

Comparative Cultural Analysis and Modern Reflections on Chinese Dragon Dance

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Abstract

Developed as a customary ritual ceremony, yet today it is believed to be an integral part of both Chinese folk art and culture. Against this background, it is important to consider how the years have treated Chinese dragon dances in terms of modern stylistic application. Specifically, it classifies systematically the diversities of kinds of dragons in terms of archive records, designs, and analysis of cultural significance. 10 cultural experts were also invited to carry out semi-structured interviews in which more light would be shed on the relevance of this dance today in giving recommendations on how to sustain it in light of this intangible heritage.

These findings disclosed 5 different classifications of dragons based on their ritual purpose. A further fact agreed upon is that they have come to transcend the traditional boundaries due to such modern adaptations as augmented reality technology, which further retains its symbolic potency at home in young, diverse sensibilities. Yet, there certainly exists an urgency for their preservation in the face of a declining tradition, making youth education on cultural values paramount.

In sum, the Chinese dragon dances encapsulate a deep cultural past imbued by an innovative present; traditional modernity supports their dynamism for cross-generation transmission of ethnic pride in China and globally among diasporic countries. This research will offer an analytical frame to understand the duality and importance of safeguarding this dragon dance heritage through strategic adaptations and youth involvement.

Keywords: Comparative; Modern Reflections

Introduction

The Chinese dragon symbolises China and has significant cultural importance. Chinese dragons represent knowledge, strength, and prosperity, and are said to bring good fortune. In ancient times, people performed dragon dances to beg for rain during droughts and to protect crops from bug infestations after sowing (Budianta, 2007). Currently, dragon dances are conducted at celebratory events to ward off malevolent forces and usher in periods of prosperity.

Their evolution is intricately linked with societal events including sacrifice, religion, and festivals, displaying deep and intriguing colours. Dragon dance is a traditional folk pastime in Sichuan, used for sacrifice and praying for rain. It has a diverse range of rich and colourful material. Panlong Song first gained popularity in the Zigong region, with many recordings documenting dragon dance performances.

For instance, dragon lanterns have their origins in the Tang Dynasty, while gongs and drums emerged during the Song Dynasty. There are very few recordings regarding dragon dances. With the rapid progress and development of the modern society, the entertainment

* Received: February 22 2027; Revised: March 11 2024; Accepted: March 14 2024

function of the dragon dance, which is lively and festive, and the economic function, which can be used for tourism development, have become the most demanded by the contemporary people. As a result, the Dragon Dance has developed into an activity with more simplified ceremonies, more colourful equipment, and stronger entertainment. The main consciousness has changed the development direction of dragon dance culture (Budianta, 2007).

The Dragon Dance, originating from China, has become a renowned cultural dance throughout the Asia area. China borders the north of Vietnam geographically. Furthermore, with the North's authority over South Vietnam, Chinese culture started to spread throughout Vietnam. Vietnamese culture has been influenced by and has intermingled with Chinese culture throughout time. In addition, Vietnam has shared other cultural elements with China throughout time, including cuisine, Lunar New Year celebrations, traditional clothes, clothing, music styles, and dances. Although none of my family members have Chinese ancestry, we still celebrate Lunar New Year and other Chinese festivals. Currently, we have decided to showcase the Dragon Dance, a very influential Chinese dance, in Vietnam. Since we lack traditional dances for significant occasions, it is delightful that the Chinese are bringing their dance to Vietnam. This dance has become one of the most significant dances celebrating Tet, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year. The Vietnamese family finds joy in seeing their cultural dance around the New Year, similar to how Americans enjoy watching fireworks during their New Year celebrations.

In modern times, the Dragon Dance has begun to be infused with a more commercial performance nature, appearing on more occasions and turning into a common festive activity, but the content of the Dragon Dance culture has not received much attention in society, and the traditional skills, historical significance, and cultural symbols behind it may be gradually forgotten. This paper documents and analyses 32 officially recognized intangible cultural heritage dragon dance programs in China, and attempts to discuss and propose the hypothesis that the ancient dragon dance culture can have a positive impact on modern life.

Hence, it is vital to conduct a comparative cultural analysis and modern reflections on the Chinese dragon dance.

Research Objectives

1. Classify and showcase the significance of the dragons in the dance
2. Analyse the relevance of the Chinese Dragon Dance to modern culture.
3. Provide recommendations on how the upcoming generation can be involved in the culture

Literature Review

Performance of the Dragon Dance

The dragon dance has been traditionally done in several styles using different kinds and colours of dragons. Green is sometimes used as the primary colour of the dragon, representing a bountiful harvest. Green is recognised as the colour associated with a healthy environment. The dragon may appear in several colours, including yellow, golden, red, and silver. Yellow symbolises the sombre empire (Liang & Zhang, 2019). Red symbolises eagerness, with its scales and tail being mostly gorgeous. Golden or silver hues representing wealth. Silver hues and sparkle create a joyful ambiance. The Dragon dance is not a daily

occurrence, thus the dragon's fabric is taken off and repainted with ultra-paint before each performance.

The dragon dance involves a troupe of performers manipulating a dragon prop attached to poles in time with loud drumming. A standard dragon dance typically lasts for 30 minutes and includes around 12 forms throughout the performance. The dragon dance, originally associated with Chinese rain ceremonies, is often performed during celebratory occasions like Chinese New Year and religious ceremonies at Chinese temples.

Occasionally, the Dragon pursues the person who is carrying a ball on a stick. This is the "Pearl of Wisdom." The Dragon seeking the "pearl of wisdom" symbolises the Dragon's pursuit of insight and knowledge. This guy enhances the whole presentation by dancing, moving about the stage, waving, and engaging in playful banter with the audience. He also manages to guide the dragon to the next movement, which may enhance their performance. During the performance, individuals present the guy with a red envelope containing money, believing it would bring them better luck.

Association with other Social and Cultural Practices

Dragon dance has evolved into a ceremonial and athletic activity throughout history. During the festival, individuals often offer prayers for the peace and prosperity of the country. The realistic dragon lanterns can create a joyful and serene festival atmosphere for people. Dragon dance has evolved into an athletic sport.

Government funds the establishment of dragon dance organisations, which hold regular dragon dancing events. Women are increasingly participating in the competitive sport of dragon dance, leading to the formation of women's dragon dancing teams (Huangsheng, 2021). Women were prohibited from participating in dragon dance throughout its early and intermediate developmental stages due to the belief that they were inferior to males. Despite ongoing advancements in gender awareness in Chinese culture, women began participating in dragon dancing in the early 1980s due to a shortage of male dragon dancers. Women were prohibited from entering the ancestral hall in ancient times due to the regulations of feudal moral codes.

Dragon dance, performed by both men and women, has been passed down and evolved throughout history. This is primarily due to the efforts of cultural institutions in China, which safeguard dragon dancing as intangible cultural heritage and have constructed effective preservation and promotion mechanisms. Dragon dance training is primarily broken into two primary elements. The dragon dance team is founded in universities.

Taking Hunan Province in China as an example, it is one of the provinces with a long history and rich culture in China, possessing diverse folk culture and traditional arts. This activity has significantly expanded since its introduction into the higher education institutions in Hunan province in 1997. Currently, 15 out of 28 higher education schools have formed their own dragon dance teams (Huangsheng, 2021). It is a significant percentage when compared to other conventional cultural programmes. The government establishes a range of prizes and honours for university dragon dance teams to encourage their growth. The dragon dance teams from universities in Hunan province took part in many competitions at the global, national, and provincial levels.

Present Situation of the Dragon Dance

The number of dragon dance performers in China is gradually decreasing. Shafira and Rui (2023) showed that professional troupes needed as many as 70 performers. Current troupes have reduced their members to 20 performers, although it is still challenging to maintain this amount. Although the industry has attracted some younger and non-Chinese artists in recent years, there is a decline in the overall number of persons joining the profession.

Some troupes have highlighted concerns about funding. Authors demonstrated that the dragon dance incurs significant financial costs and lacks profitability. Customers often ask for new props, necessitating the importation of raw materials from elsewhere at a substantial expense. Shafira and Rui (2023) find it positive that private firms supported the yearly dragon dance contests in 2017 and 2018. Troupes assist each other by sharing practice rooms or dividing the leasing expenses of these venues.

The disappearance of dragon dance tradition has significant effects on Chinese society. The loss is a degradation of the traditional heritage, ethnic identity, and community ties. For centuries, a dominant characteristic of all Chinese festivals and celebrations, the dragon dance symbolizes power, bravery, and unity. Such decline may deprive the next generations of the values, thereby social cohesion as well as patriotism.

Measures Put in Place to Remedy the Situation

Modern adaptations might include modernizing the heritage of the dragon dance without losing its authenticity but could introduce elements such as digital technology for even better visual effects and music likely to appeal to youths. Through these modern elements introduced, the dragon dance can stay appealing while bridging the past with the present (Global Times, 2023). It even helps to pass down the heritage to the future when the younger lots are called for workshops, performances, and educational programmes. Collaboration with artists of other art forms could present the dragon dance in a way that is richly colourful and avant-garde.

So, a community-based outdoor game like Dragon Dance, where people take part in the sequence with each other, would, indeed, be another very suitable alternative to holding mobiles and looking at the screens. Through participation in this routine, it would be possible to move from individual space to social space; therefore, it would allow the building of teamwork, cooperation, and communication processes toward actual social interaction.

"Seeing live dragon dance is an experience that not only gives visual satisfaction but it creates communal impact in the manner members of the audience feel free to express what they may not consider being allowed to such as expression of emotions and behaviours that are generally repressed. Basically, collective experiences create memories that are more enduring and deeper than individual ones.

Research Methodology

Research Design

That study used a qualitative research design to investigate the correlation between Comparative Cultural Analysis and Modern Reflections on Chinese Dragon Dance with a view to establishing their mutual relationship in influencing contemporary cultural expression and societal values. In terms of its own rationale, qualitative research is inherently directed toward the complete comprehension and investigation of social processes, so it seems quite apt that this methodology should be applied in the study proposed here (Pathak et al., 2013). A qualitative approach to the study would develop from some prominent components. Such an approach to the study is going to provide a very in-depth focus on the research subject, most particularly with respect to the Comparative Cultural Analysis and Modern Reflections on Chinese Dragon Dance and its impact on the current cultural practices and social views. The paper under consideration gives a possibility to find out insights on a very basic process of society values examination and the effects it has on the manifestations.

Data Collection

Interviews are a core feature in this kind of research, since they give researchers the ability to deeply examine their participants' experiences, views, and interpretations. The methodology applied in the research work was semi-structured interviews and an extensive review of literature through which data was gathered with as much structure as could make comparison of participants possible and retain sufficient flexibility to allow development of themes/issues that are unexpected.

All the interviews were done at a place that was serene and neutral so as to make the participants be relaxed and not distracted. During an interview, notes were taken down while the interviewer was able to discern the available perceptual clues that were given by the participants, which included non-verbal ones (Flick, 2017). Participants were notified that their involvement was optional, they had the option to withdraw at any point, and their answers would be kept confidential in the study findings. Prior to interviews, participants were given an information sheet detailing the goal and expectations of their involvement, as well as the procedures for processing and storing their data, before being interviewed by one of our researchers. The interview questions that were used to direct the interview may be found in Appendix 1 below.

In terms of the expanded literature review, the research data of this thesis came from the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Website, which is a government website hosted by the Ministry of Tourism of the Chinese government, and contains a directory of China's intangible cultural heritage that has been scientifically recognized, safeguarded and rationally utilized, and inherited and developed by the Chinese government. As of November 2023, among the 3,610 officially recognized cultural heritage items in China, this study presents the results of the content analysis of the 32 dragon dances in China's intangible cultural heritage.

Population and Sampling

For the respondents to be used in the interview, the study used purposive sampling, a non-probability selection strategy where participants were chosen based on their knowledge and experiences related to the research issue. Purposive sampling was used as the way to choose individuals who could provide in-depth information on The Comparative Cultural Analysis and Modern Reflections on Chinese Dragon Dance (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). They all received a description of the purposes, objectives, and guarantees of preservation of

confidentiality and anonymity to be observed in case of participation by email; those who accepted it were answering an email for arrangements on the time when an in-depth interview was conducted.

It was composed of diverse members who held different positions in cultural and societal sectors as scholars with interests in Comparative Cultural Analysis, modern-day cultural practitioners, policy makers, and community leaders who were committed to making sure the Chinese Dragon Dance cultural practices were safely preserved and promoted. This consideration tends to ensure that full knowledge on the problem of study is established from various perspectives. The added breadth of sample would have helped to make the results more generalizable to other circumstances. The broad overview of the research issue elicited a multitude of viewpoints. Each member comes with his or her perspective to be added in the study of Comparative Cultural Analysis and Modern Reflections on Chinese Dragon Dance. This approach has a much broader perspective that encompasses differing experiences, perspectives, and insights that ensured the quality of data collected and increases the analytical complexness of the research.

Data Analysis

After having conducted 10 in-depth interviews for my "The Comparative Cultural Analysis and Modern Reflections on Chinese Dragon Dance," it seems that analyzing the data gathered to find applicable themes is the next big step. I familiarized myself with the interview transcripts first through a six-step model and listened repeatedly for key perspectives relating to my research topic. I used this transcript to code according to the main conceptions or ideas reviewed, such as the modernism in the dance. (Doody & Noonan, 2013)

Following these steps, the codes were combined into larger thematic codes such as "cultural history" and "modern adaptations." They were then further worked with care to detail and acquire what adequately reflected the data in consonance with my research objectives. For example, forming codes around changes in dragon dance costumes across time and coding them under "modern adaptations." Finally, I clearly defined each theme, chose descriptive names for them, and logically structured the findings using illustrative quotes to showcase the cultural significance of dragon dances, both traditionally and in contemporary performance contexts. This multi-step analytical process enabled me to make sense of my interview data in relation to my comparative cultural study of Chinese dragon dances.

Research Conceptual Framework

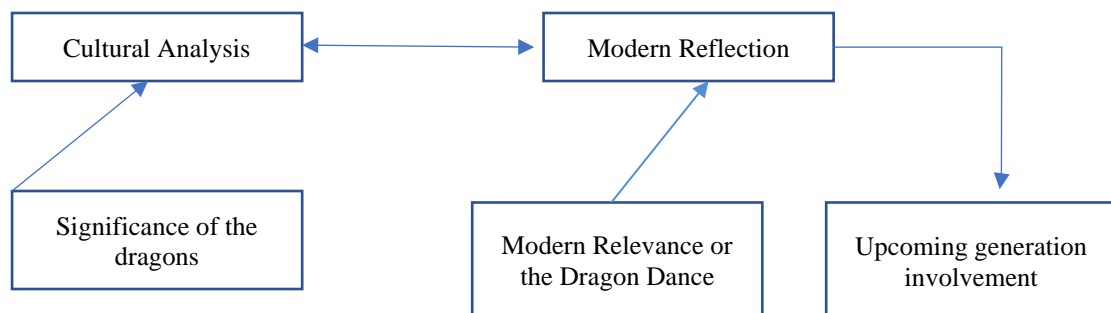


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework

Research Results

Classification and Significance of the Dragons

The expounded literature review using the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Website revealed that there were a total of 30 dragons. The full classification of the dragons with their respective pictures; name; place; festival time; musical instruments that they are accompanied with; number of dragons per dancer and their respective dragon materials will be in the Appendix 2 below.

There are a total of 30 distinct dragons mentioned across different regions of China. This includes 18 from Southern China, 7 from Northern China, and 5 found in both North and South. On average the dragons require 39 people (median of 13 people) showing great variability. 21 out of 30 dragons have 13 people or less. The Lantern Board Dragon has the second highest number at 200 people. Bamboo is used in 28 of the 30 dragon designs showing it is the most common material. Other materials frequently used include paper (25 dragons), wire (20 dragons), cloth (19 dragons) and twine (18 dragons). Straw is exclusively used for harvest dragons, while wood and incense tend to be used for ceremonial or ritual dragons.

The dragons were generally classified into five depending on their purpose. The five purposes were; Prayed for Good Luck; Prayed for Rain; Prayed for Bountiful Harvest; Prayed for Health, Safety and Worshiped the Dragon God.

Relevance to Modern Culture

All participants unequivocally agreed that the Chinese Dragon Dance bears great implications for today's contemporary culture, and comments from Participant A alluded to this point when he said, "The Chinese Dragon Dance has broken free of tradition and entered modern expression in a more in-depth way." It develops into features of contemporary cultural expression such a performance of the type that, according to Li (2019), has developed to be that it spans those original cultural platforms to impact on all cultural experience. This point of view is emphasized in the fact that they all agreed so willingly, which points to the Dragon Dance not only bridging cultures but also causing them to understand old traditions.

This was demonstrated by Participant E, who said, "While traditional practices are adhered to, troupes now embrace modern elements with costumes and choreography adopted to accord better understanding with contemporary audiences." This agrees well with Lin & Lian (2018), who gave the very examples of adaptations, like fused musical scores of East and West, as currently being executed in some performances. Such changes point out the cultural adaptability embraced by dragon dances even though their essence continues to be from years past. The agreement of participants over these new interpretations shows that the Intangible Cultural Heritage form remains relevant, as it may be adapted in time to allow the clear transmission of this folk art form to fresh generations and cultures while keeping the symbolic strength of the element intact.

Involvement of the Younger Generation in Preservation

All the participants indicated that dragon dance sustainability is dependent on youth empowerment through education on its cultural significance, as depicted in one of Participant F's statements: "Organizations should teach children about the mythological stories and symbolic meanings, so they will take pride in preserving this unique heritage." Goodarzparvari and Bueno Camejo (2018), further suggested developing cross-generational communities around the troupes that enable older performers to mentor recruits who are new to the stage. Prior generations have passed on the subtleties of that form of performance by doing it. As

Participant H explained, youth even sometimes innovate: "I have also added contemporary beats to our musical repertoire and modernized it for the young while keeping the traditional choreography." Findings then point clearly to the surfacing of innovations, and young members, if not directly, then indirectly involved as supporters or performers.

Furthermore, Participant E expresses that "educating the young generation on the historical importance and values related to its culture is very crucial for the perpetuation of the Dragon Dance." And this view falls in line with Zhang (2020), who also pointed out on behalf of intergenerational education so that cultures may be sustained, such as those of the Dragon Dance. There is unanimous understanding among all, emphasizing the indispensable need to engage the upcoming generation to the cause of keeping the Chinese Dragon Dance alive by orienting them to the historical, cultural, and social values through the educational development programs. This consensus shall develop upon the collective train, own, and be proud of feeling among kids so that the Dragon Dance remains a lively part of cultural heritage for future generations.

Discussion

Classification and Significance of the Dragons

The comparison and meaning of the dragons within the above-mentioned information illustrate the rich cultural perspective that is dominant with the Chinese Dragon Dance. These dragons are so diverse in the sense that they achieve different purposes very much, reflecting how multifaceted the society is, from praying for good luck and rain to ensuring health and safety. In its design, materials, and the amount of people that partake for each dragon, all done to enhance its dance, all enhances for each and every one of them its significance, and in this way, it carries the moral value and beliefs of the cultures and their people.

Prayed for Good Luck

In Southern China, vital activities to the cultural fabric are dragons that get prayed for good luck. Basic colors and designs including dragons like the firecracker dragon and the blast dragon of China represent prosperity and good luck. Their construction material included bamboo, twine, and paper to express prowess that the area had hitherto possessed, while the large group or participants of the dance expressed the sense of community that these days were celebrated.

Prayed for Rain

Of all the dragons which are prayed for rain, one of the most significant would have to be the most similar in shape or size of the Water Dragon and the two Prayers - the Fire Dragon and the Incense Dragon. It depicts that effort was constant in the community around agriculture when these creatures were thought to pray for rain at all times of each year. They brought rain in the lives of the crops and hence assumed prosperity of land. The actual materials but not the mechanics applied in their build were chosen for their symbolic significance with the incense representing purity and also the need for rain. For instance, straw was used alongside the incense.

Prayed for Bountiful Harvest

Straw Dragons and the Lotus Pond Silk Dragons are examples of harvest dragons, so close to an agricultural tradition in South China. They are made from what the country has in abundance—straw and bamboo standing for soil fertility. Large participation during their dances underlines what an incredible effort taken from everybody, as though only like this, the system guaranteed successful harvesting.

Prayed for Health, Safety

The dragons that beckon for health and safety are the Cloud-Dancing Dragon and the Ground-dancing Dragon. They serve as check and balance tools in keeping one another safe at all times from malevolent spirits that bring danger into the community. The large amount of its participants who focus on communal effort in maintaining tranquility and safety stresses the characteristics of their materials, which are mainly bamboo and cloth that are intended to repel aggressors.

Worshipped the Dragon God

The gods that the danced dragons represented, which included the Hundred-section dragon, and even the Quzhou dragon, were more inclined towards the worship of the Chinese nation. It is said that these dragons are the reincarnations of the Dragon God since such ancient animals owe it to him. They are supposed to have descended from the dragon and their dance symbolizes worship. All such complex designs and that multitude of people participating in this dance were sort of paying deep respect and reverence to the Dragon God who became a protector with his power and strength.

Relevance of the Chinese Dragon Dance to modern culture

Adaptation to the modern education setting

Modern variations of the Dragon Dance showcase cultural versatility while maintaining the basic style and spirit of this traditional art form. Participants agree that the Intangible Cultural Heritage form remains relevant by adapting to current circumstances, facilitating the transmission of this folk art to new generations and cultures while preserving its symbolic power. This modernism has also influenced the way dance is taught at higher education institutions. University training methods for dragon dance differ greatly from traditional ancestral traditions. This difference has caused a clear division among dragon performers (Lin & Lian, 2018). The first part of the show highlights artists who have received training from university dragon dance teams. Many of these individuals do not make dragon dance their vocation, but choose to participate in dragon dancing as public officials, entrepreneurs, or labourers. Typically, these activities do not provide financial benefits, therefore participants cannot be considered professionals exclusively devoted to dragon dance. Only a small number of persons in dragon dancing may become trainers or information disseminators due to the sport's physical requirements, which make it unsuitable for youngsters, the elderly, and most young adults who participate in dragon dancing.

Dancers must meet significant physical fitness standards, and contemporary dragon dancing includes elements of competitive sports and martial arts. Novices may develop fundamental dragon dance abilities within a 6–7-month training period, however experienced individuals need continuous training to engage in dragon dancing events (Lin & Lian, 2018). The qualifications highlight the talent level and training experience needed for dragon dance artists. Individuals who get training in dragon dancing at colleges are less inclined to pursue a career as professional dragon dancers due to these constraints. Professional dragon dancers are

mostly those who have finished just middle school education, indicating an educational disparity in the industry.

Modernistic Adaptations to the Dance

The ancient art of dragon dance is known for its fresh and powerful twists on the history of the Chinese culture. And this is done by the Tongliang Dragon Dance by taking the past into the present to live eternally forevermore. Proof that there is timeless charm from cultural practices that have fascinated its audiences across China and beyond. Dancing dragons around in the city of Chongqing, Tongliang district, long been transformed into a ritualistic dance across the world representing the centuries-old history and tradition seen with great zeal and expert experience. The Tongliang Dragon Dance has a long history, originating from the Sui and Tang dynasties and evolving throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties, with its cultural stewards making continual adaptations (Li, 2019).

The Tongliang Dragon Dance now showcases several varieties of dragons, each distinguished by a diverse range of movements and rhythms. The performance requires extraordinary coordination, with troupe members needing to synchronise exact movements, demonstrating harmony, and portraying a flawless combination of power and elegance, as well as motion and stillness. The Tongliang Dragon Dance showcases talent, creativity, and cultural importance.

Tongliang is located in the upper part of the Yangtze River and is well-known for its beautiful natural scenery, particularly Mount Bayue, which is famous for its bamboo forests. In the old town of Anju, inhabitants customarily gathered straw and bamboo from the mountains in the autumn to decorate the figures in the dragon dances. The performances, originating in this old town more than a millennium ago, have been enhanced by the use of seasonal local resources, resulting in the development of several dragon variations tailored to bestow specific benefits.

The Fire Dragon is the most famous performance of the Tongliang Dragon Dance Team and Tongliang Dragon Art Troupe. The collection also features many varieties of dragons, such as the Lotus Dragon, which emerges throughout the summer with scales resembling the petals of the flower, symbolising development and the abundance of nature (Li, 2019). The Water Dragon dance is a traditional ceremony done in bodies of water to invoke rain. As autumn arrives and farmers prepare to store their crop, the Wheat Dragon is introduced to symbolise hopes for a plentiful yield. The ancient art form of dragon dances, from its historical origins to its contemporary interpretations, showcases the vitality of Chinese heritage and the communal philosophy of its general public. The Tongliang Dragon Dance captivates audiences in China and beyond, showcasing the ongoing heritage of cultural practices that blend the past and present.

Recommendations

Adoption as learning programs in learning institutions

College and university participation is crucial to the dragon dance sport since dragon dance and Chinese dragon culture are intimately associated. On the one hand, the growth and dissemination of Chinese dragon culture may aid in the advancement of dragon dance; on the other hand, the advancement of dragon dance can actively advance the growth and dissemination of Chinese dragon culture. The dynamic process of cultural innovation and inheritance should be fully used in the development of the dragon dance cultural function (Zhang, 2023).

It is crucial to place a strong emphasis on developing talent and to take an active role in educating people about culture. For instance, colleges and universities should start encouraging activities that include dragon culture elective courses. This should be followed by bolstering scientific research; for instance, colleges and universities should host lectures and academic exchanges about dragon culture. Thirdly, they should increase their social service offerings. For instance, they could host dragon dance performances as part of their large-scale events or engage in dragon dance performances and exchanges in businesses or villages.

Learning institutions may also implement measures to promote the preservation and development of Dragon Dance Sport. Institutions may begin by preserving the valuable cultural aspects of dragon culture, while assimilating the core features and eliminating the unnecessary parts. They should preserve the rituals associated with honouring, respecting, and bidding farewell to dragons, as well as enhance and cultivate their traditional culture by emphasising reverence for nature, history, culture, noble qualities, and the achievements of ancestors. It is important to maintain the dragon dance as a form of festival celebration, blending tradition with modern trends to enhance the cultural significance of festivals.

They should maintain the traditional traits of dragon dance as a national sport while improving its quality by enhancing elements like as props, costumes, technical procedures, performance style, and music (Zhang, 2023). To boost the visual appeal of a dragon creative picture, using technological dragon dance accessories may create a striking contrast and elevate the overall ambiance of the performance. Adjustments may be made to increase the quantity of 8-shaped dragon dance movements and dragon rolls while decreasing the amount of swimming dragon motions.

They may adapt the needs of dragon dancers and audience to what best organises competitions, competition format, and place of competition. Finally, since we are building dragon dance as a national sport, it is good to incorporate good things in modern sports and contemporary life into it.

Incorporating Dragon Dance in Early Childhood Education

Parents could introduce their children to Chinese dragon dances through simple, participatory activities right at home. They can share colourful picture books and age-appropriate videos so kids can visually understand these vibrant performances. Trying out basic hand motions like waves and snaps enables them to mimic basic dance steps. Even making simple crafts like paper dragon puppets gives them hands-on fun while experiencing cultural symbols. Requesting leeway in screen time rules to showcase recordings of other celebrations where children are taking part in dances will build enthusiasm. Local cultural centres may also put on family workshops (Choy, 2017). On seeking these, parents allow children to get first exposure

in environments that are not new to them. Teachers have a role in integrating dragon dance right from the early childhood education.

The dragon dance in the curriculum becomes very relevant, dynamic, and culturally meaningful. It increases physical skills and offers practice that requires work in a team as creative results through performances. Research of techniques and the stories of a dragon dance beforehand can be useful for a teacher to start participation because in such a way, they will understand the cultural significance of this activity and educational benefits behind it. This way, they can structure dragon dance lessons to be part of their normal curriculum, combining parts that deal with storytelling, movement, music and other features that make learning highly interactive and stimulating. Teachers can also encourage parents and community members to take part in dragon dance activities that create a support mechanism for the children to learn and perform (Choy, 2017). In addition, teachers can receive professional practice in dragon dance; thus, such educators will acquire the needed skills to carry out the dance in the best possible manner that will most definitely increase its educative value.

Acknowledgements

This paper is a research project from the Ph.D. program in design at the Faculty of Decorative Arts, Silpakorn University. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and thanks to Assistant Professor (Ph.D.) Watanapun Krutasaen for his support, patience and guidance that enabled me to successfully complete this thesis and the research work behind it. I would also like to thank the other professors at Sipakorn University for their continuous guidance and support of my research work.

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