

Exploration of Teaching Practice on Empowering the Consciousness of the Chinese National Community with Ethnic Music in Universities in Border Areas

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Abstract: Against the strategic backdrop of forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community in the new era, universities in border areas, as crucial platforms for the integration of multi-ethnic cultures, shoulder the significant mission of enhancing ethnic unity and promoting outstanding traditional Chinese culture. As an important carrier of Chinese culture, ethnic music not only contains profound historical memories and emotional identities but also demonstrates a powerful cultural and educational function in the teaching of border universities. Based on the actual situation of universities in border areas, this paper analyzes the unique value of ethnic music in cultivating students' national identity, cultural identity, and emotional identity, and explores effective paths for it to empower the forging and strengthening of the consciousness of the Chinese national community in teaching practice. By combining policy orientations and teaching status quo, the paper points out the main dilemmas such as single curriculum content, insufficient integration of ideological and political education, and a lack of practical resources, and proposes countermeasures such as strengthening the integration of ideological and political education, optimizing the curriculum structure, and expanding practical platforms. Through the deepening and innovation of ethnic music education, border universities can effectively enhance students' cultural consciousness and cultural confidence, providing solid educational support for forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community. This paper has positive significance for promoting the high-quality development of education in border universities and constructing a new-era ethnic unity and progress education system.

Keywords: Border universities; Ethnic music; Consciousness of the Chinese national community; Teaching practice; Cultural identity

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1. Introduction

Forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community is an important strategic task of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Especially for border areas, it has far-reaching political and practical significance. As the main front for cultivating people with moral integrity, universities shoulder the important mission of training new-era talents for national rejuvenation. Universities in border areas, located at the forefront of ethnic integration, face a complex pattern of co-existing multi-ethnic and multi-cultural groups. Their educational function is not only to impart academic knowledge but also to carry the important responsibility of enhancing ethnic unity and strengthening national identity. Against this background, ethnic music, as an important carrier of outstanding traditional Chinese culture, with its rich historical deposits, strong emotional expressions, and unique cultural symbols, plays an irreplaceable role in strengthening cultural identity, promoting ethnic integration, and carrying forward the national spirit.

In recent years, the state has attached great importance to the role and path expansion of ethnic music in higher education. In the reply to Proposal No. 2112 of the Third Session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Ministry of Education clearly pointed out that courses such as ethnic musicology and traditional Chinese music should be systematically incorporated into the university talent training system to strengthen young students' understanding and recognition of the multi-ethnic culture of China and enhance cultural confidence. At the same time, the National Press and Publication Administration issued the "Notice on the High-quality Publication Projects of the Chinese Ethnic Music Inheritance and Publication Project," proposing to carry forward outstanding traditional Chinese culture and showcase the contemporary elegance of ethnic music by deeply exploring, sorting out, and publishing high-quality ethnic music projects, further promoting the cohesion and dissemination of the consciousness of the Chinese national community.

While the policy level is constantly advancing, universities across the country have responded positively, carrying out curriculum construction and teaching practices with regional characteristics. Universities in border areas are at the forefront. For example, universities in Guangxi, Xinjiang, Yunnan, and other places have actively integrated local ethnic minority music resources into the teaching practice of curriculum-based ideological and political education. Through the establishment of ethnic music courses, they guide students to understand the integration of multi-ethnic cultures and the historical logic of national unity, thereby enhancing cultural identity and a sense of responsibility. Based on this, it has important theoretical and practical value to explore how ethnic music education in border universities can more effectively serve the forging and strengthening of the consciousness of the Chinese national community. This paper will combine the actual situation of universities in border areas, analyze the unique role and practical dilemmas of ethnic music in consciousness cultivation, and propose optimized teaching paths to promote the integrated development of ideological and political education, aesthetic education, and ethnic unity education.

2. The unique value of ethnic music in forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community

2.1. The cultural carrier function of ethnic music

The General Secretary pointed out in his speech at the National Ethnic Unity and Progress Commendation Conference in 2024 that "the splendid Chinese culture is jointly created by all ethnic groups. To create a new glory of socialist culture, we must constantly strengthen our identification with Chinese culture and promote the mutual learning and integration of the cultures of all ethnic groups"^[1]. Cultural identity is a socialized,

practical process. The cognitive and internalization process of all ethnic groups in China towards Chinese culture constructs the cultural consciousness of the value, concept, and consciousness system of Chinese civilization ^[2]. As a tangible carrier of culture, ethnic music not only records the lifestyles, religious beliefs, social systems, and aesthetic orientations of all ethnic groups but also continuously strengthens the common cultural genes in intergenerational inheritance. Through the interpretation of melodies, rhythms, and lyrics, ethnic music vividly reproduces the cultural characteristics of the pluralistic and integrated Chinese ethnic groups, becoming an important link in maintaining cultural identity with Chinese culture ^[3]. Ethnic music plays an irreplaceable role in transmitting traditional values, carrying forward the national spirit, and maintaining the continuity of ethnic culture. Through systematic ethnic music education, universities can help students deepen their understanding of the historical development of the Chinese nation and enhance their awareness of the pluralistic and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation, thus laying a solid cultural foundation for forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community.

2.2. The role of ethnic music in emotional identity and value identity

As an art form with strong emotional expressiveness, ethnic music can directly stimulate individual emotional resonance and promote the formation of emotional identity and value identity. The consciousness of the Chinese national community, as the most real and universal emotional identity and psychological cognition, demonstrates the common psychological characteristics of all ethnic groups in China ^[4]. In the process of singing and appreciating ethnic music, students can perceive the hardships and glories of ethnic history through artistic experiences and feel the emotional context of the common struggle and development of multiple ethnic groups. This immersive cultural experience helps to break down regional differences and ethnic group barriers and enhance students' deep understanding of the Chinese nation as a community with a shared future. At the same time, the values such as patriotism, heroism, and collectivism contained in ethnic music subtly guide students to form positive value pursuits, thus deepening their identification with the consciousness of the Chinese national community at both the emotional and rational levels.

2.3. The shaping of cultural confidence of young students by ethnic music

Cultural confidence is a more fundamental, extensive, and profound form of confidence. As the backbone of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the cultivation of cultural confidence among young students has strategic significance for forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community. With its profound cultural heritage and strong ethnic characteristics, ethnic music constructs its own music cognition, enhances the humanistic, cultural, and spiritual significance of music, enabling music learning to reach a higher level. It provides young students with an important way to recognize the charm of their own ethnic culture and draw on cultural and spiritual strength ^[5]. By learning, performing, and creating ethnic music, students can directly feel the broad and profound nature and unique charm of Chinese culture, and enhance their sense of pride and belonging to their own ethnic culture in artistic practices. Ethnic music education not only improves students' artistic literacy but also subtly cultivates their ability to respect diverse cultures, identify with Chinese culture, and strengthen cultural confidence, thus gathering a powerful spiritual impetus for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

3. Analysis of the dilemmas in the teaching practice of forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community in universities in border areas

With the continuous advancement of the consciousness of the Chinese national community at the national strategic level, the educational value of ethnic music in the education of universities in border areas has become increasingly prominent. As an important part of outstanding traditional Chinese culture, ethnic music not only carries profound cultural memories and ethnic emotions but also plays an irreplaceable role in promoting students' cultural identity and ethnic unity. Especially in border areas with multi-ethnic settlements, ethnic music education in universities should shoulder the important responsibilities of cultural inheritance, identity cultivation, and unity enhancement. However, despite continuous policy support from the state and increased awareness from all sectors of society, the educational practice of ethnic music in border universities still faces multiple challenges. There are obvious shortcomings in curriculum settings, teaching integration, and resource guarantee, affecting educational effectiveness and the internalization of the consciousness of the community. The following analyzes the main dilemmas currently faced from three aspects.

3.1. Insufficient organic integration of ideological and political education and ethnic music teaching

Ethnic music has a natural advantage in shaping students' cultural identity, ethnic pride, and the consciousness of the Chinese national community. However, in the actual teaching process, this potential has not been effectively tapped. Currently, most universities in border areas still focus on skill teaching and art appreciation in ethnic music courses, ignoring the in-depth integration of their ideological and political education functions^[6]. The curriculum content often stays at the surface level of knowledge instillation and skill training, failing to guide students to deeply understand the history, culture, and national unity logic behind ethnic music and lacking systematic value guidance. This leads some students to regard ethnic music as "entertainment" or "regional culture," making it difficult for them to connect with core values such as national identity and ethnic unity. Although some universities have tried to integrate ideological and political elements into the curriculum, such as introducing historical narratives or cultural interpretations in music, the teaching methods lack systematic design, and the implementation effects vary, failing to form a stable and effective teaching paradigm. Therefore, strengthening the ideological and political education function of ethnic music courses and promoting the transformation of curriculum content from perceptual aesthetics to rational identification is a problem that needs to be solved urgently in current teaching.

3.2. Lack of diversity, systematization, and integrity of ethnic culture in curriculum design

Currently, the curriculum design of ethnic music in universities in border areas is mostly limited to the music forms or representative repertoire of a certain ethnic group, lacking a systematic presentation of the music cultures of numerous ethnic groups in the Chinese nation. Many universities' ethnic music courses mainly focus on music inheritance, especially emphasizing some ethnic music with local characteristics, while ignoring the integrity and diversity of Chinese culture. For example, many ethnic unity and progress education courses in universities adopt a "cram-down" teaching method mainly based on "teaching." The teacher's lecture becomes a "monologue," and the teaching content is rather empty. Students often passively cope, lack effective interaction, and are unable to resonate, resulting in poor teaching effects^[7]. Such a single curriculum content restricts students' comprehensive understanding of multi-ethnic cultures, making it difficult for them to fully

recognize the richness and diversity of Chinese culture. For example, some courses may focus too much on the traditional music forms of certain ethnic groups, lacking the display of the music of other ethnic groups, and failing to show the integration and interaction of different ethnic cultures in the big family of the Chinese nation. This limitation weakens the positive role of ethnic music education in cultivating students' cultural confidence and ethnic unity. Therefore, ethnic music courses in universities should pay more attention to overall design. In teaching content, they should comprehensively consider the characteristics of different ethnic music and their contributions to Chinese culture, enhancing students' in-depth understanding and recognition of the consciousness of the Chinese national community.

3.3. Scarcity of teaching resources for ethnic music in border areas and insufficient construction of practical platforms

The choice of teaching methods usually depends on teaching objectives, student characteristics, subject content, and the teaching environment. Strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community among students of different ethnic groups is one of the core goals of education in ethnic universities^[8]. Ethnic music teaching requires not only rich theoretical support but also relies on diversified teaching resources and practical platforms such as fieldwork, cultural exchanges, and performance practices. However, currently, many universities in border areas still have insufficient investment in ethnic music education resources, especially in resources related to practical activities such as fieldwork and live performances of ethnic music. Although some universities have achieved certain results in theoretical teaching, due to a lack of sufficient cultural practice opportunities, students' cognition and experience in music learning are still limited to the classroom, making it difficult for them to obtain more vivid and intuitive cultural exposure. For example, some universities lack sufficient audio-visual materials related to ethnic music, music creation materials, and ethnic musical instruments and other teaching resources, restricting the diversity and depth of teaching. In addition, most of the existing ethnic music teaching platforms have problems such as insufficient cross-department cooperation and a lack of interactive communication, failing to effectively integrate resources from different disciplines, and restricting students' comprehensive experience and in-depth understanding of ethnic music learning. This shortage of resources leads to the fact that ethnic music teaching often cannot be more deeply connected with social reality, cultural innovation, and other aspects, further restricting the role and influence of ethnic music in forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community.

4. Countermeasures for teaching practice to empower the forging and strengthening of the consciousness of the Chinese national community in universities in border areas

4.1. Strengthening the integration of ideological and political education and ethnic music teaching

To solve the problem of insufficient integration of ethnic music teaching and ideological and political education, universities in border areas should take forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community as the goal, start from the top-level curriculum design and innovation of teaching concepts, and strengthen the in-depth combination of ideological and political education and ethnic music courses. In the teaching design with forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community as the core, integrates ideological and political education by combining the achievements of outstanding traditional Chinese art culture. Through "nourishing the heart with beauty" and "cultivating the soul with virtue," subtly

guide college students to establish correct ethnic consciousness and patriotism in the atmosphere of aesthetic education, and help them consciously identify and resist wrong ideas that split ethnic unity and undermine national unity ^[9].

Firstly, in terms of curriculum setting, forging and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community should be clearly defined as one of the core goals of ethnic music courses. Especially in aspects such as the historical background, creative background, and social functions of ethnic music, conduct systematic explanations in combination with ideological and political education. Teachers can analyze the cultural significance and social value behind classic ethnic music works by analyzing them, helping students to draw ethnic cultural identity and a sense of social responsibility from them. For example, when analyzing works such as “Eight Hundred Li of Roasted Meat Under the Command” and “My Motherland,” not only should the musical forms be interpreted, but students should also be guided to think about the spiritual connotations of ethnic unity and national identity contained therein. Secondly, teaching methods also need to be innovated. Through case-based teaching, interactive discussions, situational simulations, and other methods, while students are appreciating and performing ethnic music, they can deeply understand the pluralistic and integrated nature of the Chinese nation and cultural commonalities, thus enhancing ethnic identity and the sense of community. In addition, teachers should regularly organize symposiums or cultural activities related to ethnic unity and cultural identity, allowing students to enhance their acceptance and recognition of ideological and political education through interaction and participation.

4.2. Optimizing curriculum design to fully demonstrate the diversity and unity of Chinese national music

The dialectical unity of “diversity” and “unity” is the theoretical basis for the formation of the consciousness of the Chinese national community ^[10]. Currently, there is a problem of singularity in the curriculum design of ethnic music in universities in border areas. Many courses pay too much attention to the music culture of a certain ethnic group or region while ignoring the diversity and integration of the music of other ethnic groups. In order to better demonstrate the diversity and unity of Chinese national music culture, universities should comprehensively optimize the curriculum design and construct a comprehensive and diverse curriculum system. In terms of content setting, in addition to teaching the traditional music of the Han nationality and ethnic minorities, music forms with ethnic integration characteristics should also be introduced to highlight the integration and interaction of different ethnic music. Specifically, universities can offer a series of special courses, such as “The Diversity and Unity of Chinese National Music” and “The Innovative Combination of Traditional Chinese Music and Modern Music.” Through special lectures, ethnic music concerts, and other forms, students can personally experience and feel the differences and commonalities of different ethnic music styles. Through these curriculum designs, not only can students understand the music cultures of different ethnic groups, but they can also help them understand the cultural integration and inclusiveness of the Chinese nation, enhancing their ethnic identity and cultural confidence. In addition, by inviting off-campus ethnic music experts to give academic lectures and exchanges, students can have a broader view of ethnic music, thus deepening their recognition and understanding of the culture of the Chinese national community.

4.3. Strengthening the construction of teaching resources and building diversified practical platforms

The scarcity of teaching resources for ethnic music in universities in border areas is a prominent problem in current university teaching. Especially in the teaching process, there is a lack of sufficient practical platforms,

making students lack practical cultural experiences and cognitions based on theoretical learning. Although the hardware facilities of universities basically meet the needs of music majors, the efforts in integrating the education of the consciousness of the Chinese national community are insufficient, and the high-frequency use advantage has not been fully utilized, affecting the deepening of the educational function^[11]. To make up for this deficiency, border universities should increase investment in ethnic music education resources, especially in the construction of teaching practice platforms, and create more practical opportunities to display and experience ethnic music. Firstly, schools can establish cooperative relationships with local cultural centers, art troupes, and folk musicians, and organize fieldwork and cultural exchanges of ethnic music, allowing students to perceive the charm of music in real cultural scenarios. For example, by having students conduct music fieldwork in ethnic minority-inhabited areas and understand the production and performance of ethnic musical instruments, their understanding of ethnic music and respect for multi-ethnic cultures can be enhanced. In addition, schools should actively promote cross-disciplinary cooperation both on and off campus, establish cross-department and cross-disciplinary teaching platforms, and combine departments such as music academies, cultural departments, and sociology departments to carry out cross-disciplinary teaching and research on ethnic music, cultural identity, and social value. Through diversified cooperation and practical platforms, students can comprehensively understand the diversity of ethnic music and feel the profound heritage of Chinese culture. Secondly, schools should actively explore the development of digital teaching resources, use virtual reality technology and digital music libraries, and other tools to create virtual ethnic music classrooms, and provide students with diversified learning methods. Through these modern means, the interactivity and practical learning can be enhanced.

5. Conclusion

With the continuous advancement of the construction of the consciousness of the Chinese national community, the role of ethnic music in enhancing cultural identity and promoting ethnic unity has become increasingly prominent. Especially in universities in border areas, ethnic music education not only shoulders the mission of cultural inheritance but also serves as an important way to cultivate students' national identity and ethnic unity consciousness. Through systematic and diverse teaching practices, ethnic music can help students understand the pluralistic and integrated nature of Chinese culture, enhancing their cultural confidence and sense of responsibility. However, currently, there are still many constraints in curriculum design, teaching methods, and resource allocation, which affect educational effectiveness. Therefore, border universities need to further promote the in-depth integration of ethnic music and ideological and political education, optimize the curriculum structure, strengthen the practical links, build diversified teaching platforms, and improve the educational quality and effectiveness of cultivating people. In the future, it is necessary to continuously deepen the teaching reform of ethnic music, expand the depth and breadth of cultural education, lay a solid foundation for cultivating new-era youth with a high degree of cultural identity and ethnic responsibility, and help the consciousness of the Chinese national community take root and thrive in border areas.

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Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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