
Research on Practical Pathways for Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation through Traditional Ethnic Sports in the Dayaoshan Region

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Abstract: This paper employs literature review, field research, case study analysis, and comparative analysis to explore the value, challenges, and practical strategies of fostering a sense of community for the Chinese Nation through traditional ethnic sports in the Dayaoshan region. The findings reveal: Functional value includes the “heart-nourishing” effect of cultural identity, the “soul-forging” role of community emotions, and the linkage between social capital and rural revitalization. Challenges include insufficient resource investment, a talent inheritance gap, homogenization and commercialization impacts, and a lack of dissemination channels. Practical pathways involve improving institutional guarantees, strengthening talent cultivation, integrating modern technology, and constructing collaborative platforms.

Keywords: Dayaoshan area; ethnic traditional sports; forging a strong sense of the Chinese national community; Practical Pathways

Online publication: February 26, 2026

1. Introduction

Fostering a strong sense of community for the Chinese Nation has become the central task of ethnic work in the new era. The General Secretary emphasized, “Taking the fostering of a sense of community for the Chinese Nation as the main thread, we must continuously consolidate unity among all ethnic groups”^[1]. The Dayaoshan region is a multi-ethnic co-inhabited area and an important birthplace of Yao culture. In 2024, the State General Administration of Sport and other departments issued the “Guidelines on Promoting the Fostering of a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation through Sports,” explicitly stating that by 2030, the sports consciousness, health awareness, and sense of community among all ethnic groups should significantly strengthen. The Dayaoshan region boasts rich traditional ethnic sports activities, presenting a culturally diverse and integrated pattern that plays a unique role in promoting ethnic interactions, exchanges, and integration, as well as constructing a shared spiritual home for the Chinese Nation^[2]. Based on national policies on ethnic unity and traditional sports protection, combined with the actual development of traditional ethnic sports in the Dayaoshan region, this paper deeply analyzes their value and challenges in fostering a sense of community for the Chinese Nation and explores scientifically feasible practical pathways to provide references for related research and practice.

2. Functional Value of Traditional Ethnic Sports in the Dayaoshan Region in Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation

2.1. Enhancing Cultural Identity and Strengthening Psychological Belonging

Traditional ethnic sports serve as living carriers of ethnic culture, deeply rooted in the historical heritage and folk customs of various ethnic groups. Through physical practice, they transform abstract cultural symbols into perceivable and participatory life experiences. Taking the Yao “Dancing Incense Dragon” in Dayaoshan as an example, its dance postures, ritual artifact usage, and local seasonal customs are deeply intertwined, integrating traditional rain-praying ceremonies with agricultural civilization connotations. It is not only a collective activity that unites the community but also a ritualized expression of the Yao people’s reverence for nature and gratitude for their homeland. During the performance of the Dancing Incense Dragon, participants and audiences immerse themselves in the rhythm and movement, fully expressing individual reverence for ancestral traditions and attachment to their homeland’s landscapes, thereby continuously deepening cultural identity at the spiritual level. Traditional sports such as

Yellow Mud Drum Dance and Drum-Topping Competitions create a collective atmosphere of “sharing breath and fate” through the resonance of drum sounds and physical collaboration among participants, enabling strong emotional resonance through collaborative participation. This cultural sharing is not merely imitation and coordination of physical movements but also reinforces the collective self-awareness of the ethnic group through group rituals. Multi-ethnic participatory festival sports rituals can effectively enhance the recognition with shared values among all ethnic groups, providing individuals with a sense of ethnic pride and social trust during participation, thus significantly promoting social cohesion. With the advancement of modern community governance, the Dayaoshan region gradually integrates ethnic sports innovation into the public cultural service system, promoting the normalized practice and performance of traditional sports in daily life through measures such as constructing Yao cultural museums and creating festival tourism brands, further solidifying cultural identity and psychological belonging among all ethnic groups.

2.2. Leveraging Educational Efficacy and Cultivating New Era Talents

Traditional ethnic sports possess unique educational value. By integrating concepts such as patriotism, collectivism, sports spirit, and mutual learning into the youth education system through curriculum-based and experiential teaching, effective inheritance of Chinese excellent culture can be achieved^[3, 4]. Primary and secondary schools in Jinxiu Yao Autonomous County actively respond to the policy of introducing sports intangible cultural heritage into campuses, adaptively incorporating the drumming actions and dance steps of the Yao Yellow Mud Drum Dance into students’ daily physical exercises, allowing youth to subtly absorb ethnic cultural nutrients during sports activities. Meanwhile, top skills are included in physical education compulsory courses, with regular competitions held in conjunction with local history teaching, enabling students to deeply understand the historical context and cultural connotations behind ethnic sports during skill training.

The educational practice of traditional ethnic sports not only enriches the school physical education curriculum but also aids in cultivating students’ cultural awareness and sense of responsibility, constructing an educational model that integrates “knowledge and action.” The organic combination of classroom teaching and community practice is key to enhancing educational effectiveness: schools invite intangible cultural heritage inheritors to conduct experiential courses on campus and organize students to participate in various ethnic festival sports activities, deeply integrating classroom knowledge with real-life experiences, helping students closely feel the cultural charm of ethnic sports, and thereby enhancing cultural confidence, interpersonal communication, and teamwork abilities. This educational model also lays the foundation for cultivating compound talents with both skill inheritance and project management abilities, providing solid talent support for the sustainable development of traditional ethnic sports.

2.3. Uniting Social Forces and Promoting Ethnic Integration

Traditional ethnic sports possess both competitive and ritualistic characteristics, with festival activities serving as platforms

for equal exchange and emotional integration, as well as important avenues for multi-ethnic interactions, exchanges, and integration^[5, 6, 7]. In the Dayaoshan region, traditional and commemorative festivals such as the King Pan Festival, the Yao March 3rd Festival, and the Autonomous County Establishment Celebration regularly organize sports performances such as Yellow Mud Drum Dance, Drum-Topping Competitions, and Dancing Incense Dragon, attracting participation from all ethnic groups and breaking cultural barriers and enhancing emotional connections in the same competitive and viewing scenarios. This multi-ethnic integrated sports exchange not only involves skill and rule competitions but also promotes emotional communication and social capital accumulation among all ethnic groups. Joint participation and observation of traditional ethnic sports can effectively enhance trust and mutual assistance levels among different ethnic groups, positively contributing to maintaining social harmony and stability. The Dayaoshan region innovatively explores a “inheritors-teachers and students-tourists” tripartite participatory mechanism tailored to different age, gender, and social background groups, further expanding the social coverage of traditional ethnic sports, uniting popular cohesion, and promoting a favorable situation of “joint participation, shared joy, and mutual recognition among all ethnic groups.”

2.4. Strengthening Political Integration and Uniting Development Consensus

In the cause of ethnic unity and progress in the new era, traditional ethnic sports possess significant political integration functions. The state emphasizes promoting interactions, exchanges, and integration among all ethnic groups through sports activities to provide support for fostering a sense of community for the Chinese Nation. Traditional ethnic sports in the Dayaoshan region are not only important contents of public cultural activities and ethnic festivals but also crucial carriers for showcasing ethnic unity and enhancing cultural soft power. Ethnic sports events co-hosted by the government and communities serve as windows for cultural display and effective means for social mobilization and consensus-building. All ethnic groups continuously strengthen their identification with national unity and ethnic unity through competing and interacting on the same field, forming a multi-level political integration pathway from the national to regional to community levels. Meanwhile, the region integrates organized sports operations with grassroots governance, incorporating voluntary services and community self-governance to construct a governance model featuring diverse participation and shared construction and benefits, further highlighting the unique value of traditional ethnic sports in uniting consensus and promoting political integration.

3. Challenges in Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation through Traditional Ethnic Sports in the Dayaoshan Region

3.1. Insufficient Resource Investment and Weak Support Systems

Insufficient resource investment is a prominent bottleneck restricting the development of traditional ethnic sports in the Dayaoshan region, not only involving shortages of hardware facilities and special funds but also structural issues in institutional mechanisms and fund allocation. Local traditional ethnic sports and festival activities heavily rely on financial funds, but the disbursement process is cumbersome and lacks flexibility, making it difficult for grassroots levels to obtain timely guarantees during critical stages such as event organization and project cultivation, affecting long-term development. The lack of effective supervision and performance evaluation in fund usage makes it difficult to quantify investment effectiveness, reducing the motivation for sustained investment. Special funds are mostly annual budgets, lacking cross-year stable support, making it difficult for long-term cultivation projects to form stable expectations. Additionally, the low recognition of the value of traditional ethnic sports places them in a weak position in regional overall planning, making it difficult to obtain policy support for multi-departmental collaboration and cross-domain integration, further restricting the improvement of their resource support systems^[8].

3.2. Talent Inheritance Gap and Lack of Cultivation Systems

Talent inheritance in traditional ethnic sports is facing a risk of discontinuity. Traditional skills mainly rely on family or

master-apprentice relationships for inheritance, lacking necessary social support and value recognition. Inheritors lack due social status and development prospects, leading to weak willingness among the younger generation to participate in inheritance. The training system for traditional ethnic sports lacks standardized curricula and certification systems, with no unified industry standards for skill assessment or inheritor qualifications, failing to provide career advancement channels and economic return guarantees for sports intangible cultural heritage inheritors. The involvement of ethnic sports in the education system is weak, with a lack of effective connections between schools and social sports organizations, making it difficult to promote traditional projects in youth physical education and extracurricular activities. The inheritance of traditional ethnic sports not only stays at the skill level but also faces the risk of dilution of cultural connotations and values, restricting their role as “heart-nourishing and soul-forging” carriers in achieving internalized identification and long-term influence among youth groups^[9].

3.3. Homogenization and Intensified Commercialization Impacts

Traditional ethnic sports are also subject to homogenization and excessive commercialization impacts. Commercial development often accompanies a tendency towards overconsumption of cultural symbols^[10]. Some commercially operated events use modern marketing means such as “big data” and “internet celebrity effects” for brand building, symbolizing and labeling ethnic sports to create replicable “internet celebrity-style” activity models, neglecting the diversity maintenance of regionality, ritual sense, and cultural relevance. This trend invisibly weakens the uniqueness of sports resources in the Dayaoshan region, leading to similarities in projects from different regions and ethnic groups under commercial packaging, making it difficult to maintain cultural diversity. The lack of cultural property rights protection and intellectual property rights for traditional ethnic sports also makes original ecological projects susceptible to capitalized reconstruction, forming low-cost assembly-line-style “performance products,” damaging community cultural sovereignty and causing confusion among consumers about the concept of “ethnic sports,” weakening brand core competitiveness and cultural leadership.

3.4. Insufficient Modern Dissemination Channels and Lagging Digital Construction

Traditional ethnic sports also have shortcomings in modern dissemination, requiring strengthened coordination between digital construction and professional content planning. Sports intangible cultural heritage lacks centralized digital resource management and copyright protection mechanisms, restricting secondary creation and commercial cooperation of high-quality video, audio, and image materials. Grassroots institutions generally lack professional talents in new media planning, short video production, and live streaming operations, making it difficult to occupy advantageous positions in platform algorithm recommendation systems, resulting in scattered and unsustainable dissemination effects. Cross-media integrated promotion is insufficient, with weak linkages with tourism, culture, education, and other fields, making it difficult for ethnic sports to form IP-based operations and multi-scenario displays, missing opportunities for deep integration with regional cultural tourism brands. Simultaneous online launches and the lack of two-way interaction between “the cloud” and “the field” significantly limit the potential of ethnic sports to expand cultural influence in the new era.

4. Practical Pathways for “Nourishing the Heart and Forging the Soul” through Ethnic Sports: Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation through Traditional Ethnic Sports in the Dayaoshan Region

4.1. Improving Institutional Guarantees and Constructing Long-term Development Mechanisms

Constructing a scientific and comprehensive institutional framework is the foundation for the sustainable development of ethnic traditional sports in the Dayaoshan area and serves as a crucial safeguard for fully leveraging their role in “nourishing the mind and forging the spirit.” It is essential to formulate targeted development plans that align with the regional characteristics of the Dayaoshan area and the needs of ethnic sports development, clearly defining strategic goals, key tasks, and annual assessment indicators. Representative traditional Yao sports should be prioritized for support, with tiered

and categorized assistance implemented based on the inheritance value and influence of each project, thereby creating a development pattern that features “graded support with highlighted priorities.” The financial investment mechanism should be refined, and a closed-loop operational process of “special funds—project application—rolling evaluation—performance feedback” should be established: the government should set up special funds for ethnic sports based on annual plans, clarify application conditions and procedures, and encourage grassroots organizations and social groups to actively apply; an evaluation team composed of experts in culture, sports, ethnology, and other fields should be established to conduct mid-term and final evaluations of projects regularly; subsequent funding should be allocated based on evaluation results, with review opinions and fund usage publicly disclosed to accept social supervision and ensure efficient and transparent fund utilization. Local legislative efforts should be advanced to incorporate the legitimate rights and interests of inheritors of sports intangible cultural heritage and their representative protection groups into the scope of legal protection, clarifying criteria and procedures for recognizing inheritors’ qualifications, ensuring public resource support for inheritance venues and equipment, establishing intellectual property protection mechanisms, defining boundaries between public welfare and commercial activities, and specifying penalties for violations that harm cultural heritage^[11], thereby providing solid institutional support for the inheritance and dissemination of ethnic sports.

4.2. Strengthening Talent Cultivation and Solidifying the Foundation for Inheritance and Development

Talents are key to the sustainable development of traditional ethnic sports^[12]. A comprehensive talent cultivation system covering four levels of “inheritors-professional teachers-grassroots coaches-youth volunteers” should be constructed. First, relying on county and township cultural stations, skilled and expressive old artisans should be selected and recognized as intangible cultural heritage inheritors, with subsidies and honorary incentives provided by the government to ensure their dedicated involvement in inheritance practices. Second, ethnic sports teacher training bases should be jointly established with normal universities and sports universities, offering courses such as “Ethnic Sports Teaching Methods” and “Ethnic Traditional Sports Culture,” with old artisans and university teachers jointly teaching to enhance the modern educational technology and curriculum design abilities of the inheritance group while transmitting traditional skills, cultivating “dual-qualified” physical education teachers for primary and secondary schools and vocational colleges. Third, directional training programs should be jointly held with the State General Administration of Sport and provincial sports departments to upgrade the coaching philosophies and safety management levels of rural grassroots coaches, and a standardized qualification certification and evaluation system for grassroots coaches should be gradually established through modules such as coach qualification certification and event operation management training. Fourth, university students and social youth should be mobilized to form “Ethnic Sports Youth Volunteer Corps,” regularly conducting volunteer services such as “summer research camps” and “winter inheritance camps,” allowing youth to grow through participation in traditional sports inheritance and promotion. Through job rotations, community practices, thematic research studies, and other means, youth’s identification and sense of belonging to ethnic sports should be enhanced, enabling them to become both vital forces in inheritance work and active disseminators of fostering a sense of community.

4.3. Integrating Modern Technology and Innovating Inheritance and Dissemination Models

Technology empowerment is a breakthrough in the inheritance and dissemination of contemporary ethnic sports^[13]. Traditional ethnic sports in the Dayaoshan region should collaborate with well-known domestic universities, research institutes, and technology enterprises to construct a “Dayaoshan Region Ethnic Sports Digital Archive.” Three-dimensional scanning, motion capture, and high-precision stereo imaging technologies should be used to conduct three-dimensional digital modeling of the action essentials, artifact structures, and venue layouts of traditional ethnic sports projects, forming visual and interactive digital resources. Based on VR/AR technologies, immersive experience products such as “Panoramic Restoration of Dancing Incense Dragon” and “Virtual Training for Yao Rope Competition” should be developed, allowing audiences from different regions and backgrounds to transcend time and space limitations and intuitively experience

the unique charm of Dayaoshan ethnic sports. An intelligent dissemination platform should be constructed based on big data analysis and artificial intelligence recommendation algorithms, targeting short videos and live streams to potential audiences based on user personas and interest tags, improving dissemination precision and participation conversion rates. Digital archives can be connected with educational resources to develop school-based curriculum auxiliary software and teaching micro-lessons, achieving classroom-inside and outside integration, enabling convenient access to multimedia teaching materials for both students and teachers, and enhancing learning experiences and cultural identification. The intervention of technological means not only provides new pathways for the “living inheritance” of ethnic sports but also creates technological conditions for expanding their social influence and cultivating community emotions^[14].

4.4. Constructing Collaborative Platforms and Enhancing Synergistic Development Effectiveness

To exert the synergistic effects of institutions, talents, and technology^[15], a comprehensive service platform integrating “culture + tourism + sports + education” should be constructed. The platform should provide one-stop services such as event registration, tourism route reservations, cultural product e-commerce, and online teaching resources, connecting the complete chain from “event viewing-experience-learning-consumption.” “Yao Mountain Sports Culture Tours” products should be launched in collaboration with cultural and tourism departments, integrating projects such as Dancing Incense Dragon performances, Yao Rope Competition experiences, and ethnic festival participation into research tourism routes, and connecting with local homestays, specialty catering, ecological tours, and other resources to achieve deep integration of sports experiences and cultural tourism consumption. Meanwhile, mainstream e-commerce and cultural and creative platforms should be jointly utilized to develop cultural and creative products such as handmade ropes, sachets, and clothing related to event IPs, converting cultural value into economic value through a model combining online live streaming sales and offline exhibitions and sales. In education, “Yao Mountain Ethnic Sports” series micro-lessons should be created in collaboration with MOOC platforms, inviting intangible cultural heritage inheritors and university experts to record courses and open them to the public, expanding dissemination coverage and providing continuous operational content support for the platform.

Funding

Project Name: 2025 Guangxi Higher Education Institutions’ Young and Middle-aged Teachers’ Scientific Research Foundation Capacity Enhancement Project: A Study on Traditional Ethnic Sports in the Dayaoshan Region and Their Role in Fostering a Strong Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation (Project No.: 2025KY0878).

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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