

Forging Resilience and Fostering Connection: An Empowerment Study on University Sanshou Courses and Their Impact on Students' Psychological Resilience and Social Skills

Jinxin Chang*

School of Physical Education, Shanxi University, Taiyuan, Shanxi, China

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: This study investigates how university Sanshou courses can transcend their traditional physical skill instruction to empower students' psychological resilience and social skills. Theoretical analysis reveals that Sanshou's challenging and normative practice environment naturally fosters these competencies, yet current course implementation remains limited by narrow objectives, outdated pedagogy, and a unidimensional evaluation system. We propose a tripartite optimization strategy involving: objective redesign for whole-person development, immersive teaching incorporating collaborative and reflective elements, and multidimensional process-oriented assessment. the "Harmonizing Strength and Cultivation" reform approach presented can effectively unlock Sanshou's holistic educational value, providing valuable insights for broader physical education curriculum innovation.

Keywords: University Sanshou; Psychological Resilience; Social Skills; Physical Education Curriculum; Empowerment Mechanism

1. Introduction

In the context of contemporary fast-paced and high-pressure society, university students face multiple challenges related to academics, interpersonal relationships, and future career development[1]. the cultivation of psychological resilience and social skills has therefore become an indispensable dimension of higher education[2]. Psychological resilience is a key psychological capital that enables individuals to cope with adversity, adapt to change, and grow from these experiences, while strong social skills form the foundation for building supportive interpersonal relationships and achieving social integration. As the primary arena for talent development, a crucial task for

universities is to explore diverse pathways to effectively empower students with these core competencies[3].

Physical education has been demonstrated to be an effective vehicle for promoting mental health and socialization. Among various sports, Sanshou, a modern combat sport integrating technique, tactics, and willpower training, holds value that should extend beyond mere physical fitness and self-defense. It requires practitioners to confront pressure, overcome fear, manage emotions, adhere to strict etiquette, and engage in frequent team interactions in practice, thereby providing a unique context for tempering psychological resilience and enhancing social skills. However, a review of current Sanshou course practices in universities reveals that teaching objectives are often narrowly focused on technical instruction and physical conditioning, with insufficient exploration of its deeper educational functions, namely "cultivating the mind" (Yuxin) and "cultivating social competence" (Yuqun). This oversight leads to a constriction of the course's holistic educational value[4].

Given this context, this study focuses on the empowerment mechanism of university Sanshou courses concerning students' psychological resilience and social skills[5]. the research aims to break through traditional perspectives by theoretically analyzing the intrinsic connection between Sanshou courses and the aforementioned competencies, examining the practical challenges in current teaching methodologies, and subsequently exploring feasible pathways for curriculum optimization. the goal is to provide theoretical reference and practical insights for unleashing the full educational potential of university Sanshou courses and promoting the comprehensive quality development of university students.

2. Theoretical Linkage: the Intrinsic

Connection Between Sanshou Courses and Psychological Resilience and Social Skills

A Sanshou course is not merely about physical exertion and the transmission of techniques and tactics. Its unique training model and cultural possess a profound and multifaceted intrinsic alignment with the cultivation of university students' psychological resilience and social skills[6]. This connection forms the core theoretical basis for the course's potential for "empowerment."

Firstly, the Sanshou course serves as an effective crucible for forging psychological resilience. Psychological resilience refers to an individual's ability to effectively adapt and rebound when facing pressure, setbacks, and adversity. Essentially, Sanshou training is a process of continuously setting and overcoming physical and mental challenges. During physical conditioning, students must constantly challenge their limits, learning to persevere through fatigue and discomfort, thereby tempering perseverance and indomitable willpower. In combat practice, participants must confront the fear of being struck and the risk of defeat. This process compulsorily trains their emotional management and stress coping abilities. Each experience of reviewing, adjusting, and returning to the platform after a setback perfectly demonstrates the core psychological resilience model of "adversity-recovery-growth," fostering a positive mindset of courageously facing and transcending difficulties[7].

Secondly, the Sanshou classroom is a natural field for enhancing social skills. Social skills encompass multiple dimensions such as communication, collaboration, empathy, and awareness of rules. As a confrontational sport with strict etiquette norms, Sanshou teaching is naturally embedded with frequent social interactions. Partner drills and simulated sparring require students to engage in clear and effective command communication and body language interpretation, directly enhancing their non-verbal communication and collaborative skills. More importantly, the education in "martial virtue" (Wude), emphasizing mutual respect (e. g., pre-match bowing), trust (controlling force during exchanges), and responsibility (avoiding prohibited targets), internalizes the competitive relationship into a form of deep social interaction within a rule-based framework. This encourages students to learn to maintain respect in competition and

build trust through confrontation, thereby effectively promoting their social adaptability and the development of a mature outlook on interpersonal relationships.

In summary, through its inherent characteristics of challenge, confrontation, and normativity, the Sanshou course provides a "pressure-filled context" for cultivating psychological resilience and constructs an "interactive platform" for enhancing social skills. the intrinsic connection between these elements lays a solid theoretical foundation for the subsequent discussion in this study.

3. Examination of the Status Quo: Deficiencies in the "Empowerment" Function of University Sanshou Courses

Despite the significant theoretical potential of Sanshou courses to empower psychological resilience and social skills, an examination of current teaching practices in universities reveals a notable tendency towards a constricted and superficial realization of their educational function, failing to effectively actualize this potential. the main deficiencies are manifested at the following three levels[8].

Firstly, the curriculum objectives are narrowly defined, reflecting a skewed value orientation. Currently, the syllabi for most university Sanshou courses remain heavily focused on physical conditioning, technical movement standardization, and competitive outcomes, with assessment standards built around these aspects. This value orientation, characterized by an overemphasis on technical skills, leads to the widespread neglect in teaching of intentional guidance and in-depth exploration of students' psychological fluctuations and social interactions. For instance, instructors seldom engage in targeted psychological counseling when students overcome fatigue or face the fear of sparring, nor do they successfully transform the formalistic etiquette of bowing into an education of intrinsic respect and empathy. Consequently, the functions of "cultivating the mind" (Yuxin) and "cultivating social competence" (Yuqun) remain in a state of spontaneity rather than becoming a conscious educational practice[9].

Secondly, teaching methods and content are outdated, lacking designed empowerment contexts. the teaching process is often dominated by a singular "teacher demonstration, student imitation" model of one-way instruction, with

classroom interaction primarily consisting of unilateral technical corrections. This model lacks structured situational designs capable of effectively stimulating psychological resilience and social cooperation. For example, courses rarely introduce tactical tasks requiring teamwork for completion, or establish specific training segments designed to simulate pressure and manage emotions. The result is that even if students gain physical and technical training, their growth in psychological and social dimensions often remains fragmented and incidental by-products, rather than becoming systematic and transferable core competencies. Finally, the assessment and evaluation system is one-sided, overlooking the dimension of developmental process. The existing evaluation system relies almost exclusively on summative assessments of technical proficiency and physical fitness tests. A student's technical progress, demonstration of courage and perseverance in combat, or the support and encouragement offered to peers within a team – these process-oriented indicators reflecting the development of psychological resilience and social skills – are largely excluded from the evaluation framework. This assessment approach, which "emphasizes results over process, and skills over literacy," inadvertently reinforces the sport-oriented nature of the course. It fails to signal the value of holistic development to students and offers little positive incentive for teachers to innovate their pedagogy.

4. Path Exploration: Curriculum Optimization Strategies for Achieving "Dual Empowerment"

To bridge the gap between the potential of Sanshou courses and their current reality, and to genuinely realize their empowering effect on university students' psychological resilience and social skills, systematic curriculum reform and innovation are essential. Based on the aforementioned intrinsic connections and identified deficiencies, this study proposes the following tripartite optimization strategy[10]. The primary task involves the top-level redesign of curriculum objectives, facilitating a value shift from "skill transmission" to "whole-person education." The cultivation objectives for psychological resilience and social skills should be explicitly added and detailed within the course syllabus. For instance, specific, observable behavioral indicators such as

"maintaining emotional stability during high-intensity sparring" and "proactively collaborating to complete tactical tasks" can be incorporated alongside technical goals. This top-level design will guide teaching practices to focus on "dual empowerment."

The core element lies in innovating teaching content and methods to construct an "immersive" empowering teaching environment. Instructors must move beyond one-way technical demonstration and design structured teaching activities. Examples include introducing "team-based tactical analysis and practice" tasks that compel students to solve problems collaboratively; establishing "willpower challenges under extreme load" segments, such as timed continuous attack and defense drills coupled with immediate mindset guidance; and implementing post-training "training logs and reflection" to encourage students to record psychological experiences and interactive insights, thereby internalizing external physical practice into psychological growth and social cognition[11].

A crucial safeguard is the reform of the assessment and evaluation system, establishing a multidimensional process-oriented evaluation mechanism. The simplistic model of "single high-stakes testing determining grades" must be abandoned in favor of constructing a comprehensive evaluation system that integrates technical, psychological, and social dimensions. Specifically, the weight of process evaluation can be significantly increased, incorporating factors such as class participation, contribution within teams, proactive performance in overcoming difficulties, and adherence to martial virtue etiquette into the assessment scope. Through various methods like peer assessment, teacher observation records, and reflective reports, students' non-technical growth should receive substantive recognition, thereby creating a reverse incentive for students to value and invest in their holistic development.

5. Conclusion

This study establishes the significant potential of university Sanshou courses to empower students' psychological resilience and social skills, moving beyond their traditional role as mere skill-based training. Our analysis confirms that the sport's inherent challenges and structured nature provide a unique platform for holistic development. However, this potential remains

largely untapped due to constrained objectives, outdated pedagogy, and a narrow evaluation system.

To address this, we propose a systematic, tripartite optimization strategy: redesigning objectives towards whole-person education, innovating teaching methods to create immersive learning contexts, and reforming assessment to incorporate multidimensional, process-oriented evaluation. This "Harmonizing Strength and Cultivation" approach provides a viable framework for enhancing Sanshou courses and offers insights for broader physical education reform.

Future work should focus on empirically validating these strategies and elucidating the specific mechanisms behind Sanshou's empowerment effects. Such research will be crucial in realizing the full educational value of Sanshou and its role in nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of contributing to societal advancement.

References

- [1] Cerit E, Şimşek N. A social skills development training programme to improve adolescents' psychological resilience and emotional intelligence level. *Arch Psychiatr Nurs*. 2021; 35:610 – 6.
- [2] You X-R, Gong X-R, Guo M-R, Ma B-X. Cognitive behavioural therapy to improve social skills in children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder: A meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *J Affect Disord*. 2024; 344:8 – 17.
- [3] Haghighi AH, Broughani S, Askari R, Shahrabadi H, Souza D, Gentil P. Combined Physical Training Strategies Improve Physical Fitness, Behavior, and Social Skills of Autistic Children. *J Autism Dev Disord*. 2023; 53:4271 – 9.
- [4] Li G, Huang P, Cui S, He Y, Tan Y, Chen S. Effect of long-term Tai Chi training on Parkinson's disease: a 3.5-year follow-up cohort study. *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry*. 2024; 95:222 – 8.
- [5] Yang X, Wu J, Ma Y, Yu J, Cao H, Zeng A, et al. Effectiveness of Virtual Reality Technology Interventions in Improving the Social Skills of Children and Adolescents With Autism: Systematic Review. *J Med Internet Res*. 2025; 27:e60845.
- [6] Martin-Moratinos M, Bella-Fernández M, Blasco-Fontecilla H. Effects of Music on Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Potential Application in Serious Video Games: Systematic Review. *J Med Internet Res*. 2023; 25:e37742.
- [7] Huang J, Du C, Liu J, Tan G. Meta-Analysis on Intervention Effects of Physical Activities on Children and Adolescents with Autism. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2020; 17:1950.
- [8] Li B, Tang H, He G, Jin Z, He Y, Huang P, et al. Tai Chi enhances cognitive training effects on delaying cognitive decline in mild cognitive impairment. *Alzheimers Dement*. 2023; 19:136 – 49.
- [9] Taylor-Piliae RE, Finley BA. Tai Chi exercise for psychological well-being among adults with cardiovascular disease: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Eur J Cardiovasc Nurs*. 2020; 19:580 – 91.
- [10] Wang C, Bannuru R, Ramel J, Kupelnick B, Scott T, Schmid CH. Tai Chi on psychological well-being: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Complement Altern Med*. 2010; 10:23.
- [11] Wang F, Lee E-KO, Wu T, Benson H, Fricchione G, Wang W, et al. the effects of tai chi on depression, anxiety, and psychological well-being: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Int J Behav Med*. 2014; 21:605 – 17.