

Research on the Infiltration Paths of Aesthetic Education in Architectural Interior Design in Higher Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of Regional Culture in Sichuan and Chongqing

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of the advancement of the “Double High Plan” and the deepening of the strategy for building a cultural powerhouse, aesthetic education in architectural interior design in higher vocational colleges faces dual demands for “cultural empowerment” and “skill enhancement.” Currently, prominent issues exist in this field, such as superficial integration of regional culture, disconnection between aesthetic education and professional skill training, and a lack of systematic infiltration paths. This study primarily takes regional culture in Sichuan and Chongqing as research samples, employing literature research, mixed research methods, case analysis, and action research. By analyzing the current status and dilemmas of aesthetic education practices, it constructs a four-dimensional integrated infiltration path for aesthetic education encompassing “resources-implementation-guarantee-evaluation.” This research not only provides an operable practical paradigm for aesthetic education reform in design-related majors in higher vocational colleges but also supports the living transmission of regional culture in Sichuan and Chongqing.

Keywords: Regional culture; Higher vocational colleges; Architectural interior design; Aesthetic education infiltration; Path construction

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research background and problem statement

The “National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan” explicitly emphasizes the need to strengthen the coordinated cultivation of cultural literacy and professional skills. The “Double High Plan” further elevates the construction of an aesthetic education system as a core indicator for professional development. Under the guidance of the strategy for building a cultural powerhouse, the creative transformation of regional culture has become a core element for achieving differentiated competition in the design industry. As a key medium for

the concrete expression of regional culture, the architectural interior design industry has a particularly urgent demand for compound talents who possess both “skills and aesthetic sensibilities.”

According to research data, there are currently three core bottlenecks in the aesthetic education practices of interior design majors at higher vocational colleges. Firstly, the application of Sichuan-Chongqing culture tends to be superficial, often manifesting as a “symbol collage” approach. For instance, in spatial design, there is a simple incorporation of visual symbols such as traditional Sichuan-Chongqing patterns and facial makeup designs, without delving deeply into their cultural connotations and aesthetic values. Secondly, aesthetic education and the cultivation of professional skills are often disjointed, with a frequent emphasis on skills over aesthetics. In some core courses, aesthetic education content is either absent or fragmented, leading to a structural contradiction where “the enhancement of aesthetic cognition is disconnected from the practical application of skills.” Thirdly, there is a lack of systematic immersion pathways, with a closed-loop design missing throughout the entire process from the selection of Sichuan-Chongqing cultural resources, curriculum transformation, to the realization of outcomes, resulting in superficial aesthetic immersion effects. The aforementioned issues directly contribute to the prominent homogenization of graduates’ design works, making it difficult to meet the industry’s demand for culturally innovative designs. Therefore, there is an urgent need to construct a scientific and systematic aesthetic immersion pathway to address these challenges.

1.2. Research significance and innovation points

This study holds both theoretical and practical value, presenting multi-dimensional innovative characteristics. Theoretically, it is grounded in the positioning of higher vocational colleges as “skill-centric with aesthetic support,” coupling cultural immersion theory with vocational education competency-based theory. It reveals the collaborative educational mechanism of “integrating aesthetic education into skill training and enhancing skills through aesthetic practice,” expanding the research horizon on the integration of vocational aesthetic education and Sichuan-Chongqing regional culture. Practically, the constructed four-dimensional pathway of “resources-implementation-support-evaluation” precisely addresses pain points such as fragmented courses and inefficient resource transformation. Empirical evidence shows that it can enhance students’ cultural aesthetics and design innovation capabilities, drive the living transmission of Sichuan-Chongqing intangible cultural heritage, and establish a virtuous cycle of “talent cultivation-cultural heritage-industry empowerment.” At the innovation level, the perspective focuses on the dual objectives of “skills and aesthetic education,” breaking through the limitations of traditional aesthetic education that emphasizes appreciation over skills; the pathway addresses fragmentation through a closed-loop system; and the practice ensures implementation by relying on real-world projects in Sichuan and Chongqing.

2. Definition of core concepts

2.1. Regional culture of Sichuan and Chongqing

The regional culture of Sichuan and Chongqing specifically refers to the indigenous cultural carriers in the Sichuan-Chongqing region that are unique, inheritable, and suitable for aesthetic education in interior design. It possesses dual attributes of “aesthetic value” and “skill relevance,” with typical manifestations including traditional architecture (Chongqing stilted buildings, Western Sichuan dwellings), intangible cultural heritage techniques (Qingshen bamboo weaving, Rongchang grass cloth), and folk symbols (Shu brocade patterns, Sichuan opera facial makeup), etc.

2.2. Aesthetic education in interior design at vocational colleges

Aesthetic education in interior design at vocational colleges is based on the core positioning of skill development in vocational education. It focuses on the key stages of “cognition-experience-creation” and aims to cultivate students’ abilities to identify, refine, and express the beauty of regional culture in Sichuan and Chongqing through design. Ultimately, it strives to achieve the educational goal of “coordinated development of technical proficiency and aesthetic excellence.”

2.3. Pathways for aesthetic education infiltration

“Aesthetic education” refers to “education in the appreciation of beauty”^[1]. As the core vehicle for integrating Sichuan-Chongqing culture into teaching, the pathways for aesthetic education infiltration are characterized by their “subtle and imperceptible” nature. The core requirements are as follows: systematically covering the entire chain of curriculum-teaching-practice; balancing skill training with aesthetic education development in a collaborative manner; and relying on real-world projects for practical verification to achieve the transformation of cultural resources into educational outcomes.

3. Current status and challenges of aesthetic education infiltration with regional culture

Currently, the value of regional culture in aesthetic education infiltration is becoming increasingly prominent. The Sichuan-Chongqing region boasts a long history of development, and its regional cultural content exhibits exceptional uniqueness. To this day, traditional regional cultural forms are still preserved in the Sichuan-Chongqing area^[2]. Leveraging its rich and unique regional cultural resources, the Sichuan-Chongqing region provides abundant materials for aesthetic education, with high potential for transformation and applicability to diverse aesthetic education teaching scenarios. However, the actual implementation of aesthetic education infiltration with Sichuan-Chongqing regional culture faces numerous challenges, with many issues requiring urgent resolution.

At the level of teaching practice, some teachers have simplified the “integration of Sichuan-Chongqing culture” into “symbol collage,” employing a singular transformation method that lacks in-depth development and interactive experiences, while also neglecting the aesthetic education infiltration of cultural connotations. This drawback is particularly prominent in the student work design phase. Due to a lack of in-depth understanding of regional culture, students’ works often merely imitate surface-level elements, making it difficult to truly integrate the essence of regional culture. This significantly limits the excavation and release of the aesthetic education potential of regional culture. From the perspective of practical closed-loop design, there are obvious shortcomings in the aesthetic education practice of Sichuan-Chongqing regional culture in terms of “resource screening–curriculum integration–practical transformation–achievement incubation.” At the resource end, cultural resources are scattered, and institutions have not established standardized resource libraries, resulting in teachers having to spend significant time and effort collecting materials on their own. At the curriculum end, cultural content is mostly presented in the form of “after-school extensions” and has not been standardized as teaching modules. At the practical end, there is a lack of real project carriers, leaving students’ cultural theme design achievements without opportunities for on-site verification. At the transformation end, there is no dedicated incubation platform, making it difficult for excellent proposals to be transformed into market products, which hinders the sustainability of aesthetic education effects. In terms of the teaching staff, most teachers lack experience in intangible cultural heritage techniques and project practice, making it difficult

for them to effectively guide students in conducting integrated design. Additionally, the evaluation system is severely detached from educational goals, exhibiting characteristics of “three emphases and three neglects”: emphasizing results over process, where only final works determine grades, neglecting the gradual development of students’ aesthetic cognition; emphasizing skills over aesthetics, where excessive attention is paid to software operation proficiency, neglecting the cultural connotations and artistic beauty of works; and emphasizing in-school over off-campus, lacking third-party evaluation entities such as enterprises, resulting in evaluation results that are disconnected from industry needs. This singular evaluation model not only fails to accurately measure the effects of aesthetic education infiltration but also makes it difficult to form a feedback mechanism for reverse optimization of teaching.

4. Construction of aesthetic education infiltration paths for Sichuan-Chongqing regional culture

In response to the prevalent issues in the current art and design curriculum systems of colleges and universities, such as curriculum objectives deviating from aesthetic education orientation, overemphasis on the commercial value of design, and unclear representation of cultural connotations^[3], and based on the closed-loop logic of “resource transformation–implementation–support guarantee–evaluation feedback,” a “four-dimensional collaborative” aesthetic education infiltration path is constructed to achieve a deep integration of Sichuan-Chongqing culture and interior design teaching, thereby addressing current practical dilemmas.

4.1. Systematic development of aesthetic education resources in Sichuan-Chongqing culture

When developing cultural resources in the Sichuan-Chongqing region, the focus should be placed on the uniqueness and artistic appeal of cultural resources. Priority should be given to selecting intangible cultural heritage projects and architectural elements with distinct regional cultural identities, ensuring that the selected resources embody the core essence of Sichuan-Chongqing culture. Simultaneously, consideration should be given to the compatibility of Sichuan-Chongqing elements with the curriculum and the feasibility of practical implementation, achieving a profound integration of cultural elements with design skills.

Based on the aforementioned criteria, the research team systematically selected eight core resources from the rich cultural tapestry of Sichuan and Chongqing, including Qingshen Bamboo Weaving, Western Sichuan Folk Houses, Shu Brocade Patterns, Chengdu Lacquer Art, Rongchang Hemp Fabric, Chongqing Stilted Buildings, Sichuan Opera Facial Makeup, and Liangping Bamboo Curtains. These resources encompass both material cultural carriers, such as traditional handicrafts and regional architecture, as well as intangible cultural forms like opera art, forming a matrix structure characterized by “core resources leading, supplemented by auxiliary resources.” This structure not only comprehensively presents the diverse characteristics of Sichuan-Chongqing culture but also effectively transforms cultural resources into teaching elements through precise alignment with the curriculum of architectural interior design.

A digital resource library has been established for the selected resources. This library includes 3D models of typical designs such as Chongqing Stilted Buildings and Western Sichuan Folk Houses, instructional videos on bamboo weaving and hemp fabric techniques, interview records with intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and high-definition pattern materials of Shu Brocade and Sichuan Opera Facial Makeup, enabling digital storage of resources and faculty sharing. A “Curriculum Conversion Manual” has been formulated to transform the selected resources into standardized teaching content. Three types of curriculum modules—basic,

skill, and innovative—have been developed following a stepwise logic of “basic cognition–skill application–innovative practice.” In the basic module for freshmen, the cultural connotations, aesthetic characteristics, and design transformation logic of the eight core resources are systematically explained, enabling students to grasp the regional cultural characteristics of Sichuan-Chongqing and enhance their aesthetic sense in interior design. In the skill module for sophomores, topics such as “Staggered Layout of Stilted Buildings and Mountain Space Design” and “Application of Regional Colors in Sichuan-Chongqing” are integrated into core courses like “Residential Space Design” and “Courtyard Landscape Design,” encouraging students to contemplate the ingenious use and restructuring of Sichuan-Chongqing regional elements in their designs for further creative exploration. In the innovative modules for the second semester of sophomore year and junior year, real-world projects serve as vehicles for the comprehensive and innovative application of resources.

4.2. Three-dimensional implementation of “curriculum–teaching–practice”

To promote the in-depth integration of Sichuan-Chongqing culture into architectural interior design teaching and achieve a leapfrog development from “cultural cognition” to “design application” and then to “innovative transformation,” the following measures have been implemented at the curriculum integration level: A cross-regional stepped curriculum system combining “online sharing + offline in-depth teaching” has been established. During the foundational course stage, common knowledge is shared through online courses in digital resource libraries, while offline, teachers supplement the curriculum with content tailored to local cultural resources, forming a complementary model of “universal theory + regional practice.” In the core course stage, a “cross-regional course module mutual recognition” mechanism has been introduced to break down regional barriers. For instance, students in Sichuan can opt for the “Rongchang Hemp Soft Furnishing Design” module from Chongqing, while students in Chongqing can study the “Qingshen Bamboo Weaving Decorative Application” module from Sichuan, fostering the integration of cross-regional cultural elements. During the practical training course stage, joint practical training projects such as “Sichuan-Chongqing Cultural Integration-Themed Dining Space Design” are set up, using real design tasks as a vehicle to guide students in integrating cultural symbols from both regions and cultivating their ability to integrate cross-regional cultures.

At the teaching integration level, an innovative three-stage teaching method of “perception–experience–creation” has been developed to align with students’ cognitive development patterns. In the perception stage, students gain intuitive cognition and emotional connections with Sichuan-Chongqing culture through internships, research trips featuring regional cultural characteristics, on-site observations of intangible cultural heritage techniques, surveys of traditional architecture, and participation in cultural workshops. In the experience stage, “cultural element translation and practical training” is conducted, with tasks such as “digital reconstruction of bamboo weaving patterns.” Teachers provide case analyses and step-by-step guidance to help students master design translation methods for cultural symbols and enhance their practical skills. In the creation stage, “real project-driven” teaching is implemented, aligning with the needs of Sichuan-Chongqing cultural tourism projects (such as rural homestay renovations and dining space designs in cultural tourism towns). Students are guided to apply their cultural translation achievements to real-world scenarios, forming a complete loop of “cognitive input–skill internalization–innovative output.”

At the practical integration level, a tripartite practical platform integrating “school-local government collaboration–school-enterprise cooperation–competition exchanges” has been established to address the challenges of resource dispersion and outcome commercialization. By establishing off-campus internship and practice bases, stable offline internship and training venues are provided for students. Through the joint

establishment of a “Design Achievement Incubation Center” on the school-enterprise cooperation platform, technical support and market connection channels are offered for outstanding student projects, promoting the market-oriented implementation of design achievements. Through the event exchange platform, a competition mechanism is set up to inspire students to explore innovative expressions of Sichuan-Chongqing culture. Meanwhile, award-winning works are included in the teaching resource library for promotion, forming a virtuous cycle of “cultural development–teaching transformation–industrial application–achievement feedback” that effectively enhances the dissemination and influence of Sichuan-Chongqing culture in the field of architectural interior design.

4.3. Cultivation path for faculty capacity building

Higher vocational colleges should strive to create opportunities for teachers to engage in aesthetic education learning and training, enhancing aesthetic education awareness and literacy among teachers across various disciplines, shaping their charismatic personalities, nurturing their passion for aesthetic education, and stimulating their enthusiasm for aesthetic education ^[4]. Faculty capacity building centers around the “Three-Teacher Project,” targeting the cultivation of composite faculty members with “theory + skills + practical experience.” The Master Teacher Leadership Project invites intangible cultural heritage inheritors and industry experts from Sichuan and Chongqing as special guest instructors, conducting four online and offline special lectures and demonstration classes each semester to precisely guide key teachers in enhancing their cultural teaching abilities. The Capacity Enhancement Project selects teachers annually to participate in Sichuan-Chongqing cultural aesthetic education training programs, covering cultural interpretation, practical skill operations, and project implementation, requiring the completion of one case study on the transformation of cultural resources into curricula, with successful completion necessary for graduation. The Cross-School Exchange Project promotes the mutual secondment of teachers among Sichuan-Chongqing institutions, facilitating the sharing of resource transformation and teaching implementation experiences, and breaking down regional teaching barriers.

4.4. Construction of a multidimensional and comprehensive evaluation system

Based on competency-based theory and closed-loop management theory, a variety of evaluation methods are employed, focusing not only on evaluating students’ learning outcomes but also on assessing their learning processes ^[5]. Efforts are made to construct an evaluation system characterized by “four-party collaboration, four-dimensional integration, and full-process coverage,” aiming to precisely address the prominent issues in traditional evaluation methods. In terms of evaluation subjects, a “quadruple collaboration” model is adopted. School teachers, with a weighting of 40%, focus on cultural cognition and teaching process evaluation. Enterprise mentors, with a weighting of 30%, concentrate on the feasibility of solutions and professional skill proficiency. Intangible cultural heritage inheritors, with a weighting of 20%, oversee cultural fidelity and artistic accuracy. Peer evaluation among students, with a weighting of 10%, revolves around creative ideas and cultural innovation, jointly establishing a multi-dimensional and comprehensive evaluation framework. Regarding the evaluation content, a “four-dimensional integrated” indicator system is constructed, with cultural aesthetic cognition and design aesthetic expression each accounting for 30%, and professional skill integration and cross-regional collaborative innovation each accounting for 20%. Each dimension is further divided into three secondary indicators, accompanied by detailed scoring criteria to ensure standardized and orderly evaluation operations. In terms of evaluation methods, a “full-course coverage + cross-regional linkage” approach is

implemented. Pre-class diagnostic assessments are conducted to understand foundational cognition, in-class process evaluations are carried out to track practical operations and research performance, and post-class comprehensive evaluations are conducted through work reviews, cross-regional joint defenses, and enterprise feedback, forming a closed-loop management mechanism of “evaluation-feedback-optimization.”

5. Conclusion

This study, grounded in the regional cultural characteristics of Sichuan and Chongqing and the aesthetic education needs of higher vocational interior design, constructs a “four-dimensional collaboration” immersion pathway. Through systematic resource development, implementation across three dimensions of curriculum, teaching, and practice, cultivation of a “triple-role faculty” (teachers with expertise in theory, practice, and cultural heritage), and a multi-dimensional and comprehensive evaluation system, it addresses pain points such as superficiality and fragmentation in aesthetic education practices. It provides a replicable practical paradigm for the integration of aesthetic education and regional culture in higher vocational education, contributing to the cultivation of compound talents with “exquisite skills and exceptional aesthetic sensibilities.”

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Disclosure statement

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