue. This kind of daily repetition may seem monotonous, but it is actually a key process of honing one's character - it not only tests the physical endurance of the martial artist, but also directly points to their willpower. In addition, in the process of martial arts training, from precise mastery of a single movement to the combination learning of multiple movements in series, ultimately achieving the integrated performance of a complete routine; From swinging the leg inward to attempting the 360 degree whirlwind foot, and even further challenging the difficult movement of the 720 degree whirlwind foot, each stage is a physical and psychological challenge, and students can gain achievement experience and self-efficacy improvement through successful breakthroughs in each stage, gaining the courage to challenge themselves and inspiring the spirit of continuous exploration and progress.

2.3 Promote communication and cooperation, develop and enhance capabilities

"Teenagers receiving martial arts education on campus increase opportunities for contact and interaction with 'real people', which plays an irreplaceable role in improving their social skills and independent social skills"^[7]. At the same time, they also crave peer recognition, teamwork, and a sense of collective belonging, which are the core themes and emotional needs in the growth of adolescent students. And martial arts education precisely provides a valuable practical platform for this demand.

For example, in martial arts teaching, there are multi

person projects such as two person training, three person training, and collective training. These projects not only require individuals to master the skills proficiently, but also require collaboration and cooperation with partners. During the practice process of participating in collective projects, students need to carefully observe the actions of their peers, actively listen to their opinions, and actively share their own experiences, constantly establishing mutual understanding and trust, thus effectively promoting the formation of cooperation spirit, communication skills, and collective sense of belonging, laying a solid foundation for their future social adaptability and organizational integration ability.

3. The Effective Path of Incorporating Martial Arts Spirit into School Education

“The spirit of martial arts, as an important component of traditional Chinese culture, not only holds significant importance for the progress and development of history, but also has its spiritual connotations in the contemporary value system. The two can be said to have a complementary and mutually beneficial relationship”^[8]. “At present, the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese martial arts culture is slow, and only a few schools with traditional martial arts characteristics are continuously promoting and competing. Problems such as single projects, insufficient technical support, and inadequate facility construction hinder the inheritance and development of the spirit of martial arts, making people’s concepts gradually blurred and development difficult to sustain.”^[9] In view of the above difficulties, the key to solving the problem lies in precisely refining the spiritual value essence of martial arts from the perspective of practical education, and effectively integrating it into the teaching objectives, curriculum construction, evaluation system and teacher building of school physical education, so as to achieve the sublimation from skill teaching to cultural education. Propose the clever integration of martial arts education into the general martial arts curriculum, organize activities related to martial arts characteristics, and guide students to participate in ethnic sports activities from body to mind in a vivid and interesting way. In addition, the school should strengthen the introduction of martial arts professional teachers and promote cultural exchanges between martial arts schools and the outside world, in order to address the root causes of problems.

3.1 Integrating Martial Arts Ethics Education into Martial Arts Classrooms

Martial arts education is not only the process of im-

parting physical skills, but also an important way to shape personality and cultivate values. In martial arts classes, teachers should adhere to the teaching philosophy of “putting morality first and combining morality and skills”, organically integrating martial ethics education into various aspects of technical teaching, so that students can not only master martial arts skills, but also subtly accept the influence of traditional culture and moral norms.

In the process of martial arts teaching, in addition to imparting the essentials of movements, more attention should be paid to interpreting the spirit of martial ethics and cultural connotations through vivid and close to students’ cognitive examples. Teachers can adopt various teaching strategies: firstly, through situational creation, integrating martial arts education into practical scenarios, such as emphasizing the martial arts requirement of “point to point” in adversarial exercises, cultivating students’ awareness of respecting opponents and restraining etiquette; Secondly, using case teaching method, narrate the allusions of martial arts masters emphasizing morality and self-cultivation, such as the story of Sun Lutang’s “cultivating morality before teaching art and refusing to be used by the powerful”, so that students can understand the practical embodiment of the spirit of martial arts; Thirdly, cooperative learning activities can also be designed to allow students to experience the collectivist spirit of “working together and helping each other” through two person practice and collective projects. At the same time, teachers should pay attention to their own martial arts cultivation, set an example for students through their words and deeds, and make martial arts education not only limited to verbal teaching, but also become a code of conduct and value pursuit for students.

3.2 Organize martial arts themed activities

Activities are an important form for students to actively experience the spirit of martial arts, and the most common forms include martial arts routine competitions, cultural performances, and cultural lectures. Build diverse display platforms for students. We can organize and choreograph martial arts collective exercises and club performances. Simultaneously conduct a martial arts knowledge competition and popularize the concept of “learning etiquette before learning skills” through fun Q&A. A special traditional etiquette experience area is set up, where students wear practice clothes and perform fist hugging rituals to experience the cultural significance of “standing upright”, achieving a dual improvement of physical exercise and moral cultivation.

This type of activity not only showcases the techniques and aesthetics of martial arts, but also strengthens stu-

students' sense of participation and belonging through competitions, group performances, cultural immersion, and other activities. Through practical interaction, students can truly understand the spiritual connotations of martial arts such as "valuing martial arts and morality, respecting teachers and valuing morality, and cultivating both internal and external skills", thereby achieving a sublimation from skill learning to cultural identity.

3.3 Strengthen the construction of professional martial arts teaching staff

The professional competence of teachers is a key support for the development of schools, and the cultivation of high-quality talents relies on the construction of a high-quality teaching staff. The inheritance of the spirit of martial arts particularly requires guidance from good teachers. Whether it is the theoretical immersion in martial arts classes or the practical guidance of traditional martial arts, teachers need to have both solid knowledge and practical abilities.

In the process of integrating the spirit of martial arts into school education, the understanding and interpretation of the core of martial arts spirit directly affect the degree and effectiveness of the educational function of martial arts. Teachers' professional competence can be improved by establishing a diversified training system.

On the one hand, we will collaborate with inheritors of intangible cultural heritage of martial arts and scholars of martial arts culture to conduct specialized training, allowing teachers to delve into the philosophical ideas and historical stories behind martial arts, and transforming cultural heritage into vivid classroom explanations; On the other hand, training on "integrating martial arts spirit into the classroom" is carried out, which simulates teaching scenarios to guide teachers to organically integrate historical allusions and cultural connotations behind teaching movements and techniques. Only by filling the gaps in teaching staff can we build an educational ecosystem that supports the rooting of the spirit of martial arts, making the campus a fertile cultural ground for cultivating students' sound personalities and promoting the inheritance of the spirit of martial arts from generation to generation.

3.4 Promoting Campus Martial Arts Cultural Exchange with Foreign Countries

Incorporating campus martial arts into the external cultural exchange system is not only an important practice of China's excellent traditional culture going global, but also a key path to broaden students' international horizons and deepen their understanding of martial arts spirit. Interac-

tion can be carried out through a combination of online and offline methods. Online live streaming of martial arts routine teaching and themed seminars on martial arts spirit can be organized, allowing students to learn classic routines such as Tai Chi and Changquan together with their overseas peers, and simultaneously explain the cultural connotations behind the "boxing etiquette" and "martial ethics standards"; Offline, regular "Martial Arts Culture Exchange Week" can be held, inviting overseas school martial arts clubs to visit and organize exchange activities such as martial arts exhibitions and cultural sharing sessions. Through face-to-face technical exchanges and cultural dialogues, students can learn to interpret the spirit of martial arts in international language and enhance their cross-cultural expression abilities.

4. Conclusion

The spirit of martial arts is rich in connotation and has multiple educational values for shaping students' personalities. It can play an important role in cultivating students' moral qualities, tempering their willpower, promoting the development of social communication skills, and deepening their self-awareness. Integrating the spirit of martial arts into school education is not only beneficial for inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture, but also enriches educational resources, innovates educational methods, and promotes the comprehensive development of students. By integrating martial arts education into martial arts classrooms, organizing activities related to martial arts characteristics, strengthening the construction of professional martial arts teaching staff, and promoting cultural exchanges between campus martial arts and foreign countries, the spirit of martial arts can shine in the campus, inheriting excellent traditional Chinese culture and laying a solid foundation for cultivating well-rounded talents.

Fund Project

University-level Youth Research Project of Guangzhou Sport University — Practical Pathways for Integrating Ideological and Political Elements into Specialized Martial Arts Courses in Sports Universities (XGQN202409)

References

- [1] Zhao Qing.Chongde Shangwu promotes traditional Chinese martial arts culture [J]. Chinese Martial Arts, 2005 (4): 36-37
- [2] Zhao Lei.Research on the Spiritual Connotation of Martial Arts [J]. Stationery and Technology, 2014, (04):29+33.

[3] Li Erhui, Liu Qing, Chen Yongjiang, etc A Brief Analysis of the Spirit and Cultural Connotation of Martial Arts [J]. Chinese Martial Arts (Research), 2017,6 (09): 42-44

[4] Ni Jinfu.The Humanistic Spirit and Value Connotation of Martial Arts Teaching [J]. Journal of Anhui University of Technology (Social Sciences Edition), 2008, (04):159-160.

[5] Cai Feng, Zhang Jianhua, Zhang Jian Research on Traditional Martial Arts Ethics from the Perspective of Confucian Ritual Culture [J]. Journal of Harbin Sport University, 2017, 35 (05): 56-61

[6] Liu Fenghu, Chen Baoxue, Wang Shun, etc The cultivation of martial arts spirit, backbone, and confidence in teenagers: spiritual dimension, educational consciousness, and practical approach [J]. Sports and Science, 2024, 45 (06): 48-56

[7] Shen Xia, Huang Yejun.On the role of martial arts education in the socialization of young people [J]. Youth Sports, 2018, (10):26-27.

[8] Chen Hongmei.The connotation of martial arts spirit and its correlation with socialist core values [J]. Sports, 2017, (04):137-138.

[9] Ding Guozhao, Shi Biying.The connotation of the spirit of martial arts and its impact on the inheritance of Chinese martial arts [J]. Contemporary Sports Science and Technology, 2023, 13 (29): 113-116.