

The Dao of Movement: Daoist Perspectives on Human Performance and Athletic Harmony

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Abstract

The importance of psychological regulation, embodied awareness, and holistic athlete development is growing in contemporary sport science. But few studies have explored athletic performance from a Daoist philosophy perspective. The purpose of this paper is to examine the potential contribution of some of the fundamental concepts of Daoism (Dao, Wu Wei (effortless action), Ziran (naturalness), and dynamic harmony) to current thinking in human movement and athletic performance. The study adopts an interdisciplinary interpretive perspective, drawing on classical Daoist philosophy, and perspectives from sport philosophy, embodiment theory and sport psychology. This work proposes that Daoist philosophy provides an alternative way of understanding movement that focuses on flexibility, fluidity, composition, and the integration of body and mind. The connection between Wu Wei and today's focus on flow, automaticity, and effective athletic performance is especially emphasized. The analysis also explores the implications of the Daoist views for coaching philosophy, psychological regulation, recovery balance, and sustainable athlete development. Instead of establishing Daoism as a different approach to modern sport science, the study suggests that an alternative way of understanding embodied performance and athletic harmony may be provided by the Daoist philosophy. In the context of the present study, the interdisciplinary relevance of Daoist thought for today's debates on movement, athletic health, life, and sustainable strategies to human performance is highlighted.

Keywords: Daoism; Human movement; Athletic performance; Embodiment; Sports philosophy; Mind-body integration

1. Introduction

Current concepts of sports performance have grown to incorporate a wider range of factors in the understanding of sports participation than just a physiological or biomechanical approach. Today, sport science has evolved to acknowledge the importance of psychological regulation, attentional control, emotional stability, and embodied awareness for successful athletic performance, as well as physical conditioning and technical skills (Loland et al., 2023). As a result, there has been an increasing interest among researchers in exploring the interaction between cognition, perception, movement, and the response to the environment in how these factors influence athletic performance and human movement.

In this context, interdisciplinary scholarship has grown in interest in philosophical and contemplative traditions that focus on balance, embodiment, and holistic human development.

Of these traditions, Daoism has a unique approach to movement and harmonious action. Daoist philosophy is based largely on classical Chinese works like the *Dao De Jing* and the *Zhuangzi*, and it is characterized by principles of fluidity, adaptability, moderation, and harmony with nature. Daoism sees action as a whole and holistic process, not just a mechanical output, of the body/mind/environment. These views can contribute to the conceptual understanding of current debates on the subject of sport performance, movement education, and sustainable sport participation (Zhang et al., 2020).

In the modern world of sport scholarship, the notions of flow, embodied cognition, mindfulness, attentional regulation, and psychological composure have been explored. Sport psychology studies have shown that emotional control, focus, confidence, and making adaptive decisions are essential to competitive performance. Likewise, embodiment theories focus on the dynamic interplay of perception, body awareness, cognition, and environmental context as movement comes into being. Nevertheless, the current sport models are still largely dominated by physiological performance-based models, focusing mainly on the measurable physiological outcomes (Araújo et al., 2017). Consequently, there is a relative lack of attention to the philosophical aspects of movement, embodiment, and harmonious action in sport research.

In Daoist thought, ideas like *Wu Wei* (effortless action), *Ziran* (naturalness), and the balance of *Yin–Yang* can provide meaningful interpretations of how to be efficient, adaptable, psychologically composed, and sustainably developed athletes. The concepts of harmony, responsiveness, and internal regulation are embedded in several Chinese body cultivation practices, such as martial arts and meditative movement exercises (Kee, 2019). Harmony, responsiveness, and internal regulation are concepts that have been part of Chinese body cultivation practices since the past, including martial arts and meditative movement exercises. Few studies, however, have investigated athletic performance from a Daoist philosophy perspective.

Thus, in the present study, the Daoist philosophical concepts were explored to see how they can help in the understanding of human movement, athletic performance, and embodied harmony in the present times. More specifically, the study examines the applicability of the concepts of *Dao*, *Wu Wei*, *Ziran*, and dynamic balance in the field of sport and movement studies. The goals of the study are: (1) to examine the concepts of key Daoist concepts related to movement and embodiment; (2) to investigate the connection between *Wu Wei* and athletic flow states; and (3) to explore the implications of Daoist thought for coaching philosophy, psychological regulation, athlete well-being, and sustainable sport participation. These conceptual relationships discussed in the present study are summarized in the figure.1

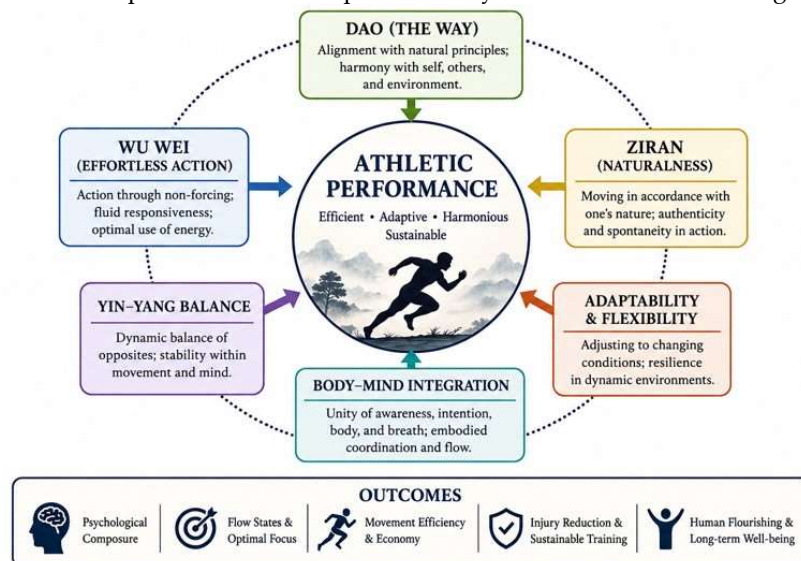


Figure 1. Conceptual Relationship Between Daoist Philosophy and Athletic Performance
2. Methodological and Theoretical Framework

The present study is conceptual and philosophical in nature, and takes an interdisciplinary approach to explore the relevance of the Daoist perspective in the current discourse on human

movement and athletic performance. The study does not take an empirical approach, but rather is part of an interpretive humanities-based scholarship that examines theoretical connections between classical Daoist philosophy and contemporary theories of movement studies, sport, and the body. The study is to explore the potential of Daoist concepts for the general conceptualization of athletic harmony, embodied awareness, and adaptive performance.

The method of the study is based on interpretive philosophical inquiry and conceptual analysis. Daoism is not a doctrine to be studied, but a way of thinking that allows movement, balance, adaptability, and action of the human being to be comprehended. Thus, the analysis combines selected Daoist concepts with current philosophies from sport, embodiment theory, movement theories, and sport psychology (Zhou et al., 2023). The theoretical basis of the study is mainly based on the classical Daoist works like the *Dao De Jing* and *Zhuangzi*, focusing on concepts such as *Dao*, *Wu Wei*, *Ziran*, and dynamic harmony. These concepts are explored in the context of their broader philosophical understanding to ensure that they are not interpreted simplistically.

The study also incorporates current literature on embodied cognition, flow states, attentional control, movement efficiency, and athlete development. The study does not assert direct parallels between Daoist philosophy and scientific theories, but rather conceptual parallels and interpretive resonances that are relevant to interdisciplinary scholarship (Kee et al., 2021). The method is thus comparative and integrative instead of empirical. Comparative analysis is conducted to provide an examination of how the concepts of adaptability, naturalness, and harmonious action in Daoist thought relate to the current debate around flow states, automaticity, and embodied coordination. Integrative analysis also situates Daoist philosophy in the larger context of the discussion of sustainable athlete development, psychological balance, and holistic movement education (Loland et al., 2023).

Importantly, the study is not designed to provide empirical substantiation of Daoist practice nor to supplant the scientific models of athletic training and performance analysis. Rather, it seeks to offer a complementary philosophical perspective that enhances the study of sport and movement in the 21st century. The study also admits some limitations, such as the conceptual nature of the study, the fact that only the literature that was selected was used, and the lack of an applied performance investigation. Despite these constraints, the interdisciplinary approach taken in the study provides a suitable foundation for the investigation of the potential for incorporating Daoist concepts into the contemporary understanding of movement, performance, embodiment, and athlete development.

3. Philosophical Foundations of Daoist Thought

Daoism is one of the traditional philosophies of China, which places a great emphasis on harmony, adaptability, naturalness, and dynamic balance. Daoism is based mainly on the *Dao De Jing* and the *Zhuangzi* and sees reality as an ongoing process of change and interconnection. Daoist philosophy is not about rigid control or coercive action but about moderation, responsiveness, spontaneity, and following natural processes (Borucinsky & Čolakovac, 2020). These are useful lenses through which to view movement, embodiment, and athletic performance in the context of sport scholarship today. In Daoist philosophy, movement is not simply physical activity, but a harmonious engagement with the body, mind, awareness, and surroundings. Key Daoist concepts like *Dao*, *Wu Wei*, *Ziran*, and *Yin-yang* balance are of special relevance to the interpretation of movement and performance in a holistic and embodied way (Zhang et al., 2020).

4. The Dao as Dynamic Process

The *Dao*, which is usually translated as “the Way,” is the process that underlies the way things happen. Daoist philosophy sees the *Dao* as dynamic, fluid, and constantly changing, not fixed or static. It focuses on flexibility, interdependence, and integration with natural cycles. In the athletic realm, the idea of *Dao* can be used to understand movement more adaptively and relationally, rather than just mechanically. Effective performance is a product of the interaction of perception, environment, awareness, and action. Such viewpoints are consistent with modern conceptions of movement as context and embodied (Myszka et al., 2023).

5. Wu Wei and Effortless Action

The term “Wu Wei,” which translates as “effortless action” or “non-coercive action,” describes types of action that are efficient, responsive, and have no unnecessary tension. Importantly, it does not mean that the individual is not trying or passive. Instead, Wu Wei is a harmonious action that arises from coordinated and flexible action. This is especially important in the realm of sport, where high-level athletes often exhibit smooth and efficient movement in dynamic conditions, with little conscious interference (Kee et al., 2021). The study points out some conceptual similarities between Wu Wei and current research in sport psychology on flow, automaticity and movement fluency.

6. Ziran and Naturalness

Ziran, which can be translated as “naturalness” or “spontaneity,” is another of the important Daoist principles. Ziran stresses authentic and adaptive action, rather than an externally imposed action. Ziran facilitates smooth, responsive, and context-sensitive performance in movement contexts. When athletes become more natural in their movement execution, they tend to perform best when it is not being forced with conscious effort (Woods et al., 2020). But Daoist naturalness is not against discipline or practice; rather, spontaneous and efficient movement emerges from long-term training and body familiarity.

7. Yin–Yang and Dynamic Balance

The Yin and Yang symbol represents the complementary relationship of the forces in life. Yin and Yang are not opposites, but are dynamic and continually changing and transforming into each other. Balance is not static; it is adaptive. The Yin–Yang model can be used to understand relationships between tension and relaxation, exertion and recovery, stability and adaptability, and more, in sport and movement contexts (Pilotta, 2020). The Daoist philosophy is about balance and moderation, which are key to sustainable performance and LTD.

8. Daoist Perspectives on the Body and Embodiment

Daoist philosophy does not consider the body to be a mechanical entity but rather as an integrated and dynamic part of the human being. Bodily cultivation exercises with breathing control, posture, awareness, and synchronized movement are often stressed in classical Daoist traditions. Theories of contemporary embodiment also highlight the interdependent nature of cognition, perception, emotion and movement. Thus, athletic performance is not just a physical ability; it is also an awareness, a responsiveness, an interaction with the environment. Daoist views add to these conversations by placing a priority on holistic and embodied movement and athlete development (Peng, 2025). The Daoist ideas discussed in the current study and their significance to human movement are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Core Daoist Concepts and Their Relevance to Human Movement

Daoist Concept	Philosophical Meaning	Relevance to Sport and Human Movement
Wu Wei	Effortless or non-coercive action characterized by fluid responsiveness and minimal unnecessary force	Supports efficient movement execution, movement economy, psychological composure, and adaptive athletic performance
Ziran	Naturalness, spontaneity, and authentic alignment with situational conditions	Contributes to adaptive coordination, spontaneous movement responses, and flexible skill execution in dynamic sport environments
Yin–Yang Balance	Dynamic interaction and balance between complementary forces and processes	Relevant to balancing exertion and recovery, stability and flexibility, and psychological regulation in athlete development
Dao	The underlying process or “Way” emphasizes harmony, adaptability, and	Encourages integrated understanding of movement as relational, adaptive, and

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	continuous transformation.	context-sensitive
Body–Mind Integration	Coordinated unity between awareness, bodily action, perception, and responsiveness	Supports embodied performance, attentional regulation, movement fluency, and holistic athlete development
Adaptability and Harmony	Continuous adjustment to changing conditions while maintaining balance and responsiveness	Enhances situational awareness, resilience, tactical flexibility, and sustainable performance under competitive demands

9. Daoism and Human Movement

Traditionally, human movement has been studied from a physiological and biomechanical standpoint, focusing on strength, speed, coordination, and technical performance. In recent years, however, the field of contemporary movement has come to acknowledge the perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and embodied aspects of athletic performance. In this context, Daoist philosophy offers a more comprehensive perspective on how movement is an adaptive process and an ongoing relationship, influenced by awareness, balance, responsiveness, and harmonious coordination. In Daoist philosophy, movement is seen as a dynamic relationship between the individual and the environment (Peng, 2025). Daoism is about adapting to the situation, being responsive, and using economy of action, rather than being overly controlling or forceful. These viewpoints are especially valuable in sports, where success often relies on timing, coordination, mental agility, and the ability to adjust to varying circumstances.

10. Embodied Awareness in Athletic Performance

Embodied awareness is an important aspect of Daoist philosophy and modern movement theory. In Daoism, effective action is produced by harmonizing the body, mind, and environment—not by over-engaging in conscious control. Likewise, embodied cognition theories suggest that perception, action, and cognition are all interdependent. Athletes in athletic environments need to control their attention, understand sensory information and react appropriately to varying environments. Daoist philosophy adds to these discussions in terms of the importance of responding and moving rather than forcing over-controlling (Renshaw et al., 2019). A skilled performer will often perform optimally with greater awareness and less conscious effort. Importantly, such embodied responsiveness is not just intuition, but a sustained practice, training, and experiential learning.

11. Efficiency and Economy of Motion

Another conceptual area of relevance to the Daoist philosophy is the efficiency of movement. In sport science, movement economy is the ability to use the least amount of energy to produce the greatest amount of work. The principle of Wu Wei also highlights the idea of simplicity and moderation, which is central to Daoist philosophy. High levels of physical exertion can be associated with smooth, coordinated, and efficient movement patterns during elite athletic performance. Efficiency is not just about biomechanics; it's about mental stability and flexibility as well. Too much tension, anxiety and overexertion can cause coordination problems and decrease performance effectiveness (Pakosz et al., 2021). Daoist approaches, then, promote an understanding of the efficiency of movement as a harmony of intention, breathing, awareness, muscular coordination, and responsiveness to the environment.

12. Breath Regulation, Rhythm, and Coordination

The regulation of breath has been an integral part of the Daoist cultivation of the body and is linked with concentration, balance, and internal regulation. Controlled breathing and rhythmic movements are often used in Daoist practices to achieve harmony between the physiological and psychological processes. When we talk about breathing strategies in modern sporting contexts, they are usually employed to control attention, emotional state, and movement tempo. According to Daoist philosophy, breathing is not just a physiological process, but an integrated and harmonious process of respiration, awareness, timing, and movement

synchronization. In sports like running, swimming, martial arts, and team sports, rhythm is also essential; any disruption to it can affect the coordination and performance of the athletes. But the study does not assert that the Daoist breathing techniques directly enhance physical performance. Rather, Daoist concepts are explored as philosophies that can be used to inform a wider range of understandings about attentional regulation, movement coordination, and embodied performance (Laborde et al., 2022).

13. Adaptability and Ecological Responsiveness

Flexibility is one of the most important qualities of a good athlete and a key link between Daoist philosophy and modern movement theory. Competitive sport situations are complex and unpredictable, and athletes must constantly modify their movements, attention, and decisions to suit the situation. The philosophy of the Daoists is one of flexibility, fluidity, and responsiveness, rather than of rigid control, and is often expressed in the metaphor of flowing water. Likewise, the ecological approach to movement suggests that movement becomes skilful through constant interaction between the athlete and the environment. In sports, flexible athletes are more likely to be able to adjust their approach seamlessly without losing coordination or composure (Myszka et al., 2023; Woods et al., 2020). This view also helps to create coaching settings where exploration is encouraged, and problem-solving is flexible. In general, Daoist views highlight the concepts of fluidity, balance, efficiency, adaptability, and coordinated embodiment. Daoist philosophy provides conceptual insight into movement that is meaningful for the current discourse on athletic performance and human movement, because it sees movement as a process that is integrated and relational.

14. Wu Wei and Athletic Performance

The effortless action (wu wei) or non-coercive action is a key Daoist concept that is applicable to athletic performance and human movement. The concept of Wu Wei is not passive, but rather is an action that is fluid, efficient, and adaptive, without too much tension or conscious control. During sporting situations, it is frequently essential to be able to perform complex movements in a coordinated and responsive manner within dynamic situations.

15. Flow States and Effortless Performance

A significant link between Wu Wei and modern sport psychology relates to the concept of flow. Flow is usually defined as a state of deep concentration and optimal engagement, characterized by the appearance of movement that is fluid, automatic, and well-coordinated. When athletes are in flow, they may feel less self-aware, more focused, and feel like their movement and intention are the same. While flow theory and Daoist philosophy are from different intellectual backgrounds, there are conceptual similarities between them. Both highlight effective action, adaptability, and the minimisation of internal resistance (Lynch & Troy, 2021). As in Daoism, the philosophy suggests that too much effort and too much control can hinder harmonious action, and in sport psychology, the emphasis is on the recognition that overthinking can negatively affect skilled performance under pressure.

16. Psychological Regulation and Competitive Composure

The psychological control of competition is also discussed in Wu Wei. Athletic settings are often stressful and fraught with anxiety, emotional strain, and performance uncertainty, and athletes must focus and remain calm in high-pressure situations. The Daoist philosophy is more about being calm, moderate, and balanced, less about over-excitability and mental domination. The current sport psychology also emphasizes the need for attentional control and emotional regulation to ensure stable performance (Yue et al., 2023). Too much anxiety or overload of thoughts can interfere with movement coordination and decision-making. Daoist ideas, thus, can conceptually inform ideas of psychological balance and effective attentional focus in sporting contexts.

17. Skill Acquisition and Embodied Automaticity

Another aspect of the relationship between Wu Wei and athleticism is in the process of learning skills and the automaticity of movement. The mastery of athletic skills is gained through repetition, repetition, and repetition, with the patterns of movement becoming more automatic and less dependent upon conscious effort. Daoism also suggests that harmonious action is born out of cultivation and familiarity rather than force. Studies in motor learning indicate that over-emphasis on conscious attention to well-learned skills can have a detrimental effect on

coordination and timing when it is needed(Morgan, 2018). In this regard, Wu Wei is a philosophical view of efficient and adaptive movement execution.

18. Excessive Control and Performance Breakdown

The Daoist philosophy often condemns over-controlling, fixating, and pushing things too hard. In contemporary sport contexts, the pressure to perform can lead to psychological stress, excessive training, burnout, and movement rigidity. High-pressure situations can cause athletes to become too technical or concerned with their own failure, which can create instability in their attention and fluidity in their movement. Modern sport psychology also acknowledges that over-conscious awareness can have a detrimental impact on skilled motor performance. In contrast, Daoist philosophy is based on adaptability, moderation, and balanced engagement. In Wu Wei, effective performance is achieved by attuning to the flow and maintaining a calm state of mind instead of forcing it. The parallels between the philosophy of the Dao and modern sport psychology are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparative Themes Between Daoist Philosophy and Contemporary Sport Psychology

Daoist Perspective	Contemporary Sport Psychology Parallel	Relevance to Athletic Performance
Wu Wei	Flow state	Fluid and efficient performance characterized by deep concentration, automaticity, and reduced conscious interference.
Non-attachment	Emotional regulation	Supports psychological composure, reduced performance anxiety, and balanced responses to competitive outcomes
Harmony	Mind–body integration	Encourages coordinated interaction between cognition, perception, movement, and emotional stability
Naturalness (Ziran)	Adaptive attentional control	Facilitates spontaneous responsiveness and flexible adaptation during dynamic sport situations
Dynamic Balance (Yin–Yang)	Psychological resilience and recovery regulation	Supports balanced management of stress, recovery, exertion, and long-term athlete sustainability
Effortless responsiveness	Automatic motor execution	Relates to skilled movement performance with minimal unnecessary tension or cognitive overload
Moderation and balance	Burnout prevention and well-being	Emphasizes sustainable participation, recovery awareness, and holistic athlete development
Situational adaptability	Cognitive flexibility	Enhances decision-making and responsiveness under changing competitive conditions

In sum, Wu Wei offers a helpful framework for analysing athletic motion in terms of its efficiency, adaptability, and embodiment. Conceptual parallels with flow states, attentional regulation and movement automaticity provide Daoist philosophy with valuable insights to interdisciplinary discussions of sport performance and human movement.

19. Athletic Harmony and Human Flourishing

Daoist philosophy provides a more holistic view of athletic involvement that's not limited to winning and performance. The Daoist tradition is focused on harmony, balance, self-cultivation, and the development of the whole person, whereas the modern sport environment is more concerned with achievement and optimization. Athletic performance is thus read as a process of growth and adaptation in the body, as well as technical accomplishment.

20. Mind–Body Integration and Embodied Harmony

One of the major tenets of Daoist philosophy is the unity of body and mind. Action comes from harmonizing the awareness, movement, perception, and responsiveness. Modern sport science also acknowledges the interplay between physiological readiness, attentional control, stability of emotions, and adaptation to the environment in sports performance. According to the Daoist view, athletic harmony is not just about technical proficiency, but also about the harmonious flow of coordination and adaptability, as well as psychological composure (Singh, 2021). These perspectives can also help promote the well-being of athletes by focusing on balance, moderation, and sustainable participation.

21. Reconsidering Competitive Culture

In modern sports systems, measurable success, specialization, and continuous achievement are often the priorities. While these methods have helped improve the performance of athletes, they have also raised concerns about burnout, stress, and athlete fatigue. The Daoist philosophy is critical of over-ambitious and excessive efforts and a focus on moderation, adaptability, and natural processes. In the context of sport, this view fosters an appreciation of learning, process, and embodied engagement over outcome. Daoist philosophy thus encourages more holistic perspectives on competition, incorporating performance excellence and the health and well-being of the athlete, and sustainable development (Steyn & Nolte, 2021).

22. Ethical Dimensions of Athletic Practice

The Daoist philosophy also provides ethical views on involvement in sport. Humility, moderation, adaptability, and non-domination are key principles of classical Daoist thought. These principles can be used in conversations about sportsmanship, coaching philosophy, and athlete development. In a highly competitive setting, overemphasis on achievement can lead to unhealthy training practices and psychological stress. Daoist philosophy, on the other hand, promotes balanced practices that focus on recovery, self-awareness, and sustainable preparation. The concept of Wu Wei is also used in coaching to show that less is more and that guiding and responding to the individual rather than controlling them is a more effective way of coaching (Kee et al., 2021).

23. Human Flourishing Through Movement

Daoist philosophy sees human flourishing as a harmonious way of living in dynamic processes of being, not as a process of domination and/or control through excessive force. In sport settings, movement practices can serve as performance practices and as practices of self-cultivation and embodied development. Resilience, adaptability, attentional regulation, and self-understanding can be developed through training and competition. Daoist thinking, then, calls for the recognition of the athlete as a whole person whose development goes beyond what is measurable (Ilundáin-Agurruza, 2016). In sum, Daoist philosophy provides valuable conceptual contributions to the understanding of athlete well-being, sustainable development, and the human meaning of participation in movement and sport.

24. Implications for Contemporary Sport Practice

The multi-disciplinary approaches generated in this study indicate that Daoist philosophy could provide useful conceptual frameworks for the practice of sport, coaching, and athlete development in the present. The ideas of Wu Wei, Ziran, adaptability, and dynamic balance offer an interpretive framework that is complementary to the existing approaches in sport science and movement scholarship.

25. Coaching Philosophy

Modern coaching has a greater focus on flexibility, communication, psychological support, and personalized learning. The Daoist philosophy aligns with a coach-centred approach to training that emphasizes flexibility, situational responsiveness, and autonomy, rather than too much control. The idea of Wu Wei is that good learning can be achieved by allowing the person to respond appropriately rather than being taught or coached to do so. Meanwhile, Daoist views are not against discipline or technical preparation, but advocate a balance between discipline and athlete autonomy(Morgan, 2018).

26. Athlete Well-Being and Sustainability

The concept of moderation, balance, and sustainable functioning is a key aspect of the Daoist philosophy and is relevant to discussions about athlete well-being. Modern sport science has come to understand that the importance of recovery psychological resilience, and long-term athlete development are vital. Daoist teachings also warn against too much force, over-exercising, and imbalance. In sports, Daoist philosophy conceptually allows for strategies that focus on more than just optimizing performance, such as managing recovery, balancing psychological and physical needs, adapting to the environment, and ensuring sustainable participation(Zhang et al., 2020).

27. Interdisciplinary Relevance

The study is of significance for interdisciplinary discussions in sport philosophy, embodiment studies, movement culture research, and sport psychology. Daoism opens up new ways of thinking about moving by focusing on embodied awareness, adaptability, relational balance, and self-cultivation. The study also underscores the importance of non-Western philosophies for the field of movement scholarship today and illustrates the potential of Daoist philosophies to inform the conversation about flow, attentional regulation, psychological composure, and athlete well-being. The interdisciplinary relationships that are mentioned in the study are summarized in Figure 2.

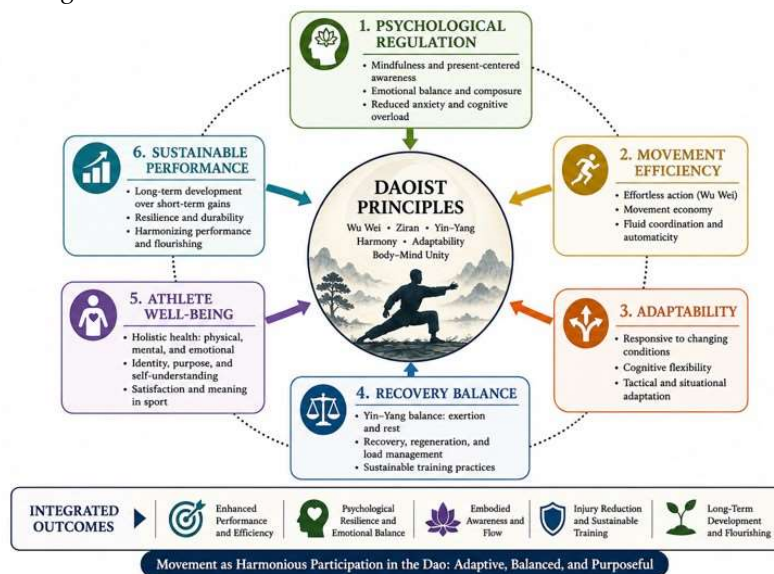


Figure 2. Interdisciplinary Framework of Daoist-Informed Athletic Development

28. Limitations and Future Research

The present study is conceptual and interpretive and not empirical. The study is not experimental or observational of athletic populations; thus, the arguments should be interpreted as theoretical interpretations and not as empirically validated models of performance. The study also involves interdisciplinary conceptual synthesis, that is, the concepts of Wu Wei and Ziran in Daoism do not necessarily match the terminology in sport science today. In addition, the study does not examine all of the themes of Daoism, but only those themes that are connected to movement and embodiment. Qualitative and applied research that explores athlete experiences of mindfulness, adaptability, embodied awarenesses and psychological regulation in sport contexts could be useful for future research. The

interdisciplinary integration of philosophy, movement science, coaching, and sport psychology could further enhance the understanding of Daoist perspectives in the area of athletic development.

29. Conclusion

This research explored the implications of Daoist philosophy for the modern interpretation of human movement, the performance of sport and the harmony of the body. Daoist philosophy offers a way of thinking that involves concepts of Dao, Wu Wei, Ziran, and dynamic balance, which focus on adaptability, efficiency, responsiveness, and integrated action. Conceptual similarities were found between Daoist philosophy and current research in sport psychology, embodiment theory, and movement studies, including the concepts of flow, attentional regulation, movement efficiency, and sustainable athlete development. More importantly, the study does not present Daoism as an alternative to empirical sport science, but rather as an alternative way of understanding movement and performance that enhances interdisciplinary discourse. In sum, Daoism provides a useful perspective on the nature of movement as a holistic, adaptive, and embodied process that can be relevant to current debates about sporting performance and human flourishing and to sustainable sport participation.

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