

The study of current situation of wushu development for excellence in Jiangsu

Bai Jianfei¹, Bunjob Piromkam^{2*}

College of Innovation and Management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand.

E-mail: s65584950003@ssru.ac.th

*Corresponding Author E-mail: bunjob.pi@ssru.ac.th

Abstract

The objective of this study investigates the current state of wushu development in Jiangsu Province, China, with a focus on achieving excellence. Through literature reviews and expert interviews, the study explores the current status of wushu development in Jiangsu Province and its influencing factors. The findings found that social cognition remains one-sided, with insufficient recognition of wushu's cultural and philosophical significance, leading to difficulties in cultural transmission and reduced cultural identity among youth. Talent cultivation systems are fragmented, with low social recognition, inadequate reserve forces, and talent outflow, which collectively impede sustainable development. Addressing these issues requires systemic reforms, improved policy enforcement, enhanced cultural promotion, and strengthened talent development to realize the full potential of Jiangsu's wushu industry.

Keywords: Wushu development; Excellence; Current situation; Strategic path

1. Introduction

Background introduction

With the acceleration of social modernization and the increasing recognition of cultural heritage, traditional Chinese sports such as wushu are receiving growing attention in both policy and academic circles. Wushu, as a representative symbol of Chinese traditional physical culture, integrates combat techniques, aesthetic expression, and philosophical principles. Jiangsu province, as a historical hub of Chinese martial arts, possesses abundant wushu resources and a variety of influential schools including Taijiquan, Liuhequan, and Mantis Boxing. These styles are widely practiced and culturally rooted, forming an essential part of the province's intangible heritage and social identity.

In response to national strategies promoting the revitalization of traditional sports, Jiangsu has introduced a series of policy measures aimed at integrating wushu into modern education, public fitness programs, and the broader sports industry. Policy documents such as the 14th Five-Year Plan for Sports Development and the Jiangsu Provincial Implementation Plan for National Fitness from 2021 to 2025 provide clear directives to strengthen the role of wushu in cultural promotion, economic development, and youth training. Despite these favorable policy conditions, the practical outcomes remain limited due to persistent challenges. These include insufficient youth participation, lack of innovation in teaching methods, underdeveloped competition systems, low marketization, uneven coaching quality, and weak reserve talent pipelines.

Under such circumstances, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth investigation into the current situation of wushu development in Jiangsu province. By identifying the core influencing factors such as government functions, cultural identity, economic input, market mechanisms, and talent development, this study seeks to clarify the strategic path toward excellence. The research aims to provide scientific recommendations for optimizing policies, enhancing institutional systems, and promoting the sustainable and high-quality development of wushu in Jiangsu.

2. Literature review

2.1 Policy implementation theory

Policy implementation theory refers to the study of how government policies are transformed into concrete outcomes through administrative procedures, institutional coordination, and stakeholder participation. Scholars emphasize the relationship among policy design, operational mechanisms, and actual effectiveness. In traditional sports development, this theory helps evaluate how policy intentions are translated into grassroots practice and long-term results. It is directly aligned with the dimension of government functions and policy implementation in this study, providing a foundation to examine the impact of policy systems on wushu development in Jiangsu province.

2.2 Cultural heritage theory

Cultural heritage theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding how cultural values and practices are preserved and transmitted across generations. It focuses on the symbolic significance, educational roles, and community engagement inherent in cultural traditions. In the context of wushu, this theory highlights how martial arts remain relevant through reinterpretation, formal instruction, and public involvement. It serves as the theoretical basis for analyzing social identity and cultural inheritance, emphasizing the cultural continuity and collective recognition that sustain wushu in Jiangsu province.

2.3 Sports industry theory

Sports industry theory addresses the structure, function, and evolution of sports as an integrated sector involving competition, fitness, and commercial services. The theory views sports as both economic products and cultural assets, and it explains how traditional practices like wushu adapt to modern industrial frameworks. It supports this study's focus on economic input and resource allocation by clarifying how capital investment, infrastructure development, and industrial chains contribute to the modernization and sustainability of wushu in Jiangsu province.

2.4 Development strategy theory

Development strategy theory explores how long-term plans are formulated and implemented to achieve sustainable outcomes in fields such as education, culture, and public service. In sports, it provides guidance on setting development goals, coordinating institutional efforts, and aligning with social demand. This theory supports the integration of multiple factors—including policy, market, and talent into a cohesive strategic framework. It contributes to the overall understanding of development approaches for wushu excellence, although not limited to a single independent variable.

2.5 Talent development theory

Talent development theory focuses on the identification, cultivation, and advancement of individuals with potential in specialized domains. In sports, it involves coaching quality, training systems, and educational support. Applied to wushu, the theory explains how practitioners move from basic learning to advanced levels through structured pathways and institutional backing. It aligns with the variable of reserve talent management, offering insights into how youth cultivation and human resource strategies support sustainable excellence in the wushu system.

2.6 Holistic development theory

Holistic development theory emphasizes balanced and comprehensive growth across physical, cognitive, cultural, and ethical dimensions. It advocates for integrated development that goes beyond technical skills to include moral cultivation, cultural awareness, and social engagement. In wushu development, the theory supports a broad view of excellence that includes performance standards, educational value, and societal relevance. It corresponds to the study's dependent variable the development of wushu for excellence in Jiangsu province by offering a multidimensional understanding of progress and influence.

3. Research methodology

The study investigates the current situation and key influencing factors of wushu development for excellence in Jiangsu province, China, through documentary analysis and expert/stakeholder interviews, using content analysis as the main analytic approach.

Analysis of the current situation of wushu development in Jiangsu province, China

1. Lagging industrialization

1.1 Imperfect industrial chain: The formation of the wushu industrial chain still lacks systematization and diversification. The main source of income of the wushu industry is still concentrated in traditional areas such as events, performances and training courses, failing to form a multi-dimensional commercial operation. Related derivative industries, such as wushu cultural products and wushu tourism, have not yet been fully developed.

1.2 Insufficient market mechanism: The existing market-oriented operation of wushu is still in the primary stage, and the market mechanism is not yet mature, which makes it difficult for capital and social resources to effectively gather and invest in the wushu industry. Many investors and capitalists choose to withdraw or maintain a cautious attitude towards investment in the wushu industry due to a lack of in-depth knowledge of the industry and its commercialization potential.

1.3 Lack of specialized platform: Jiangsu province's wushu industry, especially in the dissemination and training, has not yet formed a unified professional platform. Some wushu schools and groups lack effective resource integration in their independent development, making it difficult to realize cross-industry collaboration.

2. Imbalance in policy implementation and resource allocation

2.1 Insufficient implementation of policies: implementation at the grassroots level is a key factor, and there are differences in the understanding and implementation methods of some local governments, resulting in the failure to implement many good policies and measures, especially in remote or economically relatively backward areas.

2.2 Uneven allocation of resources; there are significant differences in the level of economic development in Jiangsu province, especially between urban and rural areas and

regions, which directly affects the allocation of resources needed for the development of wushu. Economically developed areas, such as Nanjing, Suzhou and other large cities, have sufficient financial support, facilities and policy resources to better promote the development of wushu programs, which not only attracts more excellent wushu talents, but also provides a more complete training and competition platform. However, some economically developing areas in Jiangsu province are facing problems such as lack of funds and infrastructure, and the popularization and development of wushu programs are seriously constrained.

3. Problems of social cognition and cultural transmission

3.1 One-sided social cognition: In modern society, the social cognition of wushu is often one-sided, and many people limit it to fitness exercise or competitive sports, while neglecting its profound cultural connotation and philosophical thinking. Especially among some wushu enthusiasts, more attention is often focused on skill training at the competitive level, ignoring the unique value of wushu as a cultural carrier. The deeper connotations of wushu include “cultivating one's body and nourishing one's character” and “passing on Chinese culture”, which are spiritual values that have not been sufficiently emphasized in modern society.

3.2 The dilemma of cultural inheritance: The inheritance of wushu is not only dependent on the teaching of skills, but also on cultural recognition and inheritance. In areas where urbanization is rapidly advancing, young people pay less attention to traditional wushu, believing it to be out of touch with the demands of modern life.

3.3 Lack of cultural identity: In modern society, wushu is often regarded as an outdated traditional skill rather than a cultural symbol with modernity and international value. Especially for the younger generation, with the advent of globalization and the age of informationization, the identity of wushu as a traditional culture has gradually weakened. Many young people's understandings of wushu are limited to its superficial skills, which are incompatible with the pace and demands of modern life, and they even misunderstand its historical and cultural values.

4.4 Deficiencies in the wushu talent training system

4.4.1 Lack of talent cultivation system: Jiangsu province's wushu talent cultivation system is fragmented and lacks unified planning and systematic design. Wushu schools and clubs mainly rely on traditional apprenticeship training and lack a modernized education and teaching system. Due to the resource limitations of wushu development, many outstanding wushu talents have not been able to enter the high-level competitive arena or obtain broader development space.

4.4.2 Insufficient social recognition: although the number of wushu talents in Jiangsu province is quite large, the social recognition is generally low, and wushu is not attractive enough as a career development. Many wushu enthusiasts and professionals fail to obtain appropriate social value and professional recognition, leading to the loss of some excellent talents.

4.4.3 Insufficient reserve force: Jiangsu province also faces challenges in the cultivation of reserve talents in wushu. The current wushu training system lacks long-term planning and support, resulting in many promising young people failing to receive sustained training. Many outstanding young wushu competitors show good talent in their initial training, but during their career development, they find it difficult to adhere to the path of specialization due to the limitations of funding, educational resources, and social acceptance.

4.4.4 Talent outflow problem: In addition to the cultivation and reserve of local talents, Jiangsu province is also facing the problem of the loss of excellent wushu talents. Many high-level wushu talents choose to go overseas or to other provinces, resulting in the loss of talent resources. Internationalized wushu training and tournaments have attracted many promising young people, while the lack of sufficient local support and development opportunities has made local wushu education and development more constrained.

5. Development concept and path of wushu in Jiangsu province, China

5.1 Balancing cultural heritage and innovation

The development of wushu in Jiangsu province emphasizes a dynamic balance between cultural preservation and modern innovation. Wushu embodies not only physical techniques but also philosophical values and social functions. To adapt to globalization, Jiangsu promotes international exchanges to enhance recognition while maintaining cultural authenticity. The integration of wushu into formal education has strengthened youth engagement and cultural awareness. At the same time, innovative practices such as incorporating wushu into stage performances, film, and digital platforms have expanded its reach and relevance. This combination of tradition and modernization supports the sustainable development of wushu in contemporary society.

5.2 Integration of socialization and market-oriented development

The development of wushu places strong emphasis on combining public engagement with market-driven strategies. With growing societal demand for health and cultural experiences, wushu has evolved from its traditional roles into a form of national fitness and cultural consumption. By embedding wushu into community life, schools, and workplaces, public participation has been significantly enhanced. On the industrial side, efforts have been made to establish a comprehensive chain that includes training, competitions, and cultural tourism. Cross-sector integration, particularly “wushu + tourism,” has expanded both cultural influence and economic value. Branded tournaments not only boost competitive standards but also serve as platforms for commercialization, reinforcing the cultural identity and market potential of wushu in a modern context.

5.3 Organic integration of traditional wushu and competitive sports

The integration of traditional wushu with modern competitive sports reflects a shift toward scientific, systematic development. By incorporating sports science disciplines such as biomechanics, physiology, and psychology, training has become more personalized and efficient. Reforms in competition formats and scoring standards have enhanced the fairness and appeal of wushu events, supporting athlete performance on an international stage. Standardization efforts further align wushu with global sporting norms, paving the way for its modernization and international recognition.

5.4 Cross-field cooperation and internationalization strategy

Wushu development increasingly relies on collaboration across sectors and a diversified internationalization approach. By linking with cultural industries, education, and sports organizations, wushu has expanded beyond traditional boundaries to achieve multidimensional growth. Internationally, its influence is enhanced through both traditional tournaments and modern media such as film and digital platforms. Effective dissemination requires not only translation but also culturally adaptive communication that preserves wushu’s symbolic

meaning. Building a discourse system aligned with global expression habits helps foster cultural exchange and strengthens wushu's presence on the world stage.

5.5 Policy support and community-based development

Wushu development has been strongly driven by supportive policies that enhance infrastructure, funding, and cultural promotion. By integrating wushu into community activities and public spaces, its presence has extended into everyday life, fostering broader participation and cultural identity. The “school–community–society” model has effectively linked wushu with education and national fitness goals, enabling multi-age engagement and cultural continuity. However, disparities remain between urban and rural areas due to unequal resource allocation, highlighting the need for more inclusive and balanced policy implementation.

5.6 Digitalization and intelligent development trends

The advancement of digital and intelligent technologies has become a key driver in modernizing wushu. Tools such as virtual reality, AI-based motion analysis, and interactive platforms have expanded access to training and enhanced global communication. Digital dissemination breaks traditional constraints of time and space, allowing broader participation and visibility. Intelligent systems also improve the quality and interactivity of competitions, attracting younger audiences. Despite these innovations, challenges such as high costs and uneven access remain. Future efforts should focus on reducing technological barriers and promoting inclusive digital strategies to ensure sustainable and widespread development of wushu in the digital age.

6. Conclusion

The development of martial arts in Jiangsu Province currently faces numerous challenges, including an incomplete industrial chain, an underdeveloped market mechanism, and a lack of professional platforms. These factors hinder its commercialization. Uneven policy implementation and resource allocation, particularly the significant disparities between urban and rural areas, restrict the widespread advancement of martial arts development. An overemphasis on physical fitness at the expense of cultural and philosophical values has led to difficulties in cultural inheritance and weakened cultural identity, particularly among the younger generation. Additionally, the talent cultivation system is fragmented, social recognition is low, there is a shortage of reserve talent, and significant talent loss is occurring, all of which threaten the sustainability of martial arts development. To address these issues, future strategies should focus on strengthening industrial integration, enhancing cultural awareness, optimizing policy implementation, and establishing a comprehensive talent development system. Enhancing public awareness of the cultural value of martial arts and establishing more robust support mechanisms will be key to achieving sustainable growth and international influence.

References

- Bailey, R., & Morley, D. (2022). Towards a model of talent development in physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*, 11(3), 211–230.
- Bramham, P., Hylton, K., & Jackson, D. (2025). *Sports Development: Policy, Process and Practice*. Routledge

- Brownell, S. (2019). *Training the body for China: Sports in the moral order of the People's Republic*. University of Chicago Press.
- Chen, L.F. (2024). Research on wushu training program based on the perspective of sports biomechanics. *Boxing and Fighting*, (13), 25–27.
- Chen, J.H. (2024). Study on the promotion effect and integration mechanism of Chinese excellent traditional culture on art education—Taking wushu as an example. *Wushu Research*, (02), 12–14.
- Chen, W. (2024). Wushu economic value and market development trend. *Modern Economic Information*, (21), 347.
- Deng, Q. (2025). Institutional coordination and policy implementation efficiency in school wushu programs. *Education and Sports Policy Journal*, (01), 51–64.
- Gao, X., Guo, G.C., & Li, C. (2025). A model construction and empirical study of modernized Chinese wushu event branding. *Journal of Physical Education*, 41(02), 46–56.
- Guo, Y. (2025). Exploring the development model and path selection of traditional wushu based on the perspective of optimized resource allocation. *Productivity Research*, (12), 76–78.
- Hong, H.Y. (2024). Study on the real dilemma and optimization path of youth wushu reserve talents training. *Wushu Research*, (02), 72–74.
- Liu, W., & Peng, J. (2024). A study on the path of artificial intelligence enabling the international communication of Chinese wushu. *Journal of Shenyang Sport University*, (04), 124–130.
- Liu, L. (2019). Research on the value of traditional wushu sports in community sports activities. *Chinese Wushu*, (01), 90–92.
- Ma, X.X. (2023). *Exploration of the path of high-quality development of wushu industry under the view of industrial chain (master's thesis)*. Shandong: Shandong Normal University.
- Qiu, H., & Zhang, D.Y. (2022). Research on the 5W model of digital communication of taijiquan—Taking Jitterbug as an example. *Journal of Henan University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*, (02), 90–97.