

The Role of Physical Education in Achieving the Goals of Healthy China 2030: A Study on College Students' Health Promotion

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Abstract

The “Healthy China 2030” Plan, initiated in 2016 by President Xi Jinping, was designed to emphasize the crucial role of public health in advancing society and to divert the attention from the treatment of illness to the comprehensive promotion of physical health. Furthermore, it holds the belief that public physical condition should be given priority over mere economic expansion. The primary objective of this study is to determine the significance of physical education in promoting the health of college students and diseases prevention. The study adopts the comprehensive research method which emphasizes individual accountability, government intervention, and targeted support for populations deemed to be at elevated risk. Considering this context, this study highlights the significance of physical education by discussing its potential in achieving the five particular objectives of the “Healthy China 2030” Plan. The findings of the study shows, within the framework of the “Healthy China 2030” Plan, physical education now has emerged as a crucial means of promoting the well-being of college students and preventing illness, including the reduction of risks and the expansion of health care service. Thus, the study has reached a conclusion that, physical education plays a fundamental role in achieving the objectives of the “Healthy China 2030” Plan, particularly in the promotion of the physical condition of college students.

Keywords: Physical Education; Healthy China 2030; College Students; Health Promotions

Introduction

1. Conclude the research problem

First of all, the study demonstrates the comprehensive approach that is outlined in the “Healthy China 2030” Plan. This approach places an emphasis on individuals taking responsibility, the involvement of the government, and providing specialised care for groups that are considered to be at a high risk. Also, the study evaluates the role of physical education within the context of the “Healthy China 2030” Plan. In addition, the study discusses how physical education can help lower risk factors and expand healthcare scope, aligning with the plan’s fundamental principles of health primacy, reform and innovation, scientific and technical advancement, and justice and equality. Apart from these, the study, too, examines the potential for physical education to maintain college students’ health and prevent illness, contributing to the overall health goals of “Healthy China 2030” Plan.

2. Objective

The primary objective of the study is to determine the significance of physical education in achieving the goals of the “Healthy China 2030” Plan, with a particular focus on maintaining the health of college students. This study also aims to demonstrate how physical education can contribute to the accomplishment of the plan’s five specific objectives: managing primary risk

factors, expanding health service capacity, scaling up the health industry, and perfecting the health service system.

3. Scope

By introducing the “Healthy China 2030 Plan” (HC 2030) in October 2016, President Xi Jinping made it clear that public health is an essential prerequisite for any and all economic and social improvement that is foreseeable in the future. There are a number of topics that are included in the 29 chapters that make up the HC 2030 blueprint. Some of these topics include public health services, the management of the environment, the Chinese medical sector, and food and drug safety. It is a national strategy that has been developed with the primary goal of enabling all individuals to participate in health care, to share health care, and to take responsibility for their own health. There are five specific goals that have been established in order to improve the overall level of health across the country. These goals are the management of the primary risk factors, the expansion of the capacity of the health service, the expansion of the scale of the health industry, and the perfection of the health service system.

Healthy China Vision 2030

After the fast-socioeconomic transition, China began on an ambitious trip with the introduction of "Healthy China 2030." This decision was undertaken in response to the rapid transformation of healthscape globally. A comprehensive and integrated approach with the goal of promoting the health and well-being of the population is represented by this forward-thinking effort, which was first unveiled in the year 2016. A forward-looking vision for healthcare that spans well into the next decade is articulated by the project, which has its origins in a historical context of tackling increasing health concerns (Tan et al., 2019).

Figure 1.0. The Goals and Visions of Healthy China 2030

Goal				
Put health on the priority list of development to a strategic position; promote the concept of health in the whole process of public policy implementation; enable everyone to be involved health and everyone to share health care services; focus on the health of all the people all their life in China				
Principles				
Health Priority	Reform and Innovation	Scientific Development	Justice and Equity	
HC 2030: China’s vision for health care				
1. Health Level	2. Healthy life	3. Health Services and Health Security	4. Environmental Health	5. Health Industry
The 13 Core Indicators				
A. The average life expectancy B. The mortality rate of infants C. The mortality rate of children below 5 years of age D. The mortality rate of pregnant women and mortality E. The proportion of those meeting the national physique determination standard among urban and rural residents	A. The level of health literacy among residents B. The number of people taking part in physical exercise	A. Premature mortality as a result of major non-communicable diseases B. The number of registered doctors per 1000 residents and registered nurses per 1000 residents C. The proportion of personal health spending in the total health expenses	A. Good air quality rate of all cities at prefecture level or above B. The rate of surface water quality better than III	A. The total investment scale of health services

Source: (Tan et al., 2017)

The Healthy China 2030 policy is based on four fundamental assumptions (Tan et al., 2017a). The first is the importance of health. In light of the circumstances that exist across the country, health care need to be given priority and positioned strategically throughout the entirety of the process of putting public policy into effect. The second stage is the creative, demanding process. At the same time as the health care business should follow the direction of the government, it should also pay attention to the role that the market mechanism plays, and it should speed up reform in strategic areas. The advancement of scientific knowledge is the third principle. The plan places an emphasis on the significance of both prevention and treatment, with a particular emphasis on preventive and management, Chinese and Western medicine, and modifications to the service mode in order to decrease the gaps in fundamental health services. According to (Zhang et al., 2022), the policy stresses on fairness and justice as the fourth principle. For the purpose of ensuring that all citizens have equitable access to basic public health care and to preserve public welfare, the rural regions of the country get special attention.

Healthy Lifestyle Among the Youth in China

Within the intricate pattern of China's health landscape, the resiliency and vigour of the country's youth are intricately intertwined into the fabric of the nation's growing wealth. The connection that exists between health awareness, medical issues, and the importance of younger generation's health is not just necessary; but is also an ongoing investment for the health of the nation (Ainsworth & Sallis, 2022; Zhongxue, 2022).

The narrative of China's health consciousness is therefore etched in the decisions made by the young of today, resonating with the tenacity of a civilization that is adjusting to the ebb and flow of time while simultaneously nurturing a future that is healthier, more aware, and more prosperous.

1. The Focus on University Students

University students face many challenges. In effect, the academic lifestyles that are characterised by a lack of physical activity, erratic eating habits, and elevated levels of stress brought on by academic rivalry all present real dangers. Cultures that are highly urbanized are experiencing an increase in illnesses, such as obesity and cardiovascular problems, which is a reflection of worldwide trends. At the same time, the severe academic constraints contribute to a rising awareness of mental health difficulties, which emphasises the necessity of comprehensive well-being.

With the intention of addressing these difficulties, the Chinese government, in conjunction with universities, has been leading the charge in implementing health awareness initiatives that are specifically designed to meet the requirements of university students (J. Zhang et al., 2022). These programmes make use of digital channels in order to distribute information on balanced lives, resources for mental health, and preventative healthcare measures. By virtue of their status as centres of knowledge and cultural influence, universities play a crucial part in the process of moulding health-conscious behaviours among the student population.

Not only does the narrative of university youth health in China represent the problems that are brought by changing lifestyles, but it also illustrates the resiliency and flexibility of the younger generation. Here, the level of health awareness and concerns relegated to medical is important so that a generation that not only focusses on intellectual excellence can be developed, but it can also nurture a society that places a priority on its own well-being. This in turn will contribute to a future that is both healthier and more lively for China (Fong et al., 2021; Ning et al., 2017). In the unfolding chapters of China's health narrative, the health and choices of university students become a demonstration of the nation's dedication to the cultivation of a society that is both holistic and prosperous.



2. Physical Education and Sports

China has won an astounding 28 gold medals in the sport of table tennis by 2022, this is evidence of the country's unrivalled domination in the competitive sport of table tennis. A generation of athletes that are exemplary of greatness and resiliency has been produced as a result of the intentional nurturing of athletic skill, in conjunction with a social consciousness of the importance of physical health (Tan et al., 2019). These accomplishments are additional confirmation of the necessity of physical education, and they are linked to the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle (Fan et al., 2023). Because of the participation of athletes like Zhang Jike in table tennis, Lin Dan in badminton, and Liao Hui in weightlifting, China's overall standing in the world of sports has significantly increased. In effect, previously, global sports champions would be the United States and Russia, but now it is China and the United States.

The elements that helps the growth of the sporting generation is the outcome of this interaction. There are many exemplary sports, not limited to gymnastics, table tennis, badminton, and weightlifting that highlight the significance of physical education. The link with Olympics demonstrates the value of physical education in the process of developing a nation that is healthier, more athletic, and more recognized on the international stage, but the examples of these sports also highlight the importance of physical education.

Sports Development within the Chinese Frame

According to Tan et al., (2019); Vogeler et al., (2023), it was a significant achievement when China successfully organized the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008. This event showcased not just China's exceptional ability to organize, but also its clear superiority in the realm of sports. This event was a pivotal moment in history. The rise of China as a dominant force in sports was exemplified by the remarkable opening ceremony, which included exceptional cultural elements and top-tier choreography. The ceremony functioned as a representation of China's rising prominence in the realm of athletics. China has solidified its position as one of the leading athletic nations in the world due to its impressive medal count, particularly in gymnastics, table tennis, and other sports. This is because China has excelled in several fields.

1. Wellbeing and Physical Fitness

The participation of university students in physical education classes within the context of college settings is likely to result in significant benefits for these individuals. In addition to the immediate advantages of improved cardiovascular health, muscular strength, and flexibility, the effects of consistent participation in sessions like these will be seen for a significant amount of time in the future. As the pressures of academic life and the sedentary nature of studying become more intense, physical education acts as an essential counterweight, in addition to boosting general well-being. These courses provide Chinese students who are attempting to navigate the stresses of higher education the opportunity to break away from the limits of their academic pursuits, therefore encouraging a holistic approach to health.

In addition, when students are enrolled in college, physical education acts as a social nexus, enabling them to make connections with people outside of the academic world. Not only does the camaraderie that is developed through the participation in common physical activities foster a feeling of community among peers, but it also encourages the development of collaboration. When it comes to the mental and emotional well-being of students, the cultivation of such social relationships is of significant importance in the context of China's university settings, where academic rivalry may be rigorous (Dai & Menhas, 2020). The college education system in China not only provides students with academic information but also prepares them for a life that is more balanced and healthier once they leave the campus gates. Essentially, this can be taxing, especially with the legacy of One Child system that had given rise to the spoilt child syndrome (X. Zhang et al., 2021). This is accomplished by teaching the significance of physical fitness and well-being in students. As China continues to place an emphasis on the holistic development of its young, the incorporation of physical education into university curricula becomes an essential component in the process of molding a generation that is not only academically capable but also physically robust and socially connected.

2. Reduction of Stress Factors

Students may experience increased levels of stress as they negotiate the hard demands of academics. The pressure of homework, examinations, and personal issues can all contribute to increased levels of stress. The antidote that emerges as a potent remedy is physical education, which provides an organized and enjoyable outlet for relieving the stress that has collected over time (Zhongxue, 2022). Chinese students are able to find their own outlet from various ways from solo workouts to group engagements. These activities provide them with the opportunity to briefly withdraw from the academic constraints that characterize their everyday life.

One of the benefits of participating in physical activity is the added advantage of the production of endorphins (Gan & Anshel, 2006). These are the natural mood enhancers that the body produces, which in turn helps to cultivate a pleasant mental state. The inclusion of physical education as part of the Healthy China 2030 campaign is in perfect harmony with the nation's commitment to placing a high priority on mental well-being. This shows resilience, not only does China address the current issues that university students are facing, but it also contributes to the overall objective of building a psychologically robust and balanced population. This can be done by incorporating stress reduction measures into the curriculum of colleges and universities through the implementation of these tactics. One good example would be breathing exercises, morning dance routines seen in schools and other more physical activities. Figure 2.0 depicts a screengrab from a dance activity conducted in schools in this method.



The beneficial benefits of stress reduction via physical education transcend beyond the individual, resulting in the creation of a healthier and more conducive atmosphere for learning and personal growth within the dynamic terrain of China's universities.

3. The Advantage of Community Building

Physical education further offers the benefits of developing communal cohesiveness and facilitating social integration. For many students, university life can sometimes be a solitary experience, particularly for students who are adjusting to a new environment or dealing with the pressures of academic competition (Anshel & Si, 2008; Fan et al., 2023). Here, the main goal of physical education curricula is to function as a catalyst for social integration, it promotes the contact and collaboration of students from different backgrounds, eventually helping them overcome academic and cultural barriers. Engaging in physical activities together creates a common basis for social interaction, so cultivating friendships and facilitating the development of a supportive community.

There is also the sense of belonging, which is essential for maintaining good mental health as it helps to manage the emotional challenges frequently associated with the pursuit of higher education (Zhang, 2019). The social determinants of health highlighted in Healthy China 2030 initiative are tightly intertwined with the significance of community development (Fong et al., 2021; Ning et al., 2017; Qiu et al., 2022).

Methods of Promotion

It is not entirely easy to promote healthy behaviors among Chinese college students. However, it is crucial for enhancing both their general health and academic performance, although they might face resistance (Dong et al., 2020). In order to develop a balanced lifestyle and ensure long-term health, it is necessary to consider and address the physical, mental, and social components of the student's life, establishing habits that are beneficial. This is essential to foster a well-rounded way of life. The attainment of this objective can be achieved through the usage of a diverse range of tactics.

From the very beginning of their college careers, it is of the highest significance for students to get into the habit of incorporating regular physical activity into their daily routines. In China, colleges give students access to a wide variety of free health and sports lessons and remain a big advantage that they can offer to their students. There are a variety of approaches that may be used in order to motivate pupils to engage in regular physical activity. One good example is by the implementation of fitness regimens, the establishment of intramural sports leagues, and the supply of exercise facilities that are adequately equipped are all some of the efforts that are being undertaken. However, there might be regional variations, especially when it comes to budgetary concerns although this can be improved further (Fong et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the organization of campus-wide events like as health fairs or fitness challenges has the potential to dramatically increase awareness of the importance of leading an active lifestyle and to build excitement for the participation in activities of this nature. This is often organized at the university or regional level. For example, the national level China National Youth Games sees the participation of various athletes all over China, especially from colleges and universities and this inspires more to participate (Li et al., 2017; Zhang, 2019).

Additionally, in order for the institution to be called comprehensive, it is necessary for it to foster an environment that actively promotes awareness of mental health and provides robust support services. One may argue that it is still a touchy issue in Asian households and educational institutions. For this reason, it is essential for educational institutions to initiate the provision of counselling services to students, instruct them in methods for stress management,

and encourage them to engage in mindfulness practises. These activities have the potential to enhance students' ability to cope with the challenges that are frequently connected with academic life (Ning et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2021). One good example is when students are allowed the space to talk to their counsellors if they need any help. Peer support groups or mental health clubs provide students with a platform to engage in talks about their experiences and get assistance in a friendly setting that places importance on mental health.

It must be understood that the incorporation of nutritional education is an essential component of the overall endeavor to improve the well-being of college students. For the purpose of ensuring that students have access to a variety of nutritious meal options, educational institutions may successfully give lectures on appropriate dietary habits, culinary instruction, and collaborations with food services (Chen et al., 2019; Santiago, 2021). Several educational institutions have implemented a ban on fast food and are promoting the use of traditional Chinese cuisine that is healthful. For example, instead of hamburgers, traditional noodles and rice dishes are given the focus. It is important to educate students about the necessity of keeping a nutritious diet and its influence on academic performance. This should drive students to make educated decisions regarding the amount of food they consume. This can be accomplished by educating kids about the significance of maintaining a healthy diet and the importance of doing so daily.

A number of Chinese colleges have shown successful implementation of these strategies. For example, a whole hearted wellness campaign has been implemented at Tsinghua University, which involves traditional martial arts as well as other forms of exercise (Zhang, 2019). There are modules on physical fitness, workshops on psychological well-being, and dining venues that offer dietary alternatives to typical meal plans that are included in this curriculum. Fudan University has implemented health promotion initiatives that encompass activities focused on comprehensive well-being. The students themselves are the primary catalysts behind these endeavors.

When it comes to the incorporation of student activities, one strategy that has been shown to be beneficial is the inclusion of traditional martial arts classes. Students are provided with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to engage in physical activity, develop discipline, and expand their cultural experiences through these sessions (Fong et al., 2021). These classes are incorporated into the curriculum so that students have the opportunity to get familiar with ancient practices that not just improve their physical fitness but also assist to their mental well-being and increase their ability to manage stress. Students are given the opportunity to learn about these practices before they are even taught.

It is likely that introducing social credit incentives into the mix could be an effective strategy to further encourage better living. This is something that need additional investigation. Those persons who are actively participating in healthy activities can be provided with additional rewards, such as better social credit ratings or exemptions from certain topics, which can be used to create a positive reinforcement loop (Gan & Anshel, 2006). Students are motivated to place a higher premium on their individual health and wellness through the implementation of this technique, which not only links with the larger societal goals of encouraging a healthy population but also inspires students to do so.

In addition, the provision of tangible rewards, such as arranged trips and money incentives, has the ability to significantly boost the amount of people who participate in the activity. As a result of their participation in organised trips to wellness resorts or recreational vacations, students are afforded the opportunity to take a break from their typical routine and

engage in a wide range of different kinds of physical activities. It is feasible to encourage students to engage in regular physical activity by offering them financial incentives, such as scholarships or monetary rewards. This can be done in order to encourage them to exercise. This will lead to the establishment of a habit that will continue to be maintained even after they have completed their time at the college/university level (Tan et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Within the scope of the “Healthy China 2030” Plan, the concept of health had experienced a considerable upheaval, shifting away from the mere pursuit of economic growth and towards the promotion of integrated development of ecology, health, and economy. The change in the stance taken by universities provides a case in point: the use of health as a metric for determining economic success in the nation has been relegated to a lower position. In addition, the major focus of health care has switched from the treatment of illnesses to the promotion and management of health. Also, the strategy for the “Healthy China 2030” Plan makes it abundantly clear that governments ought to make improvements to the system for healthcare services, enhance the level and quality of health services, and at the same time pay more consideration to the factors that have an impact on the well-being of people in order to effectively prevent disease and, ultimately, promote health.

The promotion of healthy behaviors among college students in China is somewhat difficult, yet it is absolutely necessary for the students’ overall well-being as well as their academic achievement. The importance of addressing the physical, mental, and social factors of campus life has been highlighted in this study. It also suggests that though incorporating regular physical activity into daily routines, organising campus-wide activities and holding exhibitions centered on physical health would be advisable strategies to attract students. Likewise, schools should enhance the awareness of mental health and offer assistance by providing counselling services, education on stress management, and peer support groups. Another crucial aspect is nutritional education. Traditional Chinese cuisine and meal alternatives containing high nutrition should be used as a substitute for fast food. In addition, the incorporation of traditional martial arts courses into the curriculum would be conducive to the improvement of both physical and mental health. It may be possible to further motivate students to sustain healthy behaviours after graduation by investigating the potential of social credit incentives and concrete rewards, such as organised excursions or financial incentives. In order to realize the mission of making China a healthy nation, rather than the efforts of the administration departments of public health alone, the cooperation of each individual and sector are required. In addition, the government should incorporate health care policy into all key programs and pay more attention to high-risk groups, including women, children, elders, migrants, and low-incomers, thus offering more love and care to them. To conclude, health industry, along with health care services, needs to be developed so as to realize the objectives of the “Healthy China 2030” Plan.

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