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A POLC-Based Management Model for Promoting Dragon Dance in Polytechnic Colleges of Guangdong Province

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Dragon dance (*shua long*), a traditional Chinese folk activity symbolizing auspiciousness, strength, and wisdom, has been widely practiced since the Han Dynasty. In Guangdong Province, it remains an important cultural heritage, yet its integration into higher vocational education is still limited. While some colleges include dragon dance in festivals or special events, long-term systematic training, curriculum integration, and professional instruction remain underdeveloped. As an intangible cultural heritage, dragon dance plays an essential role in cultural preservation, education, and social cohesion, making its promotion in polytechnic colleges both urgent and relevant. The paper aims: (1) To survey the current situation of dragon dance in polytechnic colleges of Guangdong Province. (2) To construct a management model for promoting dragon dance based on the POLC (Planning, Organizing, Leading, Controlling) framework. And (3) to validate the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed model.

Methodology: The study employed a mixed-methods design, combining questionnaire surveys, expert interviews, the Delphi method, literature review, and focus groups. Questionnaires were distributed to 362 students and 111 teachers from 30 vocational colleges. Delphi validation involved 19 experts across three rounds, while 12 experts participated in focus groups to refine and confirm the model.

Results: Findings indicated that both students and teachers rated POLC dimensions highly, though shortages in professional instructors, resources, and systematic support were noted. Delphi rounds validated key factors in the POLC model, including policy design, curriculum integration, teacher training, facility provision, leadership support, and evaluation mechanisms. The focus group confirmed the feasibility of the model, emphasizing its cultural significance and the need for policy support.

Conclusion: The study proposes a comprehensive management model to promote dragon dance in Guangdong's polytechnic colleges. Effective implementation requires systematic planning, dedicated funding, teacher training, curriculum inclusion, and collaboration with cultural

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institutions. The model not only enhances student physical and cultural education but also contributes to the preservation and revitalization of dragon dance as an intangible cultural heritage

Keywords: Dragon Dance; Polytechnic Colleges; Guangdong Province

Introduction

As a vital symbol of Chinese culture, the dragon dance has seen its global influence significantly expand. In Chinese communities across Southeast Asia, the Americas, and Europe, it has become an essential element of traditional festivals like Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival. In Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, universities and cultural organizations actively promote dragon dance, establishing systematic training programs and competitive frameworks. International events such as the "World Dragon and Lion Championships" not only spread this tradition overseas but also drive its evolution from cultural display to competitive sports. Notably, some regions show more enthusiasm for dragon dance abroad than in China itself—a stark contrast to the "overseas popularity versus domestic indifference" phenomenon observed by Gao Jiajia (2023). This dynamic presents both opportunities and challenges for the future development of the Chinese dragon dance.

In China, dragon dance—a comprehensive sport blending sports, art, and cultural elements—was included in the national intangible cultural heritage list in 2006. However, compared to basketball, football, martial arts, and other sports, its nationwide popularity remains limited, a finding consistent with Lei Qiang and Lei Junrong's (2017) research. Its development is concentrated in culturally rich regions. Additionally, due to the lack of unified teaching curricula, systematic teacher training mechanisms, and sustained funding support, there are significant gaps in promoting dragon dance within the education system. Most higher vocational colleges have not incorporated dragon dance into regular physical education courses, treating it merely as an embellishment for campus cultural festivals or welcome events, lacking institutionalized guarantees. This aligns with Hei Shenglin's (2024) findings. Although some students show interest, limited participation due to inadequate curriculum design and club organizations restricts the group size and overall enthusiasm. There's a shortage of professional dragon dance instructors, with schools relying on external coaches or temporary guidance for teaching activities. Funding for equipment procurement is insufficient, and dedicated training venues remain scarce. While Guangdong Province has hosted multiple large-scale dragon dance competitions at the societal level, the number of participating teams from higher vocational colleges remains small, with competitive levels still in their early exploratory stages. Notably, no research on applying the

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POLC theory to dragon dance has been conducted among higher vocational colleges in Guangdong.

Objectives

1. To survey the current situation of the dragon dance at the polytechnic college in Guangdong province.

2. To construct a management model of the dragon dance of the Polytechnic College in Guangdong province.

3. To confirm the model of the dragon dance of the Polytechnic College in Guangdong province.

Literature Review

The cultural connotation and development of the dragon dance

As a time-honored intangible cultural heritage, dragon dance embodies the Chinese nation's profound cultural values of blessing prosperity, warding off evil, and fostering unity. More than just a folk performance art, it stands as a vital symbol of the Chinese national spirit, reflecting the totemic reverence for dragons and collective cultural identity in Chinese culture. Diverse regional styles have emerged across northern and southern China, with ethnic groups developing distinctive traditions like Guangdong's "fire dragon," Hakka's "grass dragon," and the Miao ethnic group's ritual dragon dances. These variations showcase both regional cultural uniqueness and inherent inclusivity, highlighting the multifaceted significance of dragon dance as an intangible cultural legacy.

Dragon dance embodies the essence of teamwork and collective coordination, serving both as a cultural showcase and a bridge for social interaction. Its implementation at festivals, temple fairs, campus events, and international cultural exchanges effectively strengthens community cohesion while enhancing national identity and cultural confidence. Introducing dragon dance into academic settings—particularly vocational colleges—empowers young students to engage with traditional Chinese culture through hands-on practice, thereby fulfilling its educational mission of "cultivating character through culture." Combining strength, coordination, rhythm, and artistic expression, this dynamic practice not only provides effective physical exercise but also delivers aesthetic education. It perfectly demonstrates the seamless integration of sports and culture, aligning with Liu Changli's (2015) perspective on cultural edification through athletic engagement.

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The development of the dragon dance in colleges and universities

Incubation stage (before the 1980s): In the early days of the founding of new China, the dragon dance was mainly active in folk self-organized organizations and festivals, and had not been included in the higher education system.

Exploration stage (1980s-1990s): After the reform and opening up, ethnic traditional sports gradually received more attention. With the proposal of the concept of "ethnic culture on campus", some colleges and universities began to try to introduce dragon dance as one of the contents of campus cultural performance.

Development stage (from the early 21st century to 2010): In the 21st century, the promotion of dragon dance in colleges and universities has entered a relatively systematic development stage.

Popularization and standardization stage (2010 to now): Under the background of the new era, the development of dragon dance in colleges and universities shows a significant trend of popularization and standardization.

Exploration of the POLC theory in China

The POLC theory has initiated preliminary explorations in China's sports management and related educational practices. As a classic organizational management model, it holds reference value for developing smart sports promotion strategies. While this theoretical framework has begun to emerge in Chinese sports science research, it has yet to form a systematic research lineage. Future applications of this theory in policy studies, physical education instruction, campus sports administration, and the promotion of traditional sports disciplines (such as ethnic sports and intangible cultural heritage sports) could significantly enrich the theoretical foundation of China's sports governance system and drive academic innovation. This perspective aligns with Liu Jing's (2013) observation.

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Conceptual Framework

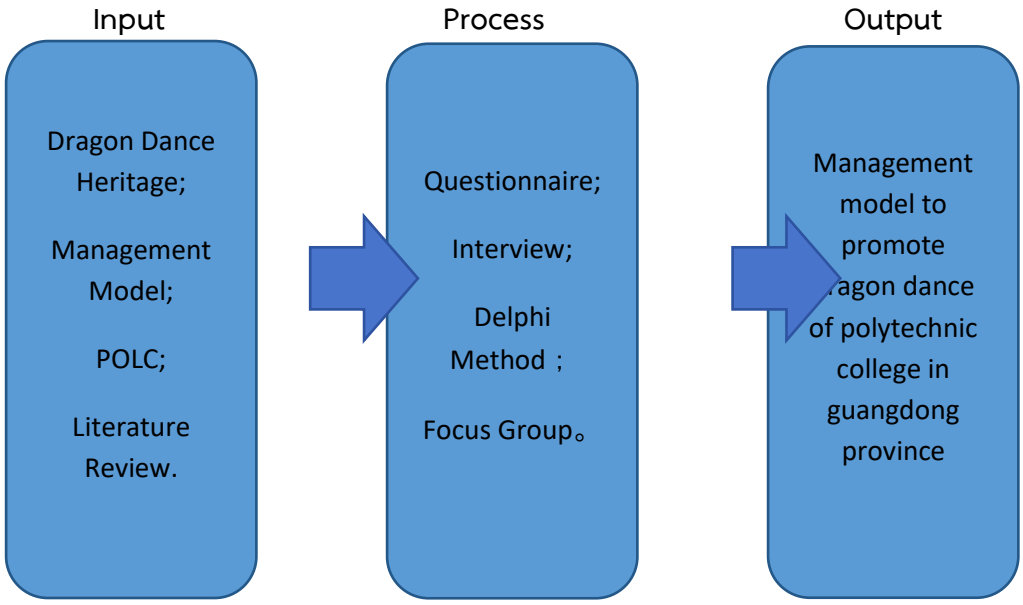


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study used a questionnaire survey, interview, Delphi method, and focus group method to finally get the promotion and management model of dragon dance in higher vocational colleges in Guangdong Province.

The questionnaire survey method was conducted by randomly distributing questionnaires to 111 teachers and 362 students from 30 higher vocational colleges in Guangdong Province through Krejcie & Morgan's table. The questionnaires were divided into student and teacher versions, consisting of 4 personal information questions, 33 POLC questions, and 3 open-ended questions.

After compiling the questionnaire results into interview outlines, we conducted interviews with seven experts. The collected feedback was then distributed to 19 experts for a Delphi method model development. The Delphi process consisted of three rounds: Round 1 (53 questions), Round 2 (51 questions), and Round 3 (51 questions). Through voting, the 19 experts confirmed that the median values and interquartile ranges (IQR) of all elements based on the POLC theory all exceeded 3.5, with IQR values below 1.5.

Finally, the model was discussed by 12 focus group experts to get the final model.

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Results

Questionnaire Survey (Students & Teachers)

Method	Sample Size	Key Findings
Questionnaire	362 students, 111 teachers	Students & teachers rated POLC dimensions "High"; shortage of teachers & resources noted
Delphi	38 experts (3 rounds)	Validated management model; consensus on factors in the POLC framework
Focus Group	12 experts (coaches, educators, leaders)	Confirmed feasibility of model; emphasized cultural significance & policy needs

Samples: Students362, Teachers111

Demographics (Students): Gender: Male 59.7%, Female 40.3%

Age: Majority between 20–21 years old (65.5%)

Study Year: Sophomore 41.7%, Junior 43.4%

Experience: 47.5% had 2–3 years of dragon dance experience

Findings: Students generally rated the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (POLC) aspects of dragon dance promotion as "High" (average scores around 3.7–3.9 / 5).

Teachers' evaluations showed similar trends, but highlighted shortages in professional instructors and training resources.

Delphi Method (Expert Panel)

Experts: 38, Rounds: 3, Method: Experts rated the importance of management model factors; consensus achieved when Median ≥ 3.5 & IQR ≤ 1.5.

Outcome: Key factors under POLC were validated, including:

Planning: policy design, funding, curriculum integration

Organizing: teacher training, facilities, collaboration with local associations

Leading: leadership support, motivation of students & staff

Controlling: evaluation mechanisms, feedback systems

Final model achieved high content validity after iterative revisions.

Focus Group (Experts, Coaches, Administrators)

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Composition: 12 participants (4 coaches, 4 PE experts, 4 college leaders)

Main Conclusions:

Positive appraisal of the draft management model

Agreement that dragon dance has cultural + educational value

Identified challenges: limited resources, lack of long-term policy support, uneven regional development

Suggested strengthening curriculum inclusion and teacher training programs

Discussion

The theoretical model for dragon dance program construction in polytechnic colleges in Guangdong Province can be constructed and improved. On the one hand, short-, medium-, and long-term planning as the guarantee of the program construction needs to be accompanied by a series of specific development goals and direction of study. In the initial stage, some negative factors will be encountered. If appropriate funds and financial reserves are provided, stability and sustainability can be achieved. On the other hand, curriculum setting, educational role, and the policy of intangible cultural heritage are the important bases for the program construction. Therefore, as a carrier of cultural inheritance and a form of cultural innovation, dragon dance aims to achieve promotion through careful objective setting (Liu, 2015).

The internal management mechanism should be led by the sports department and coordinated with the student affairs office and the youth league committee. In this way, a network system composed of internal management groups, student associations, and external support is formed. By reasonably arranging venues, targeted investment, and the school–enterprise cooperation mode, the premise of popularization and industrialization can be formed. On the other hand, the reasonable allocation of funds for cultural courses can increase the exposure of this activity (Zhang, 2012).

The quality improvement of dragon dance programs should be achieved through competitions. Competitions such as the Universiade and provincial championships are important platforms for students to show their skills and can also stimulate their enthusiasm. In this way, training and performance levels can be effectively improved. Competition is not only a way to demonstrate the vitality of dragon dance, but also a direction for the continuous inheritance and innovation of dragon dance (Fan & Yuan, 2021).

On the other hand, the long-term popularization of the dragon dance should be achieved by a dual path of culture and education. In this way, the cultural identity of students in colleges can be enhanced to a certain extent. The essence of culture is to safeguard intangible cultural

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heritage, and the main means is education. Through the joint construction of dragon dance courses, the penetration of the cross-disciplinary curriculum, and the joint construction of school–cultural organizations, this carrier can be promoted (Gao, 2023; Luo & Rao, 2011).

Recommendation

Application of research results

1. Utilize the management model to promote the dragon dance of polytechnic colleges in Guangdong province and extend it into a school-level dragon dance promotion implementation plan, and effectively coordinate with provincial coordinating departments and various dragon dance member units in Guangdong province.

2. Evaluate the venue facilities and teaching staff of polytechnic colleges that want to participate in the promotion of dragon dance projects, and regularly organize dragon dance coach training courses in conjunction with local dragon dance member units to improve the province's dragon dance teaching staff and thus improve the province's students' dragon dance level.

Recommendation for future study

1. Carry out short-term, medium-term, and long-term practice of the promotion model of higher polytechnic colleges in Guangdong Province, and adjust it at any time according to specific regions and locations, and collect factors affecting the practice to make full preparations for long-term implementation.

2. It is suggested that in the future, practitioners of dragon dance can be encouraged to engage in scientific research to promote the dragon dance model and obtain more factors conducive to the development of dragon dance.

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