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The Narrative Strategy of Health Qigong as a Health Media

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Abstract: The issue of elderly care resulting from the aging population in East Asia has garnered significant attention, with a growing emphasis on disease prevention over treatment. The integration of health Qigong with traditional Chinese medicine and exercise offers long-term benefits for the physical form and function of middle-aged and elderly individuals. Due to its distinctive philosophy and aesthetic characteristics, health Qigong has gained prominence both domestically and internationally, serving as a medium for promoting health communication and enhancing population health levels. In an aging society, incorporating culture into the communication process of health Qigong along with narrative content is an effective approach to foster health communication. By integrating aesthetic principles into research, this study analyzes three dimensions: 1) physical health; 2) cultural aspects; 3) kung fu philosophy. Consequently, it proposes an aesthetic narrative strategy for health communication that encompasses embracing one's age, appreciating cultural perspectives, and valuing simplicity.

Key words: Health Qigong; Health media; Aesthetics; Narrative Strategy

Introduction

The global population is undergoing rapid aging[1], This aging trend is particularly pronounced in Northeast Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea[2]. Consequently, the issue of population aging has become a focal point of research attention. In terms of elderly care, disease prevention holds greater significance than treatment alone. Traditional Chinese Medicine Exercise

Therapy (TCM), also known as Gong Fa or traditional Chinese medicine exercise therapy [3] encompasses health Qigong which integrates traditional Chinese medicine principles with exercise techniques suitable for individuals across all age groups.There is ample evidence to suggest that correct and consistent training in health Qigong significantly impacts the physical form and function of middle-aged and elderly individuals.TCM Qigong combines TCM theories with philosophical thoughts along with breathing exercises and guided massage to focus on internal conditioning through external exercise. During the practice of Health Qigong slow movements combined with gentle tension promote harmony between body and mind.The unique philosophical and aesthetic characteristics inherent to health Qigong serve as driving forces behind its development while facilitating its promotion both domestically and internationally.An International Health Qigong Federation association was set up to publicize it.So culture can be integrated into the communication process and into the narrative content of health communication.

Similar to the process of acculturation where immigrants assimilate into the dominant culture[4]. The process of acculturation involves immigrants assimilating into the dominant culture, the process of acculturation also entails Qigong assimilating into the dominant culture. In order to discuss the aesthetic propaganda strategy of Qigong, this study analyzes three dimensions: physical health, cultural aesthetics, and kung fu philosophy. It proposes an aesthetic narrative strategy for health communication that emphasizes embracing aging, appreciating cultural heritage, and valuing simplicity.

cultural narrative

Health Qigong is deeply rooted in Chinese culture as an independent form of exercise that enables individuals to harmonize their body and mind for optimal health—a concept closely aligned with the idea of balance and harmony in Chinese culture. The spiritual essence found in calligraphy aligns with that of health Qigong through posture regulation and basic exercises; tracing back to a time when dance was used therapeutically, this study explores dance as a form of movement therapy alongside health Qigong; literature serves as a mirror to dispel distracting thoughts while highlighting its role in nourishing the mind and calming qi—both essential functions of health Qigong. Lastly, music or vocalization shares a delicate connection with breath control in health Qigong practice.

The culture of the Pre-Qin period

The pre-Qin Confucians, including Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, advocated the integration of body and mind while emphasizing the cognitive control exerted by the mind over sensory perception and physical actions. This perspective on the human body has significantly influenced the fundamental aspects of traditional Confucian examination of bodily practices and shaped Chinese cultural attitudes towards sports. Consequently, pre-Qin Confucian sports philosophy emphasized the supremacy of "mind" over physicality, devalued brute force, and criticized activities solely driven by sensory gratification. Simultaneously, it underscored the role of "ritual" in regulating bodily conduct to enhance pedagogical efficacy through standardized sporting practices that serve as didactic exemplars. Furthermore, rooted in pre-Qin Confucian traditions of

self-preservation and self-cultivation, sports activities were imbued with introspection and self-discipline.

The Taoist school, represented by Laozi, Zhuangzi, Lietzi, 鶡 Guanzi and other Confucians, collectively established the Oriental theory of "unity of mind and body". However, Taoism's perspective on the body possesses distinctive characteristics. By employing qi theory as a bridge between the physical and mental realms, Taoism emphasizes microscopic investigation. It draws inspiration from nature to cultivate both the physical and spiritual aspects while basing its functional development on the heavenly way. Respecting the essence of life and adopting a philosophical view towards life and death, Taoism advocates moderate exercise and subtractive maintenance. In terms of sports philosophy, Taoist thought abandons power display and technical attachment in favor of embracing negative force without resistance to attain spiritual harmony through comprehensive exploration of psychological qualities. The Taoist perspective on the body as well as its sports philosophy not only indicate traditional sports' developmental direction but also provide insights for modern sports in addressing crises.[5]

In contrast to the traditional Confucian and Taoist perspectives on the body, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) emphasizes the significance of the biological body and considers it as the noumenon. The TCM perspective on the body encompasses three aspects: "anatomical body" focusing on physiological structure, "gasification body" emphasizing bodily functioning principles, and "emotional body" centering around emotional states. The concept of sports safety is advocated in opposition to dangerous sports activities, as it does not align with the notion of disease causes related to anatomical factors. Furthermore, TCM promotes a cautious approach towards physical activity by considering external pathogenic factors through seasonal adjustments while discouraging excessive exertion. Lastly, TCM recognizes a correlation between emotional well-being and internal causes of diseases; thus advocating for moderate and conventional forms of exercise while opposing unconventional or stimulating sports activities.

The cultural significance of Zhouyi

Zhouyi, as the foundation of Chinese culture, encompasses a profound understanding of the human body. The author articulates their philosophical contemplation on the world through the eight diagrams, employing a cognitive approach rooted in bodily awareness when constructing hexagrams—a mode of thinking that enables comprehensive observation of all phenomena in the universe from an individual perspective.[6] This perspective underscores the inseparable connection between the mind and body, positing that the human body mirrors the entirety of the universe, with each bodily component corresponding to elements within it. For instance, in Zhouyi, the Qian guagram symbolizes heaven while the Kun guagram represents earth; moreover, their intersection signifies the genesis of both celestial and terrestrial realms. This notion epitomizes ancient people's distinctive comprehension of the interrelationship between corporeal existence and cosmic order.[7]

The philosophical contemplation that takes the body as its foundation is not only evident in Zhouyi, but also permeates the entire ideological framework of Chinese culture. For instance, traditional Chinese medicine theory incorporates the concept of "five viscera and six fu-organs," while martial arts emphasize the practice of harmonizing one's breath internally and cultivating muscles and bones externally. These perspectives revolve around a body-centric approach to

exploring the interconnectedness between the physical self and the universe, as well as internal and external realms.

Aesthetics narrative

Aesthetic visuals

Revised sentence: Confucius once said, "Books do not speak, yet they convey meaning." However, can the wisdom of a sage be fully expressed through language alone? "Speech" here refers to the limitations of logical language in expressing individual and unique ideas and emotions. In Chapter 12 of The Analects, Confucius explains that sages use images to express what cannot be conveyed through concepts alone. Images allow for clear and complete expression where words fall short. Additionally, the name may be small but its class is large; its purpose far-reaching; its words and songs hidden with meaning. By utilizing various forms of expression such as image or music, one can better serve others by conveying complex ideas more effectively.

The implication of these two passages is that numerous aphorisms in the Book of Changes are intricate, enigmatic, and veiled due to the author's "withdrawal from society". This refers to the historical account where King Wen of Zhou was imprisoned by King Zhou of Shang, compelling him to convey truths through analogies and riddles. Nevertheless, despite being symbolized in cryptic language, the underlying concepts are candidly presented and can be employed to aid individuals in understanding and navigating their path. Consequently, its distinguishing features encompass amplifying minor metaphors into significant ones, augmenting small wholes into larger ones, traversing from here to there and bridging nearness with farness.

To distinguish "image" from "speech" and establish a connection between "image" and "meaning" is essentially to differentiate image from concept, while linking it with thought and emotion. This marks the emergence of "image" as an aesthetic category. In ancient times, when King Bao Ji ruled the world, he observed celestial bodies in the sky, surveyed the earth's topography, examined birds' and animals' characteristics, as well as identified suitable plants for cultivation on land. He closely inspected tangible objects nearby and comprehended intangible entities from afar.This symbol initiated the creation of the eight diagrams, which in turn facilitated an understanding of the inherent unpredictability of phenomena. Through these eight diagrams, one could encapsulate the diverse complexities that exist within our world. The concept of 'standing image with full intention' emphasizes a sincere and profound comprehension of animal life from within, thereby possessing an essence that promotes artistic well-being. As Zong Baihua aptly stated, art serves as a conduit for spiritual existence to merge with the material realm and animate it.

When practicing the five animal forms, it is essential to first cultivate a mental state of "likeness" and then execute corresponding movements that embody the image of a tiger in the mountains, stretching limbs and capturing prey. Similarly, when engaging in deer play, one should envision oneself as a graceful sika deer on an open field, extending legs and taking steps with elegance. Likewise, during bear play, imagine being a powerful black bear in its natural habitat; rotate the waist and engage core muscles while moving freely. In ape play, visualize being an agile monkey amidst flower-laden trees; exhibit liveliness and dexterity while plucking peaches or

offering fruits. Lastly, during bird play, envision transforming into a majestic crane by the riverside; stretch tendons and bones to their limits before spreading wings for flight. Consequently,"mind follows form" becomes an inherent principle when practicing these exercises - where thoughts align with physical actions - allowing qi to flow effortlessly throughout meridians for optimal regulation of blood circulation. Ultimately achieving not only aesthetic qualities but also promoting overall well-being.

physical aesthetics

The witchcraft culture originated from primitive societies characterized by low productivity, where people exhibited a profound reliance on the natural environment and held the belief that nature possessed vitality and dominance. Consequently, they engaged in worshiping the spirits of all natural entities, thereby giving rise to the development of witchcraft culture. In addition to exerting influence over prehistoric spiritual life, wizards also played a role as exceptional physical education instructors. Initially, collective clan members performed early witchcraft rituals such as Jingpo's eye song. Subsequently, witches emerged and assimilated significant achievements from primitive cultures while presiding over witchcraft rituals like the Dongba dance practiced by the Naxi ethnic group. Eventually, witchcraft monopolized these activities until Taoist priests were invited to perform exorcism dances for healing purposes when individuals fell ill—a clear indication marking the decline of witchcraft culture.[8] Sorcerers are non-professional clergy in primitive religions, both male and female, who possess the ability to communicate with gods and beseech their assistance for human beings through practices such as divination, healing, protection, and blessings. There are essentially two methods by which wizards establish communication with spirits and deities. One approach involves inviting gods to inhabit them so that they may speak on behalf of the supernatural entities; this is referred to as "Sorcery, Bin, ghost" in Wei Zhao's note written in Chu Language. The other method entails a witch's spirit entering another realm to seek out ghosts and gods. Examples of this type of witchcraft can be found in "The Book of Mountains and Seas · Overseas West Classics," which mentions Dengbao Mountain inhabited by a group of witches from different realms, as well as in "The Great Wilderness West Classics," which records Fengju Yumen Mountain where ten witches reside across various dimensions. However, there is no singular approach for wizards to enter a psychic state; it requires specific stimuli such as drumming, singing and dancing being the most common methods employed while others include drug consumption or self-inflicted pain. Witchcraft refers to a particular belief system or practice wherein individuals believe they can harness supernatural powers through specific rituals aimed at influencing or even coercing nature according to their own will.[9] During primitive sacrificial ceremonies, numerous sorcerers would often engage in various forms of witchcraft as a means to demonstrate the power of supernatural deities. These magical practices eventually evolved into diverse traditional sports activities, characterized by symbolic movements. Specifically, within the context of traditional society's sacrificial rituals, witches and wizards frequently performed prayer activities aimed at ensuring successful fishing and hunting endeavors, bountiful crop growth, and smooth expeditions. Through these acts of witchcraft, the sorcerers' body movements intertwined with strong rhythms and coordinated gestures gradually developed into standardized patterns. Over time, these actions acquired multiple symbolic meanings that were embraced by the majority and ultimately transformed into enduring traditions within the realm of traditional sports.[10] The

origins of certain traditional sports can be traced back to ancient witchcraft.

Kung fu narrative

The concept of Kung Fu philosophy (Kongfu-philosophers) was proposed by Professor Ni Peimin to examine the relationship between China and the West through the lens of Kung Fu. Here, Kung Fu encompasses not only martial arts and physical exertion but also refers to a set of skills for accomplishing tasks, such as perseverance and diligence. Although the term "kungfu" did not emerge until the pre-Qin Dynasty, its connotations were already present. As a novel philosophical perspective, it offers metaphysical contemplation, spiritual embodiment, and intellectual discourse when applied in the context of sports communication.

Kung Fu perspective and spirituality

From a semiotic perspective, the act of "offering sacrifices to God" as mentioned in "The Analects of Xinshu" (3.12) embodies the concept of "Suisaiism," which pertains to the interpretation of signs and meanings based on their perceived presence or absence. In this doctrine, the relationship between signs and meanings is not merely a straightforward correspondence but rather hinges upon an individual's perception of their meaningful existence during acts of worship or sacrifice.

In ancient China, people demonstrated their devotion and reverence for the gods through sacrificial rituals. These rituals served as symbolic expressions of respect and prayers, allowing individuals to establish a connection with the divine. The significance of such sacrifices lies not merely in their formalities or procedures, but rather in the profound sense of presence experienced by worshippers. Similarly, when practicing health Qigong exercises, individuals engage in mental imagery and utilize the internal energy known as "qi" to facilitate its circulation and integration with the concept of Yin and Yang within the exercise process. While it is impossible to definitively ascertain the existence or absence of Chi, this imaginative practice holds great importance due to its ritualistic nature and cognitive processes involved. As Ni Peimin stated, "The focus should not be on whether God truly exists or one's belief in God; instead, individuals should consider what attitude they adopt during religious festivals as a means of engaging in mental activities."[11]. To succinctly encapsulate the spiritual inclination of Confucianism as "Suzaiism" and analyze it through the lens of kung fu philosophy, we can effectively comprehend the spiritual attributes of Confucianism and tentatively engage in interfaith dialogue with contemporary religions. Furthermore, we can explore traditional forms of physical exercise such as health Qigong.

The epistemology and theoretical framework of Kung Fu

The knowledge structure refers to the organizational framework through which individuals acquire and master knowledge, encompassing two distinct types of knowledge: propositional and skill-based. Propositional knowledge pertains to abstract concepts conveyed through language and writing, while skill-based knowledge is derived from practical experience and application.[12]

These two forms of knowledge play a pivotal role in the advancement of human civilization, giving rise to theoretical rationality and practical rationality.

Theoretical rationality, also referred to as computational rationality, is a cognitive framework grounded in logical reasoning that underscores the investigation and comprehension of the essence and principles governing phenomena. In scientific inquiry, theoretical rationality assumes a pivotal role in elucidating natural occurrences and societal regularities through the establishment of theoretical models and mathematical derivations. Nevertheless, there exist limitations inherent to theoretical rationality due to its tendency towards abstraction and conceptualization, which may not fully capture the intricacies and diversities present within the real world.

Practical rationality, rooted in practical experience and empirical knowledge, underscores the comprehension of pragmatism and feasibility. Throughout the course of human civilization, practical rationality has assumed a pivotal role by incessantly exploring novel insights and technologies through experimentation and practice, thereby propelling societal progress and advancement. Boasting robust applicability and operability, practical rationality readily finds application in real-world production processes and daily life to enhance both productivity levels and quality of living.

In the realm of knowledge, theoretical rationality and practical rationality are not isolated entities; rather, they exhibit interdependence and mutual promotion. Theoretical reason can offer guidance and support to practical reason, while practical reason can provide opportunities for theoretical reason to verify and revise its propositions. Only by amalgamating theoretical rationality with practical rationality can we attain a more profound comprehension of the world and effectuate transformative changes.

Furthermore, two distinct types of teacher-student relationships can be identified: the egalitarian teacher-student relationship and the mentorship relationship. The essence of an egalitarian teacher-student relationship lies in mutual respect and equality, fostering a dynamic and interactive connection between educators and learners. In this context, students are not passive recipients of knowledge but actively engage in the learning process, participating in inquiry-based activities alongside their teachers to foster growth together. On the other hand, the mentorship relationship embodies a traditional form of instruction where authority rests with the master while apprentices obediently learn through imitation and practice. Over time, these apprentices gradually develop into skilled craftsmen or professionals.

Why did China fail to develop modern science? From a growth perspective, this can be attributed to the preference of the Chinese kung fu teaching system for traditional culture over theoretical exploration and development of modern science and technology.

Narrative strategy

Reframe the statement within a cultural framework

Health communication can integrate exceptional traditional culture to stand out, explore relevant aesthetic connotations, enrich the content and form of health communication, and provide individuals with more comprehensive and profound knowledge and values regarding health. While maintaining its distinctive characteristics, the expression medium of "unconventional thinking"

also endeavors to emulate the expressive advantages or aesthetic effects of other mediums. In terms of narration, "cultural thinking" advocates for cross-media storytelling. Traditional culture encompasses various literary forms such as fables, stories, and poems that can be combined with health communication. By incorporating vivid storylines and figurative metaphors into the narrative framework of health Qigong, people can gain a deeper understanding of health knowledge and values.

Exploring the aesthetic connotation of exceptional traditional culture can offer a more diverse range of forms and contents for the effective dissemination of health Qigong. Traditional Chinese culture encompasses a plethora of aesthetic ideas, which can be seamlessly integrated with health communication, enabling individuals to pursue not only physical well-being but also spiritual gratification and appreciation for beauty. For instance, traditional music, dance, painting, and other art forms can serve as powerful mediums to convey health concepts and values while empowering the expression of health Qigong, thereby facilitating a harmonious balance between artistic appreciation and active engagement in health exercises. By combining health communication with outstanding traditional culture and delving into its associated aesthetic implications, people can acquire comprehensive and profound knowledge about health as well as develop enriched values. This approach not only enhances the content and format of health communication but also enables individuals to simultaneously seek physical wellness while indulging in spiritual pleasure and aesthetic enjoyment. Therefore, it is imperative that we actively explore this amalgamation to infuse new vitality into the advancement of health communication.

Advocate the embodiment philosophy

The dissemination should prioritize the appreciation of aging to enhance the understanding of the body and health concept, rooted in the philosophical framework of traditional Chinese perspectives on body and health. Drawing from "The Biography of Changjing" in the Book of Wei, which states that "knowing destiny is akin to reverie," this refers to elderly individuals attaining longevity. For health Qigong, a traditional approach to well-being, enjoying physical and mental exercise through specific postures and breathing techniques comprehends the notion of age-related vitality. This holistic method emphasizes both internal cultivation for bodily wellness and tranquility for peace of mind. By adhering to long-term practice, health Qigong can assist individuals in regulating their physical state, enhancing immunity, ultimately leading to an extended lifespan.

From a health perspective, "knowing life" encompasses not only the cognition of life but also one's attitude towards it. Through the practice of health Qigong, older adults can develop a deeper understanding of the true essence of life and learn to cherish the present moment more profoundly. This positive outlook on life not only enhances their quality of life but also contributes to an extension in their lifespan to some extent. The term "revering" in ancient Chinese culture signifies longevity and vitality. In the context of health Qigong, pursuing a state of "reverie age" aims not only at prolonging life but also achieving physical and mental harmony and well-being. By engaging in health Qigong practices, individuals can maintain an active lifestyle during their later years while enjoying good health and happiness. Integrating traditional Chinese culture with effective communication strategies can provide people with comprehensive knowledge about maintaining good health. Chinese traditional culture is vast and profound, encompassing abundant

wisdom regarding medicine, healthcare, dietetics, among other aspects related to well-being. By combining this knowledge with modern approaches to health communication, concepts such as "Yin-Yang and Five Elements" or "meridians and acupoints" from Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) theory can be better understood by individuals seeking insights into the mysteries surrounding physical well-being.

Reinforce the cultivation of moderate benevolence

Health communication should also encompass the concept of inner beauty in the spiritual realm and elevate discussions on morality and virtuous actions. The notion of 'banal good', derived from Arendt's 'banal evil', refers to the thoughtless normality of virtuous deeds. Achieving this requires personal moral cultivation as well as a conducive social environment. The Confucian principle of 'going with the wind' suggests that individual cultivation can be translated into a societal atmosphere and cultural system, while collective cultivation serves as an embodiment of culture and system. By transforming individual virtues into a social entity independent of personal practice, supported by institutional guarantees and cultural ambiance, we can prevent mediocrity from prevailing while promoting excellence.

The maturation of individuals is the manifestation of human's overall cultivation, while the integration of individual cultivation into social systems and culture represents its embodiment.[13] Confucianism constitutes a significant facet of Chinese traditional culture, wherein the customs of "Kong Yan happy place" and "Zeng point meteorology" exemplify the spiritual dimension of Confucian tranquility and contentment. The term "Kong Yan Yue Chu" denotes the optimistic and serene attitude displayed by Confucius and Yan Hui amidst destitution. As Confucius once proclaimed in the Analects (Chapter 12), "With sparse food to eat, water to drink, bent arm for a pillow, even music can be found." Material wealth holds no sway over me like fleeting clouds." He advocated for an ethos of peace and happiness, asserting that genuine joy resides within a modest existence. It is worth noting that Yan Hui was one of Confucius' disciples.

Similar to Confucius, he lived in poverty but maintained an optimistic attitude. Their way of life embodies the essence of Confucianism, which emphasizes morality over material desires. "Zeng Dian Meteorology" describes an ideal state of living that involves bathing in the river and dancing with the wind while maintaining inner peace and harmony with nature. This poetic realm represents the pursuit of spiritual freedom within Confucianism. In today's society, where material wealth is abundant, it is important to remember that true happiness comes from within and not just from external possessions. The spiritual realm embodied by the Confucian style of poverty and happiness can help us break free from materialistic constraints and pursue genuine freedom and happiness.[14] Such an environment facilitates the occurrence of all events. Arendt introduced the concept of "banal evil," emphasizing individual accountability, moral subjectivity, and avoiding excessive reliance on external factors. The Confucian principle of "following the wind" highlights that individuals with higher status bear greater responsibilities. Transforming the gentleman's style is pivotal in addressing the prevalence of mediocrity in evil and achieving mediocrity in goodness. To prevent and actualize this transformation, we should reduce our dependence on personal morality by institutionalizing and cultivating a social system and culture based on virtuous conduct. Eradicating mediocrity in evil goes hand in hand with attaining mediocrity in goodness; once evil ceases to be normalized, goodness can become customary. Enhancing one's skills and

externalizing them through societal institutions and cultures signifies human maturity.

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