

The Influence of Tai Chi on Well-Being: Examining Practice Duration, Community Support, and Instructor Presence Among the Elderly in Jiangxi Province, China

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Abstract: *Health problems include diminished mobility, social isolation, and chronic diseases have gotten worse as China's old population has grown. The slow, controlled motions of Tai Chi, an ancient Chinese martial art, have long been practiced by older folks for the mental and physical health benefits it offers. But there isn't a tonne of data on how it's affected Jiangxi Province, China. The health and well-being of the elderly in Jiangxi are examined in this study in connection to the following factors: the frequency of Tai Chi practice, the length of sessions, the availability of instructors, and social support. Three hundred and eighty-four people filled out a quantitative cross-sectional survey questionnaire, and the results were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Physical fitness and mental health are both improved with more frequent and longer practice sessions, according to the findings. Having access to qualified teachers guarantees correct practices and injury prevention, while social support from family and community is vital for maintaining participation. These results support Tai Chi as a potential strategy to encourage healthy aging. Incorporating structured Tai Chi sessions into strategies for the care of the elderly is something that this study adds to the current literature by providing insights relevant to the region. To further validate these findings, future research should study intervention-based techniques and longitudinal effects. Tai chi programs can improve the health of older people in general, so it's important for lawmakers and doctors to back them.*

Keywords: Tai Chi, elderly health, social support, instructor accessibility, Jiangxi Province

1. Introduction

An aging population brings with it significant social and health concerns. Particularly in nations like China, where the population of seniors is rapidly expanding, this is the case. As people live longer, they are more likely to have physical limitations, mental health difficulties including depression and isolation, and chronic diseases. Traditional medical therapies are losing ground to more holistic and preventative approaches in healthcare, which are beginning to include culturally grounded physical activities (Goyal & Chauhan, 2024). Many people in their golden years practice Tai Chi, an ancient Chinese martial technique that emphasizes slow, controlled motions, to keep in shape. Research on its full effect on people's mental and physical health is lacking, especially in Jiangxi Province, China.

Many people believe that tai chi is an excellent exercise for the elderly since it improves their flexibility, balance, and cardiovascular health. The effectiveness of Tai Chi is believed to be

mostly affected by how often and for how long one practices (Du et al., 2023). If we want to know how often and for how long Tai Chi sessions improve health outcomes for the elderly, we need more research. Despite studies showing that regular practice improves physical health, there is a lack of research that focuses on the effects of Tai Chi on the elderly in Jiangxi Province. This is likely due to cultural and environmental factors that influence participation rates.

More than just a physical workout, Tai Chi has positive effects on one's mental and social health, including improved emotional regulation and a stronger sense of belonging to a community. Social support for participation is a significant factor influencing the level of involvement among the elderly in Tai Chi (Xin & Li, 2022). Support from friends, family, and organizations increases the likelihood that the elderly will continue their practice over time. To have a better grasp on how Tai Chi is taken up by the elderly in Jiangxi, we need to assess the role of social support systems in encouraging participation and health in the long run.

Another significant challenge is the wide variation in the availability of certified Tai Chi teachers across the regions of China. Since many seniors practice tai chi informally, without formal training, it is possible that it poses more risks than benefits to their health (Kaur, 2024). Instructors with the proper training can better meet the specific requirements of their older students by helping with injury avoidance, movement optimization, and personalized Tai Chi lessons. Research into the accessibility and expertise of Tai Chi instructors in Jiangxi Province is necessary to determine whether this factor influences the positive health outcomes reported by more seasoned practitioners.

Although tai chi is being more recognized for its health benefits, research on its effects on the elderly in Jiangxi Province is scarce (EKERETTE, 2021). Most studies on Tai Chi for elders have taken a national or clinical view, ignoring the practical realities faced by everyday practitioners. Many studies focus on physical health alone, whereas insufficient study considers the interconnectedness of social and physical health. By filling this gap, we can move closer to establishing policies and programs that promote Tai Chi for seniors as an all-encompassing health intervention.

In order to fill this informational void, this study examines the relationship between the health and well-being of Jiangxi Province's elderly population and variables like the frequency and duration of Tai Chi sessions, as well as the accessibility of qualified Tai Chi teachers and social support. Leung et al. (2022) state that by methodically examining these characteristics, the study will shed light on how Tai Chi can enhance the physical and social well-being of the elderly. Community organizations, healthcare practitioners, and legislators seeking to promote healthy aging through evidence-based exercise programs will find the data useful.

2. Literature Review

Tai chi, a traditional Chinese martial art that emphasizes slow, deliberate motions and deep breathing, has garnered a lot of attention recently for the positive impact it may have on one's mental and physical health. Specifically targeting older adults, healthcare workers, and people caring for those with chronic diseases, this literature review aims to synthesise the results of various studies that demonstrate how Tai Chi influences physical function, mental health, and quality of life.

Wang et al. (2022) conducted a protocol study to examine the impact of Tai Chi on the mental health, physical function, and quality of life of persons with chronic diseases. Their goal in

conducting the randomized controlled experiment was to provide conclusive evidence of Tai Chi's overall advantages. Some early research suggests that Tai Chi may have positive effects on physical function, chronic disease symptoms, and mental wellness. This study's findings support Tai Chi's promise as a health-promoting, quality-of-life-improving therapy intervention.

Tai chi has been studied as a possible wellness intervention for healthcare workers and other office-based employees. Cocchiara et al. (2020) and Cocchiara et al. (2020) conducted systematic reviews to examine the impact of Tai Chi on workplace wellness. Health care providers who regularly practice Tai Chi report less stress, more mental clarity, and better physical health, according to their research. Workers in the healthcare industry are known to experience high rates of stress and burnout; thus, incorporating Tai Chi into wellness programs in the workplace could help alleviate these issues and foster a healthier, more resilient staff.

focused a thorough evaluation of Tai Chi's psychological benefits, Taylor-Piliae and Finley (2020) zeroed focused on those that the practice offers to those with cardiovascular disease. The results of their meta-analysis show that those with cardiovascular disease who practice Tai Chi report far better mental health, less anxiety and depression, and overall better emotional health. These results suggest that Tai Chi is equally important for maintaining emotional and mental stability as it is for physical health.

Guo et al. (2020) conducted a thorough literature review and meta-analysis to identify the potential advantages of Tai Chi for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The study's authors concluded that Tai Chi training significantly improved the physical and mental health of those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The gentle, repeated motions of Tai Chi can help with a variety of issues, including decreased anxiety and depression associated with chronic respiratory disorders, improved respiratory function, and increased physical endurance.

One study in the area of metabolic health looked at the impact of Tai Chi on community members who had metabolic syndrome or were at risk for getting it (Chau et al., 2021). Their extensive research showed that metabolic health markers including blood pressure, blood glucose levels, and the waist-to-hip ratio can change significantly when people practice Tai Chi on a regular basis. This study's findings support Tai Chi's promise as a therapeutic and preventative exercise for metabolic health, especially in relation to the reduction of metabolic syndrome risk factors.

Qin et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to determine whether Tai Chi improved quality of life, BMI, and waist-hip ratio in individuals with Type 2 diabetes mellitus. According to the study's results, Tai Chi is a useful adjunctive treatment for diabetes control since it lowers body mass index (BMI), improves quality of life, and decreases the waist-to-hip ratio. Tai chi is a great way for people with diabetes to enhance their physical and mental health since it emphasizes moderate, focused movement.

The health benefits of Tai Chi exercise are discussed in a nurse's guide published by Miller et al. (2020). Tai chi has several benefits, including better cardiovascular health, greater mental well-being, and enhanced physical function, as shown in their comprehensive study. The guidebook suggests that nurses include Tai Chi in their patients' treatment plans to promote overall health and wellness, especially for older patients or those with chronic conditions.

Tai chi may be a useful intervention for enhancing health-related quality of life in older individuals with mild cognitive impairment, according to research by Siu and Lee (2021). The results of their interventional study demonstrated that older individuals whose mental health, cognitive function, and quality of life were all positively impacted by regular Tai Chi practice. Results from this study provide credence to the idea that Tai Chi may help the elderly avoid cognitive decline and improve their mental health without the need of pharmaceuticals.

In order to investigate the connection between Tai Chi and occupational wellness for healthcare workers, Dorelli et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review. Their results provide credence to the idea that healthcare professionals can benefit from incorporating tai chi into workplace wellness programs by reducing occupational stress, increasing mental clarity, and improving physical health. This review aims to emphasize the importance of Tai Chi and other holistic health practices integrated into occupational health programs for the benefit of workers' health and productivity.

Participating in this type of exercise can be beneficial for individuals with chronic diseases, healthcare workers, the elderly, and those at risk of metabolic syndrome due to its focused and gentle motions. Integrating Tai Chi into wellness programs can significantly enhance overall health, reduce stress and anxiety, increase physical function, and foster a feeling of well-being. As a holistic practice, Tai Chi may improve both your physical and emotional health. In keeping with both conventional medical practice and modern scientific understanding, it offers a holistic approach to health care.

The effects of a Tai Chi program on persons with coronary heart disease were investigated by Liu and Chan (2020). The program comprised both group sessions and home-based sessions. The participants' physical function and psychological health both improved significantly, according to the study's findings. This two-pronged approach, which mixes in-person group sessions with self-directed practice at home, has the dual goals of building a mutually supportive community and encouraging people to take charge of their own health.

Yang et al. (2021) used bibliometric analysis to look at Tai Chi clinical studies that happened between 2010 and 2020. Their research proved that doctors are starting to notice Tai Chi's positive effects on health. An abundance of positive health outcomes, including enhanced cardiovascular health, psychological wellness, and overall physical function, have been associated with Tai Chi, according to their thorough investigation. The increasing body of evidence suggests that Tai Chi, as a complementary medicine, should be integrated into standard healthcare practices.

The role of Tai Chi in improving one's psychological and immune systems was examined in a study by Fitria, Sumarni, and Astuti (2023). Their narrative review shows that Tai Chi's meditative movements and peaceful aspects might boost immunity and alleviate stress, which in turn improves mental health. This all-encompassing view of health emphasizes the potential of Tai Chi as an apparently simple yet effective kind of exercise for improving overall health.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

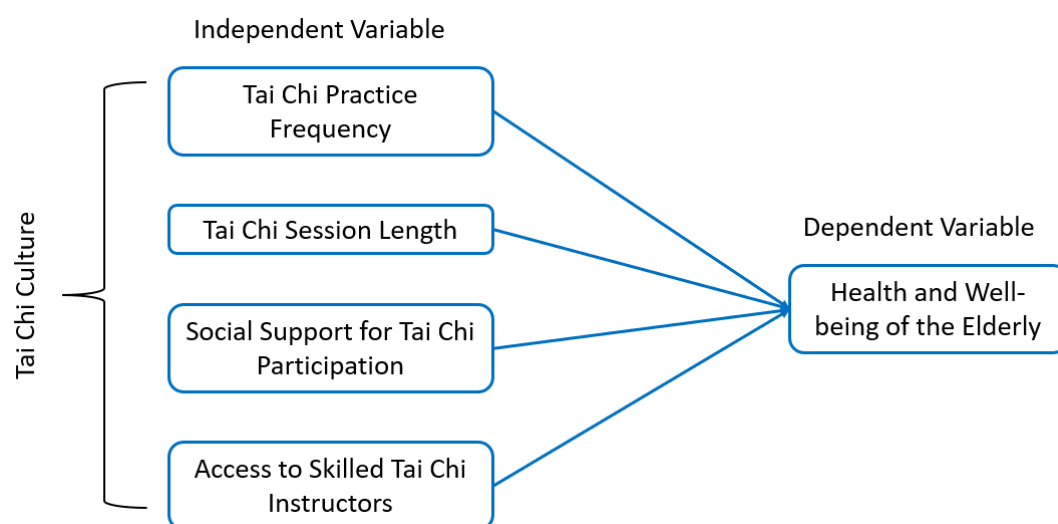
Tai chi's impact on the physical and mental health of China's geriatric population will be studied within the theoretical frameworks provided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM). Each of these theories provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the many facets of Tai Chi. Among other things, these include environmental

factors, social influences, and individual motives (Tandon et al., 2020). With these ideas in mind, our research aims to fill gaps in our understanding of how Tai Chi may benefit the health and happiness of the elderly.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a widely used paradigm in health psychology for making predictions and explaining people's actions in diverse contexts. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) states that an individual's intention to engage in an action is the most critical factor in predicting the likelihood that the individual will actually carry out that behavior. Intention is affected by three main factors in relation to the behavior: one's attitude toward the action, one's subjective norms, and one's perception of their own behavioral control. With the use of TPB, we may better understand the motivations of senior Tai Chi practitioners in Jiangxi Province and how their intentions turn into consistent practice. Attitudes about Tai Chi encompass both beliefs and evaluations of outcomes associated with the practice. A more positive outlook on Tai Chi is likely to emerge among individuals of a given age group when they perceive the practice as leading to improved health outcomes, such as enhanced physical fitness and reduced stress. The establishment of these attitudes is influenced by a multitude of circumstances, such as one's own experiences, cultural concepts, and the perceived benefits of Tai Chi (Guo & Bailey, 2022). People in Jiangxi Province, for example, may have a favorable impression of Tai Chi because of its deep cultural roots and the widespread belief in its efficacy in a region that places a premium on traditional Chinese medicine and practices.

Any action that people believe to be socially pressured to engage in or refrain from is said to be subject to subjective norms. In the context of Tai Chi, subjective norms can be influenced by those closest to the elderly, such as family, friends, and healthcare providers, who may encourage or discourage Tai Chi practice. Both positive and negative reinforcement can be used in this context. The level of motivation among seniors in Jiangxi Province to practice Tai Chi may be influenced by the level of encouragement they receive from family and community leaders (Chiu & Heirman, 2023). The province's emphasis on honoring one's ancestors and keeping families together explains this. In addition, being in the company of other Tai Chi practitioners could help foster an atmosphere that is supportive of positive subjective standards and encouragement.

2.2 Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

To statistically evaluate the association between Tai Chi and physical health in the elderly, this study seeks to employ a quantitative research technique. Because it produces measurable data that can be statistically analyzed, this method was chosen by the study to allow us to evaluate the effect with pinpoint accuracy. The study used a cross-sectional design, which involves collecting data at a single point in time, to determine if there is a correlation between Tai Chi and health outcomes.

Jiangxi Province is home to the study, and it is also famous for its traditional Chinese arts and crafts, such as Tai Chi. This province is a perfect fit for the study because of its large and growing senior population and the widespread use of Tai Chi among its senior citizens. The survey included both urban and rural areas in its sample to give a well-rounded view of Jiangxi's elderly population.

Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for sample size determination provides a dependable method to estimate the correct amount of participants given the population size. The sample size is determined using this table. According to the latest census data, about four million residents of Jiangxi Province are categorized as old, specifically defined as 60 and up. Research involving a population of this size requires 384 participants to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, as shown in the table by Krejcie and Morgan. With this sample size, the study's results can be trusted and extrapolated to a bigger population.

The primary variables that will be measured in this study are the frequency and duration of tai chi practice, the availability of qualified instructors, and the social support that participants receive for participating. The objective is to ascertain the effect of these variables on the health and welfare of Jiangxi Province's senior citizens. Mostly, a structured questionnaire will be used to gather the data. We will ask participants to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the topic using a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," for a clear and measurable result.

Evaluation of survey data is carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Because of its intuitive interface and robust statistical analysis features, SPSS is the best option. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the sample's demographic characteristics and the distribution of responses to each survey item. Using inferential statistics like regression analysis and correlation, we look at the connections between Tai Chi and physical health outcomes. Applying factor analysis to identify the specific components of physical health that Tai Chi influences allows for a more thorough understanding of these effects.

4. Conclusion

This study delves deeply into the effects on the health and happiness of the elderly in Jiangxi Province, China, of how often they practice Tai Chi, how long each session is, the availability of social support, and how easily instructors can be reached. Research indicates that Tai Chi can have a positive impact on older persons' physical fitness, mental health, and social involvement, making it a potentially comprehensive health intervention. In order to get the most out of Tai Chi, the study stresses the need of having a regular practice duration, having social networks that support you, and having access to qualified teachers. Policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and community organizers seeking to execute exercise programs supported by evidence for aging populations will benefit greatly from this study's findings,

which fill a knowledge vacuum in the literature on localized health interventions. The findings support organized Tai Chi programs that are more accessible and encourage social interaction as a means to promote healthier aging and general well-being.

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