

# Revelations of the Olympic New Generation: The Intersection of Post-00s Athleticism and Youth Education

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**Abstract:** *In the context of globalization and information technology, the Olympic spirit is interacting with and promoting youth education. This paper adopts the ideas of historical combing, case analysis and comparative study, and through organizing the inheritance vein of Olympic spirit, it reveals the evolution of the group portrait of young athletes from history to modern times, as well as the challenges faced by the post-00s athletes in the context of the new era. The inheritance and extension of the Olympic spirit by the post-00s competitors is described, emphasizing the radiant effect of the Olympic spirit on youth education in the new era and how youth education can reflect and reinforce this spirit through its mirroring role. The article provides new perspectives and strategies for youth education, especially in the development of mental toughness, self-efficacy, and cognitive reappraisal skills, and explores how the Olympic spirit in the new era influences social culture and shapes social values through value transfer.*

**Keywords:** *Olympic spirit; Youth education; Post-00s*

## 1. Introduction

In the context of the modernization of the world, young people have a broader vision and the possibility of more diversified paths of growth, but youth education is facing new challenges. The developing society places higher demands on the psychological quality and adaptability of young people. This paper analyzes the inspiration of the Olympic spirit for youth education in the new era by decoding the spiritual core of post-00s Olympians. It is in this context that the intersection of the Olympic spirit and youth education reveals its unique value and significance. The article provides a new theoretical perspective for the study of the modern Olympic spirit, and offers innovative ideas and directions for an educational system for youth that is adapted to the needs of the times.

## 2. The Historical Lineage of Olympic Spirit: The Evolution of the Youth Portrait

### 2.1. Legacy of the Olympic Spirit

Since the restart of the modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, in 1896, the Olympic spirit has carried the athletic pursuit of “faster, higher, stronger” and the motto “participation is more important than winning”. The Olympic spirit has developed into more than just a spirit of sports competition, it has become a spirit of human development and an important part of youth education (Su, 2008).<sup>[1]</sup>

The Chinese Olympians in the history books have been inspiring generations of young athletes to surpass themselves and challenge the limits with their outstanding performance and spirit of not giving up. Xu Haifeng achieved a breakthrough of zero Olympic gold medal for China in the shooting competition of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, a historic moment that not only marked the rise of China's sports career, but also greatly enhanced national self-confidence; Liu Xiang broke the world record and won the men's 110-meter hurdles event at the 2004 Athens Olympics with a time of 12:91, becoming the first Chinese player to win an Olympic gold medal in the event. Wu Dajing won and broke the world record in the men's 500-meter short-track speed skating event at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, achieving a breakthrough of zero gold medals for the Chinese delegation at that Winter Olympics and boosting the development of ice and snow sports in China; Yang Qian demonstrated the confidence and poise of China's young athletes as she shot down her first

post-00s gold in the women's 10-meter air rifle final at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics; In the 2024 Paris Olympics, Pan Zhanle won the men's 100-meter freestyle event with a time of 46:40 and broke the world record, demonstrating "China's speed"; Zheng Qinwen also won the first women's singles tennis gold medal for China in the history of the Olympic Games. These young players have not only won personal and national honors, but more importantly, they have physically passed on the Olympic spirit.

### **2.2. Modern Challenges for Post-00s Players**

The challenges faced by the 00s at the Olympics are manifold, including public opinion pressure, adaptation to new scenarios and rules, and cultural differences. The public pressure faced at the Paris Olympics specifically manifested itself in questions about doping by Chinese athletes, with Chinese team swimmers tested an average of 21 times per swimmer since Jan. 1, 2024, according to data provided by Tencent News, while the 46 U.S. swimmers had only six doping tests per capita over the same period, and the 41-member Australian team had only four tests per capita. In the face of such intensive doping control, the Chinese athletes showed unconditional cooperation and obedience, reflecting the seriousness and determination of the Chinese delegation to anti-doping work, as well as the Olympic spirit of "mutual understanding, long-lasting friendship, solidarity and fair competition". Although frequent testing may have some impact on the athletes' training and rest, the Chinese swimmers showed the vigorous power of Chinese sports by going into the competition in the sharpest manner.

The calm self-confidence and grounded expression of the post-00s contestants on the field, whether it is from the individual subjective psychological adjustment or coping with the changes of objective factors, is reflected in the best way. They are happy to show their true selves in the face of pressure, and with the new generation's sense of looseness and sunny mentality, they show the self-confidence of a strong sports nation and win the public's recognition, while the image of post-00s young athletes serves as a part of the construction of the national image. After winning the championship, "Queen Wen" Zheng Qinwen said, "I am really a little bit proud of myself", and Quan Hongchan told reporters before the start, "I am not afraid of the Parisian race", all these performances are full of personal characteristics. These personalized performances are enough to show that the Post 00s are in good shape to face the challenges without fear and enjoy the race.

The outstanding achievements of the Chinese Sports Delegation of the 33rd Olympic Games, especially those of the young athletes, have carried forward the spirit of Chinese sports and the Olympic spirit, allowing the spirit of the Chinese nation and the spirit of the times to intermingle, and vividly interpreting the spirit of China in the new era. The spirit of "solidarity" of the Chinese delegation, especially the young athletes in the team events, was demonstrated on the international stage. Whether it was against a world record-setting opponent or adversity, the athletes' mentality of never giving up was also highly commendable. The good psychological adjustment ability and strong pressure-resistant ability of the post-00s players allowed them to meet the challenge with the best attitude, and successfully constructed a good international image of China's Olympic athletes, which in turn enriched the connotation of the Olympic spirit in the new era.

### **2.3. Youth education in a changing society**

Modern education pays more attention to cultivating the comprehensive quality of young people, which, at the individual level, includes moral character, cultural cultivation, adaptability and self-management ability. Inclusion in group discussions requires creativity, teamwork, and some sense of the big picture. In this context, youth education has become increasingly integrated with the Olympic spirit, with the aim of fostering learning, a sense of responsibility, a sense of community and global competitiveness among young people through sports competitions.

All sectors of society are working together on youth education: The Ministry of Education has implemented the National Education Digitization Strategy Project to promote the modernization of education and provide youth with richer and more convenient learning resources; The spring semester of 2024, Peking University's "Power Walk Program" encourages students to go out of the classroom, go deep into the grassroots, and participate in the construction of the society through practical exercises to grow their talents; The Youth League Committee of Renmin University of China organizes students to give theoretical lectures, improves their theoretical level and lecturing ability by means of "Youth Round Table Talk", and promotes students' deep understanding and dissemination of the Party's innovative theories. The responsibility for nurturing young people falls on society as a whole, and the

provision of a good educational environment and conditions for young people to help them complete their self-growth is an indispensable basis for social development. Youth education in the midst of social change is a multi-dimensional, multi-level and complex issue. Starting from the collision between the Olympic spirit and youth education, what sparks of innovation and improvement of the youth education system can be produced?

### 3. “Laid-back vibes” Decoded: The Spiritual Kernel of the Post-00s

#### 3.1. Group Commonality Profiling

“Call the young people of the world to compete in sport”, the cry of the ‘Father of the Olympics’, Coubertin, has become a reality at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games! The two most notable features of the Olympics are “youth” and “first time”—the largest proportion of post-00s and many of them are participating in the Olympics for the first time. According to the survey data of the surging news, more than 60% of the Chinese delegation are “after 00”, among them, the youngest skateboarder Zheng Shaoxin is only 11 years old, and “after 90” athletes accounted for 53.6%, “after 80” athletes accounted for only 2.8%, 223 athletes in the delegation are participating in the Olympic Games for the first time. The proportion of “post-90s” athletes is 53.6%, while the proportion of “post-80s” athletes is less, accounting for only 2.8%. 223 athletes in the delegation are participating in the Olympic Games for the first time. These figures show that the athletes of the Chinese delegation are mainly of the younger generation, who have the important task of competing for themselves and their country at the Olympic Games.

August 12, 2024, Newspaper Southern Weekly's Chinese reporter in Beijing conversation badminton men's doubles world points No. 1 Chinese duo in the interviews. When asked about the specific preparations and strategies for the Olympic Games, first-time participant Liang Weikeng mentioned that he lost 10 kilograms in the competition. He also stated that he and his partner, Wang Chang, have been closely studying their opponents while incorporating many modern elements into their gameplay, such as increasing the speed of their serve-receive game, all while developing their unique style. In the usual training and life, Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang are very optimistic and cheerful, Wang Chang said that this may be a kind of mentality of their 00s, and seldom see the old athletes who have a particularly relaxed state of mind like them. Huang Yuting, a shooter, won one gold and one silver medal in the competition and tied the Olympic record. In an interview, she said, "This gold medal is not a source of pressure; it is simply a result and also a demonstration of ability. For me, it's still about starting from zero." Expressing her love for sports and enjoyment of the game, her calm mindset won unanimous praise.

As you can see, one of the distinctive features of the Post-'00s is that they have a sense of looseness and at the same time maintain high standards for themselves. “The newborn calf is not afraid of tigers” is not only the young players for the country subconsciously surging impetus, but also individual dedication in the collective honor of the Olympic sentiment. In the post-game interviews, the 00 athletes were very real in the face of interviews, bright smiles overflowing with determination and confidence, full of personality in their speeches, refusing to sensationalize, showing the living 00 personality. For example, Quan Hongchan's candid answers in interviews and Pan Zhanle's humor in dealing with reporters have become internet sensations.

At the same time, the new Olympic generation, the Post 00s, have more of an identity. The hero who fights for the country and the practitioner of Chinese sportsmanship is the professional identity, the disseminator of sports culture and the inheritor of Chinese sports is the social identity, and the pursuer of healthy life is the personality identity, and the individual image is presented under the group image, which to a certain extent has dissolved the stereotypes of the social public's understanding of the identity of the Olympic champion, and has projected the public's perception of the identity of Olympic champions and their emotional attitudes, and has gradually shifted from the “role regulation” to the “identity”. The Olympic champions have gradually shifted from “role regulation” to “identity”(Wu et al., 2024).<sup>[2]</sup>

#### 3.2. Paradigm of Individual Spirituality

At the recently concluded 2024 Paris Olympics, the Chinese diver in the spotlight was a 17-year-old girl named Quan Hongchan, who successfully defended her women's 10-meter diving title with her outstanding performance on the field, becoming the youngest triple gold medalist in China's Olympic

history. Most of her post-game interviews are not sensationalized, and can even feel overly blunt, as she usually conveys meaning only in plain words. But after watching CCTV reporter Dong Qian's interview with her, I realized that this girl has a delicate heart beyond her age and a toughness beyond her peers. Unlike the Tokyo Olympics, the three years of preparation for the Paris Olympics, during which All Red Chan was in her developmental period, training became more grueling and testing. She trained for 7-8 hours daily, her body covered in plasters while maintaining self-discipline. However, despite her success in winning two gold medals, she felt a sense of guilt towards her partner and competitor, Chen Yuxi. She expressed that she would be happy regardless of who won the gold for the motherland. The broad-mindedness and a strong sense of national pride exhibited by this post-2000s athlete is truly remarkable. When asked if he was ready to call it a day, he replied, "Why would I want to call it a day?", revealing the boy's ambition to pursue the ultimate and his spirit of hard work. When talking about the topic of internal competition, the reporter shared, "The gold medals won by Quan Hongchan and Chen Yuxi are not just glittering entities, but more importantly their own personal development process in which they time and time again overcame what seemed at the time to be impossible to overcome, and walked to the top of the gold medals to achieve a life of fulfillment. Some people say that "both are born with the opposite", but in fact, for them, the friendly competition is to lift each other up and make progress together." Stable at the core, translucent and resolute, this is the personal growth of a 17-year-old girl, a philosophy of life during the rounds of climbing to the top as a top athlete over and over again, and a microcosm of the new generation of post-00s Olympians.

### ***3.3. The Power of Value Delivery***

At the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, competitors from all over the world demonstrated the top level in their respective fields, and the Olympic spirit of the new era was on display. People applaud the young athletes not only for their decade-long training and proud achievements, but also for the "Laid back vibes" mentality of this new generation of Olympians. The good media image of star athletes has a very important impact on the development of a country's sports industry and the promotion of sports culture, which is not only related to personal gain or loss, but also related to the honor of the country and international image (Liu & Deng, 2013).<sup>[3]</sup> The 33rd Olympic Games has become a brand new stage for the youngsters, who are making their youthful voices heard to the world. The new Olympic spirit not only inspires the athletes to explode their potential on the field of play, but also influences the growth of young people off the field of play.

## **4. The Olympic Spirit for a New Era: Radiation effects of education**

### ***4.1. The Radiating Power of the Olympic Spirit***

The Chinese delegation won 40 gold, 27 silver and 24 bronze medals, totaling 91 medals at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. This achievement tied for first place with the United States, while setting a new medal record for China at the out-of-country Olympics, not only setting a new gold medal record for China at the out-of-country Olympics. The Chinese athletes lived up to their name and won gold medals in a number of events, including table tennis, badminton, diving and gymnastics.

The young athletes not only excelled on the field, but also led the zeitgeist of the new era of Olympics off the field. Shi Zhiyong's perseverance in weightlifting, and the Chinese women's volleyball team's never give up in the face of strong opponents, all profoundly embodied the athletic spirit of "faster, higher, stronger"; He Bingjiao's move to share the honor with her injured opponent at the award ceremony was a practical demonstration of the new Olympic values of respect and friendship.

The stories of these young athletes are not only the competition of sports, but also the transmission of spiritual power, inspiring every young person under the field to make introspection and thinking about self-growth when facing life challenges.

### ***4.2. The role of mirroring in youth education***

Now, China's "Olympic education" has not only stayed in exploration and practice, but also further theorized, curricular and systematic construction, and "Olympic education" has become a concrete action to help school sports work and implement the integration of sports and education.

"Mental toughness is not innate and can be cultivated through education," mentioned An Yuanyuan, associate dean of the School of Psychology at Nanjing Normal University, adding that an individual's

ability to quickly adapt and cope with challenges when they are in the midst of adversity is called mental toughness. She also emphasized that “today's world is full of uncertainties and challenges that require us to place greater emphasis on developing mental toughness in our students.” To cite an example from the Olympics, the Chinese tennis player Zheng Qinwen always maintained his composure and endurance when he was in poor physical condition and affected by the difficulties of objective factors, demonstrating the mental toughness of athletes in the face of adversity. Encouraging students to remain optimistic in the face of difficulties in education is also a way of building their mental toughness. In recent years, Weicheng District, Shandong Province, has vigorously promoted sunshine sharpening education, aiming to enable young people to improve their resistance, tolerance and cognitive ability. The school organizes six major course systems, such as the Resistant and Strong Quality Cognitive Course and the Attacking and Overcoming Difficulties Experience Course. Educational resources from all walks of life are integrated to enable students to sharpen their will and develop a resilient character in a non-theoretical way through unconventional practical programs such as outdoor physical training camps and summer camps on resistance to setbacks.

The Olympic spirit, as a global cultural phenomenon, integrates with and drives youth education, expanding the boundaries of their thinking through mirroring, fostering creativity and pioneering spirit, guiding young people to establish correct moral concepts, regulating their behaviors, and promoting the formation of a sense of social responsibility. Further, fostering the international outlook and cultural self-confidence of young people promotes the exchange and inheritance of world cultures.

#### **4.3. Specific methodologies for youth education**

Cognitive reassessment and self-efficacy complement each other as psychological representations of individual growth in the innovative development of youth education. Self-efficacy, as the name suggests, is an individual's confidence in his or her ability to use the skills he or she possesses to accomplish a certain task, and it is a self-regulatory mechanism that maintains the ego, and those who are better able to reduce their negative emotional experiences are usually the ones who have a higher level of self-confidence. Self-efficacy likewise serves as a key element in the instructional development of young teachers in higher education as a means of promoting professional growth and instructional innovation. Teachers' motivation and creativity in their work can be stimulated by self-efficacy, which in turn improves teaching methods and strategies and the quality of teaching in youth education. When it comes to cognitive reappraisal, it means the ability to generate novel and diverse reappraisal strategies in emotion regulation, which is also closely related to self-efficacy. The primary goal of cognitive reappraisal and expressive inhibition in influencing affect and regulating emotion is to modify emotional responses, and specific strategies of cognitive reappraisal for emotion regulation can have different effects on the subsequent emotional affect itself (Wang & Guo, 2003).<sup>[4]</sup> That is, individuals with high cognitive reappraisal creativity are able to adjust their emotional state more flexibly and creatively in the face of emotional challenges, and this ability is positively correlated with increased self-efficacy.

By integrating the above two concepts into the practice of youth education, on the one hand, by improving self-efficacy, we can enhance the youth's ability to regulate their emotions and enrich their specific strategies to cope with challenges; on the other hand, cognitive reappraisal and creativity cultivation can further enhance individual self-efficacy, and the combination of the two organically will help the youth to develop better in the process of self-growth.

## **5. Conclusions**

Coubertin combined sports and education organically, advocating the concept of “Olympics as education”, and emphasized the holistic development of young people through participation in sports activities. As for the current state of development of youth education, we see that Olympic education has made certain achievements in promoting cultural exchanges and youth development, but at the same time it faces problems such as sustainable promotability and high demand for resources. Future work requires more in-depth exploration and improvement in these areas.

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