

How Physical Education Shapes Students' Political Awareness in a Rapidly Changing Social Environment

Guangjia Wang¹, Xueting Hua², Lu Liu^{1,*}

¹*Jiangsu Normal University, Xuzhou, Jiangsu, China*

²*Jiangsu Xuzhou Vocational College of Finance and Economics, Xuzhou, Jiangsu, China*

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: This study aims to explore the internal mechanism and practical value of physical education in shaping students' political awareness amid ongoing social changes, addressing the insufficient attention to dynamic social contextual factors in existing ideological education research. Adopting the methods of literature induction, theoretical deduction and logical analysis, this research systematically sorts out the dual attributes of physical education including physical training and ideological cultivation. It analyzes the impact of diversified social trends and environmental changes on adolescents' political cognition, and summarizes the practical dilemmas of current physical education in ideological guidance. The results reveal that standardized physical education teaching, sports spirit inheritance and collective sports practice can effectively cultivate students' sense of social responsibility, national identity and normative political cognition. This study provides practical optimization directions for integrating ideological and political education into modern physical education.

Keywords: Physical Education; Ideological Cultivation; Youth Education

1. Introduction

The continuous iteration of social structures, the rapid spread of digital information, and the diversification of cultural trends have profoundly reshaped the growth environment of contemporary students. Young people are exposed to complex and fragmented social information from multiple channels in their daily growth, which exerts a subtle influence on the formation and development of their political cognition, value judgment and social identity. Political awareness, as the core component of students' comprehensive literacy, determines

their social cognition level, national identity and sense of social responsibility, and is a key training goal of modern youth quality education. Traditional political awareness cultivation mainly relies on ideological and political courses and thematic education activities, while the educational potential of public curriculum disciplines has long been underestimated in practical teaching.

Physical education, as a compulsory basic discipline covering all stages of school education, has unique educational advantages different from cultural courses. It integrates practical experience, behavioral discipline, collective interaction and spiritual inheritance, and undertakes important moral education and value shaping functions in the whole-person education system. Modern physical education is no longer limited to the single goal of physical fitness training and sports skill teaching. It contains rich ideological and political educational elements, and can realize implicit value guidance through situational teaching and practical experience. In the context of increasingly complex social environment, single indoctrination-style political education is difficult to adapt to the cognitive characteristics and growth needs of contemporary students. Exploring the implicit educational function of physical education to shape students' political awareness has become an important direction for the reform and innovation of school moral education and physical education.

This research focuses on the interactive relationship between physical education and students' political awareness shaping under the background of social environmental changes. It excavates the internal logical connection between sports educational attributes and political literacy cultivation, analyzes the practical problems faced by current physical education in ideological guidance, and constructs targeted educational optimization

paths. The research results can enrich the theoretical system of physical education curriculum ideology and politics, and provide practical reference for schools to carry out implicit political literacy education for students.

1.1 Research Background and Significance

The continuous development of social modernization has brought profound changes to youth education ecology. The popularization of internet information and the integration of cross-cultural trends make contemporary students present the characteristics of diversified cognition, personalized thinking and open vision. Such growth characteristics make students' political awareness formation present obvious plasticity and vulnerability. Complex social information and heterogeneous value concepts may interfere with the formation of students' correct political cognition, and even lead to vague national identity and weak social responsibility awareness. It is urgent for school education to build a multi-dimensional educational system to guide students to form stable and positive political awareness.

School physical education has always been an important carrier of quality education and moral education. Sports activities with standardized rules, collective attributes and competitive spirit can cultivate students' awareness of rules, team cooperation spirit and positive struggle attitude in practical experience. These spiritual qualities are highly consistent with the basic connotation of contemporary youth political literacy. In the current education reform context, the integration of ideological and political elements into professional courses has become a key focus of education reform. The value shaping function of physical education and its practical path of implementing great ideological and political courses have been continuously verified in educational practice.

The research significance of this study is reflected in two dimensions of theory and practice. In theoretical dimension, this study clarifies the internal mechanism of physical education acting on students' political awareness formation, breaks the single research perspective of traditional physical education moral education research, and expands the research boundary of physical education curriculum ideology and politics and youth political literacy education. In practical dimension, combined with the current changing social environment and students'

cognitive characteristics, this study summarizes the practical dilemmas of physical education in political awareness cultivation, and puts forward feasible optimization paths, which can provide specific operational guidance for front-line physical education teaching reform and youth political education practice.

1.2 Research Status at Home and Abroad

Foreign research on physical education and youth literacy cultivation started earlier, focusing on the social education value of sports. Relevant studies have confirmed that school sports participation can effectively cultivate adolescents' social adaptability, rule awareness and collective sense of honor, and these literacy elements constitute the basic foundation of individual social political cognition. Foreign scholars pay more attention to the practical value of sports in cultivating citizens' social literacy, and regard school physical education as an important part of civic education, emphasizing the role of sports practice in shaping young people's social participation awareness and public responsibility. However, foreign research is limited by different national political education systems and educational concepts, and there is less targeted research on students' political awareness shaping, lacking research combined with the actual situation of youth political literacy cultivation in the context of Chinese education.

Domestic research has formed a certain research foundation in the field of physical education ideological and political construction and sports moral education. Many studies have discussed the moral education function, value connotation and implementation path of physical education in school education system. Some scholars have explored the integration strategy of ideological and political elements in college and middle school physical education courses, and verified the positive role of sports spirit, red sports resources and sports rule education in shaping students' healthy personality and moral quality. Existing studies have confirmed that physical education has unique advantages in implicit ideological education, and can avoid the rigid indoctrination defects of traditional ideological education.

Nevertheless, the current domestic research still has obvious deficiencies. Most existing studies focus on the general moral education and personality shaping functions of physical

education, and few studies take students' political awareness as the core research object to carry out targeted research. Most research discussions stay in the static educational context, failing to fully combine the dynamic changes of current social environment to analyze the new challenges and new opportunities faced by physical education in political awareness cultivation. There is a lack of systematic sorting out of the internal mechanism and practical dilemmas of physical education shaping students' political awareness under the background of rapid social changes, and the targeted optimization path system is not perfect. This study makes up for the above research deficiencies, and carries out systematic research on the correlation between physical education and students' political awareness shaping under changing social environment.

2. Theoretical Foundation of the Research

2.1 Educational Value Connotation of Modern Physical Education

Modern school physical education is a comprehensive educational activity integrating physical training, skill teaching, spiritual cultivation and value guidance, with distinct comprehensive educational attributes different from single skill education. The core educational goal of modern physical education has evolved from the traditional single goal of enhancing physical fitness to the comprehensive goal of cultivating all-round developed talents with healthy physical quality, sound personality and positive spiritual quality. The value connotation of modern physical education can be divided into material level, behavioral level and spiritual level, and the multi-level value attributes jointly support the realization of students' comprehensive literacy cultivation.

At the material level, physical education takes physical exercise and sports skill learning as the carrier to improve students' physical quality, lay a solid physical foundation for their growth and development, and cultivate their persistent will quality in long-term sports training. At the behavioral level, all sports activities are carried out on the basis of standardized rules. Students need to abide by sports rules, accept referee judgment and coordinate team relations in sports learning and competition. Long-term rule constraint and behavioral standardization training can help students form good behavioral

norms and self-discipline awareness. At the spiritual level, sports contains rich spiritual connotations such as unremitting self-improvement, fair competition, unity and cooperation, and courage to struggle. These spiritual elements can infiltrate into students' ideological cognition through practical experience, and realize implicit shaping of students' values and spiritual outlook.

The implicit educational attribute of modern physical education is the core advantage of its participation in political awareness cultivation. Different from the explicit teaching of ideological and political courses, physical education realizes value guidance through situational experience and behavioral perception. This experiential educational mode is easier to be accepted by contemporary students, and can effectively avoid the rebellious psychology caused by single ideological indoctrination. The multi-dimensional educational value of physical education provides a solid theoretical basis for shaping students' political awareness, and its rule education, collective education and spiritual inheritance functions are highly compatible with the cultivation needs of students' political cognition, national identity and social responsibility.

2.2 Formation Law of Students' Political Awareness

Students' political awareness is a comprehensive cognitive system formed on the basis of individual physical and mental development, social environment perception and school education guidance, including political cognition, political emotion, political belief and political behavior tendency. The formation of political awareness is not innate, but a gradual accumulation and iterative optimization process in the process of individual growth and social interaction, with obvious stage, plasticity and situational characteristics. Adolescent students are in a critical period of physical and mental development and value formation, their cognitive ability is gradually mature, and their social perception scope is constantly expanded, so their political awareness has strong plasticity. The formation of students' political awareness follows the logical law from perceptual cognition to rational recognition, and then to behavioral internalization. In the initial stage of growth, students form superficial perceptual cognition of social systems, national

development and social norms through daily life and school education. With the enrichment of learning experience and social experience, students gradually form rational judgment on political concepts and social norms, and generate stable political emotion and political belief. Finally, internalize political cognition into behavioral consciousness, and form positive political behavior tendency in daily study and life.

School education is the core guiding factor in the formation of students' political awareness, and systematic curriculum education and situational practical education can effectively guide the direction of students' political cognition. Social environment is the important external influencing factor of political awareness formation. The positive social atmosphere and positive social values can promote the formation of students' correct political awareness, while the confused social information and negative social trends will hinder the healthy development of political cognition. Physical education, as an important part of school education, can act on each link of students' political awareness formation through situational experience and behavioral training, and realize the shaping and optimization of students' political cognition, political emotion and political behavior.

3. Practical Dilemmas of Physical Education Shaping Students' Political Awareness under Changing Social Environment

3.1 Influence of Rapid Social Changes on Students' Political Cognition Development

The rapid development of social economy and digital information technology has completely changed the traditional growth environment of students, and brought multi-dimensional influence on the development of students' political awareness. The internet and social media have become the main channels for contemporary students to obtain social information. The open and decentralized information dissemination mode makes students exposed to massive fragmented information and diversified value concepts. A large number of heterogeneous social thoughts and negative public opinions break the single positive educational atmosphere of traditional school education, and cause interference to students' correct political cognition judgment.

The diversification of social cultural trends weakens the uniqueness of mainstream social values. Some extreme individualism, utilitarianism and western erroneous thoughts penetrate into youth groups through network channels, making some students lack sufficient understanding of national development, social systems and mainstream values. The vague political cognition leads to the weakening of national identity and social responsibility awareness, and even produces biased social cognition. The rapid pace of social development also makes students' growth pressure increase, and some students pay too much attention to personal academic performance and future development, ignoring the improvement of personal political literacy and social cognition ability.

In addition, the acceleration of social mobility and the complexity of social relations make students' social participation cognition more confused. Contemporary students lack sufficient social practical experience, their political cognition is mostly derived from indirect information acquisition, and they lack independent discrimination ability against complex social information. The unstable social cognitive state makes students' political awareness present fragmented and uncertain characteristics, which increases the difficulty of school political education. Traditional single political education mode has been unable to adapt to the current complex social educational environment, and it is necessary to rely on multi-disciplinary implicit education to consolidate students' political cognition foundation.

3.2 Deficiencies of Current Physical Education in Political Awareness Cultivation

Although physical education has inherent advantages in shaping students' political awareness, restricted by traditional teaching concepts, single teaching mode and insufficient curriculum design, current school physical education has obvious deficiencies in political literacy cultivation, and cannot give full play to its implicit educational value. The most prominent problem is the deviation of teaching orientation. Most school physical education teaching still takes physical fitness improvement and sports skill teaching as the core goal, ignoring the ideological and political educational function of physical education. Physical education teachers pay more attention to

students' sports performance and physical test results in practical teaching, and lack active awareness of excavating political literacy cultivation elements in sports teaching.

The integration of ideological and political elements in physical education curriculum content is insufficient and rigid. Many schools' physical education ideological and political construction stays in superficial formal integration, simply superimposing political education content in sports teaching, lacking organic integration with sports teaching content and teaching links. The single curriculum content makes the political awareness cultivation of physical education lack pertinence and systematicness, unable to form a continuous educational influence on students' political cognition. Some physical education courses fail to combine red sports resources, sports spirit and national sports development achievements to carry out educational guidance, missing important educational carriers for cultivating students' national identity and political emotion. The single teaching mode restricts the exertion of physical education's political education function. Current physical education teaching is mostly based on classroom teaching and on-campus sports training, lacking diversified practical educational scenarios. Political awareness shaping is a kind of spiritual and cognitive cultivation, which needs rich situational experience to realize internalization. Single sports skill training and mechanical exercise cannot mobilize students' emotional resonance, and it is difficult to realize the deep shaping of political cognition. At the same time, the lack of professional educational literacy of some physical education teachers also restricts the quality of political awareness cultivation. Most physical education teachers have professional sports skills, but lack systematic ideological and political education training, and their ability to excavate educational elements and carry out implicit value guidance is insufficient.

4. Practical Paths of Physical Education Shaping Students' Political Awareness

4.1 Optimization of Curriculum Content Integrating Political Literacy Cultivation

Curriculum content is the core carrier of physical education to realize political awareness cultivation. Under the background of changing

social environment, schools need to optimize physical education curriculum content system, systematically excavate political literacy educational elements contained in sports disciplines, and realize the organic integration of sports skill teaching and political awareness cultivation. Physical education curriculum optimization should adhere to the student-oriented principle, combine the cognitive characteristics and growth needs of students at different stages, and integrate national identity education, rule awareness education, social responsibility education and collective spirit education into daily physical education teaching content.

Schools should fully tap red sports resources and integrate them into physical education curriculum system. Red sports culture contains rich spiritual connotations of patriotism, struggle and dedication, which can effectively guide students to establish correct national outlook and political outlook. In daily teaching, teachers can integrate the development history of national sports cause, the deeds of outstanding athletes and the inheritance of sports spirit into sports skill teaching, so that students can perceive the development progress of the country and the spiritual power of the nation in sports learning, and enhance their sense of national pride and identity. For different sports courses, targeted ideological and political elements can be embedded. Collective ball games can focus on cultivating students' team cooperation awareness and collective honor sense, while individual competitive sports can focus on shaping students' positive struggle spirit and fair competition awareness.

It is necessary to build a hierarchical and systematic physical education ideological and political curriculum system to adapt to the political cognition development law of students at different ages. Primary and middle school physical education focuses on cultivating students' basic rule awareness, collective consciousness and patriotic emotion, laying a foundation for the formation of initial political awareness. College physical education focuses on strengthening students' social responsibility awareness, national cultural confidence and political rational cognition, guiding students to combine personal sports development with national sports cause progress. The hierarchical curriculum content design can ensure the continuity and pertinence of political awareness

cultivation, and form a long-term educational effect.

4.2 Innovation of Teaching Modes and Educational Scenario Construction

To adapt to the complex social educational environment and students' personalized cognitive characteristics, physical education needs to break the traditional single teaching mode, innovate diversified teaching methods, and build rich educational scenarios to realize implicit and in-depth political awareness shaping. Physical education teachers should change the traditional teaching concept of focusing only on skill training, take implicit value guidance as an important teaching goal, and integrate political literacy cultivation into every link of sports teaching, including warm-up exercise, skill learning, competitive training and post-class summary.

Diversified practical sports activities should be carried out to expand the educational scenarios of political awareness cultivation. Schools can organize campus sports meetings, inter-class sports competitions, school sports leagues and other collective sports activities, let students participate in collective sports practice independently, and cultivate their sense of collective honor and team responsibility in the process of mutual cooperation and positive competition. The organizational process of sports activities can standardize students' behavioral norms, strengthen their awareness of abiding by rules and discipline, and translate normative behavioral habits into stable political cognitive literacy. At the same time, schools can carry out themed sports education activities combining social hot topics and national sports events, guide students to pay attention to national sports development and social public affairs, and cultivate their social participation awareness and political sensitivity.

It is essential to strengthen the professional literacy construction of physical education teachers and improve their ability of implicit political education. Schools should carry out regular ideological and political education training for physical education teachers, help teachers master the method of excavating disciplinary educational elements and implicit value guidance, and enable teachers to accurately integrate political literacy cultivation into sports teaching in daily teaching. Teachers should pay attention to students' emotional

experience and cognitive changes in sports teaching, grasp the opportunity of situational education, carry out targeted value guidance for students' behavioral performance and ideological trends in sports practice, and effectively promote the internalization of students' positive political awareness.

5. Conclusion

The rapid iteration of social environment has brought new challenges and opportunities for youth political awareness education. As an important part of school all-round education, physical education has unique implicit educational advantages in shaping students' political awareness, and its rule education, collective practice and spiritual inheritance functions can effectively act on the formation and optimization of students' political cognition, political emotion and political belief. This study systematically analyzes the influence mechanism of social environmental changes on students' political awareness development, sorts out the practical dilemmas of current physical education in political literacy cultivation, including deviated teaching orientation, insufficient curriculum integration and single teaching mode. Targeted at the existing problems, this study constructs the optimization paths from curriculum content optimization and teaching mode innovation. The systematic integration of ideological and political elements in physical education curriculum and the construction of diversified educational scenarios can effectively give full play to the educational value of physical education, help students form positive national identity, social responsibility awareness and normative political cognition, and adapt to the youth literacy cultivation needs under the modern social environment. In future physical education teaching reform, schools should further attach importance to the ideological and political educational function of physical education, continuously optimize the educational system, and take physical education as an important carrier of youth political awareness education to promote the all-round healthy development of students' political literacy and comprehensive quality.

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