

Research on the Innovative Path of Integrating Qilu Costume Culture into Aesthetic Education in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: Inheriting and promoting the excellent traditional Chinese culture should begin with the youth, as elementary school aesthetic education plays a crucial role in this process of cultural dissemination. At present, elementary school aesthetic education mainly focuses on traditional fields such as art, music, dance, calligraphy, etc., and there is still much room for innovation in communication carriers and paths. Based on this status quo, combining professional and regional advantages, this article proposes to take Qilu characteristic costume culture as a carrier to integrate the innovation of excellent traditional Chinese culture into elementary school aesthetic education. It aims to cultivate humanistic literacy and a sense of belonging in school-age children and establish cultural confidence.

Keywords: Traditional culture; Elementary school aesthetic education; Qilu costume culture

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1. Introduction

Young people are the future of the country, and the establishment of patriotic beliefs and the cultivation of cultural self-confidence must be firmly rooted in childhood, which cannot be separated from the inculcation of excellent traditional culture. The development of art and culture is unified, and aesthetic education is an activity that conveys artistic experience, cultivates noble sentiments, and promotes all-round development. Aesthetic education that integrates excellent traditional culture is conducive to shaping the sound personalities and noble virtues of school-age children. The integration of excellent traditional culture into aesthetic education is not merely didactic; it must align with the learning characteristics of school-age children through visual content and flexible methods. As a carrier of Chinese history, folklore, and aesthetic values, traditional costumes serve as a valuable resource for aesthetic education that warrants in-depth development.

2. Study background

While embodied in ideological, moral, and behavioral norms, aesthetic education encourages artistic practical

activities to innovate in new ways. The Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era, issued by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council in October 2020, points out that: “We should set up the concept of integration of academic disciplines, and enhance the integration of aesthetic education with moral education, intellectual education, physical education, and labor education; fully explore and utilize the rich aesthetic education resources contained in various disciplines, such as the beauty of the heart, the beauty of manners and music, the beauty of language, the beauty of behavior, the beauty of science, the beauty of order, the beauty of health, the beauty of industriousness, the beauty of art, etc., which embody the spirit of Chinese aesthetic education and the aesthetic qualities of the nation.” This puts forward new requirements for educators to further explore the rich aesthetic resources contained in various disciplines and to organically integrate interdisciplinary aesthetic content.

Among the many resources related to traditional culture, costumes are an important material for displaying China’s history and culture. The Chinese costumes inherited for thousands of years contain cultural connotations of the Chinese nation’s ideology and philosophy, aesthetic style, etiquette, and folklore, which can stimulate the emotional identity and spiritual resonance of young people. As the birthplace of Confucian culture, the formation and development of Qilu costume is rooted in traditional Chinese thought and is a vivid reflection of the evolution of geography, beliefs, folklore, and other aspects of Shandong. It has unique artistic characteristics, which can be innovatively used in elementary school aesthetic education.

3. Value of Qilu costume culture for elementary school aesthetic education

3.1. Increasing elementary school students’ intuitive understanding of traditional Chinese culture

“China has a rich tradition of etiquette, referred to as ‘Summer, the Beauty of the Dress’”^[1], China has long been known as “the Kingdom of Clothing” and “the State of Etiquette.” Traditional costumes serve as the best material to witness the development of Chinese history, visually reflecting the cultural characteristics of various Chinese dynasties. Elementary school students can have a visual understanding of the humanistic style and etiquette system of each dynasty by learning and recognizing the costumes of the past dynasties.

3.2. Enhancing elementary school students’ aesthetic interests

The styles, colors, and patterns of traditional costumes contain rich historical information and cultural connotations, reflecting high aesthetic values. By learning about the evolution of clothing styles, colors, patterns, and materials in different periods and regions of China, elementary school students can build a preliminary sense of the aesthetic characteristics of their time and place, and then improve their aesthetic ability.

3.3. Strengthening elementary school students’ sense of belonging and cultural confidence

Regional culture significantly influences an individual’s cultural identity, sense of hometown, and overall identity. Qilu’s characteristic costume culture, representing the essence of Shandong, has accumulated and evolved over time, embodying the wisdom and aesthetic values of the Shandong people. By introducing students to their local costume culture from a young age and allowing them to experience the beauty of its humanities and craftsmanship, they can develop a deeper understanding of their hometown, fostering greater cultural confidence and a stronger sense of belonging.

4. Innovative path of integrating Qilu costume culture into elementary school aesthetic education

4.1. Building an aesthetic education community in elementary school

Establishing a community for aesthetic education in elementary school can form a synergy for aesthetic education. In view of the lack of costume resources in basic education, universities with costume majors can support elementary schools in terms of educational teachers, teaching equipment, and curriculum resources, and provide training for elementary school aesthetic education teachers to improve their professionalism in traditional costume aesthetic education. Elementary schools can provide practical teaching platforms for university students majoring in clothing, realizing a win-win situation. In addition, it is also necessary to pay attention to the linkage and cooperation between schools and parents and society, using social public welfare resources to carry out aesthetic education activities, attracting more parents to participate in them, creating a good atmosphere for aesthetic education and co-culture, and forming a three-dimensional elementary school aesthetic education community.

4.2. Innovating the content of aesthetic education featuring Qilu costume culture

The content of traditional costume culture mainly covers costume styles, patterns, colors, accessories, material craftsmanship, etc., reflecting the ancient people's identity, religious beliefs, and national cultural inheritance, carrying a rich traditional culture and values ^[2]. It is pointed out in the Guidelines for Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Schools in Shandong Province that "the expansion section can involve knowledge of ancient Chinese rituals, traditional festivals, painting and calligraphy, music and drama, famous Chinese and foreign celebrities, classic stories from ancient and modern times, the world's natural cultural heritage, etc., and in particular, it is important to emphasize the characteristics of Shandong's regional culture" ^[3]. According to the guidance of the outline, adding the teaching content of Qilu regional characteristics of costumes in elementary school aesthetic education can promote the innovative development of elementary school aesthetic education in Shandong Province.

4.2.1. Confucian costumes represented by the Confucian Mansion

The Confucius Mansion, historically known as the Kong Family Mansion, is the residence of the hereditary descendants of Confucius, often referred to as the Sage of Sages. During the change of dynasties in history, it is difficult to preserve the costumes of the previous dynasties; however, due to the hereditary succession and special aristocratic status of the Confucian Mansion, a large number of costumes were preserved since the Yuan and Ming dynasties, especially in the Ming and Qing dynasties. The collection of the Confucius Mansion contains about 8,000 pieces of costumes from the past dynasties, including court dress, official dress, regular dress, casual dress, and other types of male and female costumes, which can be regarded as the home base of the traditional Chinese Confucian costume culture. Incorporating the costumes in the Confucius Mansion collection into the aesthetic education of elementary school allows students to understand the traditional etiquette system, such as the crown ceremony and maturity rite, through costumes in a more visual way, which is of positive significance to the inheritance of the Confucian culture and the state of etiquette.

4.2.2. Imperial costumes represented by feudal ceremonies

The sacrificial ceremony to Heaven on Mount Tai symbolized that the emperor was entrusted with the mandate of Heaven. As the foremost of the Five Great Mountains, Mount Tai was believed to be the closest place to the heavens, where prayers could ascend directly to the sky. Emperors with outstanding merit and virtue chose to establish their temples on Mount Tai. This grand sacrificial ceremony surpassed even the grandeur of the

coronation ceremonies of successive dynasties ^[4]. Therefore, the costume worn by the emperors also has the highest level of specifications, and its pattern is highly hierarchical, elaborate, and gorgeous. The design and craftsmanship of imperial costumes reflect unique aesthetic values and cultural connotations. Students can have a deeper understanding of the ceremonial system, hierarchical concepts, symbolism, and aesthetic interests represented by the imperial costumes, such as the decorative patterns of the twelve chapters of the imperial costumes, and feel the profundity and depth of traditional culture through the understanding of the imperial costumes.

4.2.3. Intangible cultural heritage textiles represented by blue-printed fabrics

Shandong Province is home to many representatives of textile-related intangible cultural heritage, including the national treasures of Lu brocade and Zhoucun silk dyeing and weaving techniques. Additionally, the province boasts provincial intangible cultural heritage items such as blue-printed cloth and colored-printed cloth. Considering the hardware facilities of the school and the practical skills of elementary school students, a highly participatory non-heritage program such as Blue Calico can be chosen to be included in the content of aesthetic education. Shandong blue-printed cloth has a long history and is a handmade printing and dyeing technique formed by working people in long-term practice. Its easy-to-get raw materials, simple colors, and auspicious patterns reflect the warmth and simplicity of the people of Shandong and their straightforward and generous characteristics. Through hands-on participation in the practice of blue-printed fabric, students can have a better understanding of the traditional patterns and experience the spirit of craftsmanship, which is conducive to the cultivation of students' aesthetic perception, artistic expression, creative practice, and other abilities.

4.3. Innovating the teaching system of aesthetic education in elementary school

4.3.1. Interdisciplinary integration

Aesthetic education has a wide range of interdisciplinary characteristics, which fits well with the clothing profession. Clothing integrates multidisciplinary knowledge of art and design, history and culture, material science, engineering technology, etc., such as tattoo patterns, idiomatic allusions, fabric printing and dyeing, and women's red craftsmanship. These are all very suitable for incorporation into elementary school aesthetic education, in line with the requirements of its multidisciplinary development.

4.3.2. Utilization of new technologies

The innovative development of aesthetic education cannot be separated from the support of emerging science and technology, such as digital art creation, artificial intelligence-assisted creation, virtual reality applications, etc., which can bring students a richer experience of aesthetic education. Specifically for Qilu costumes, three-dimensional digital technology can be used to simulate the design and display, enriching the teaching means and attracting students' interest.

4.3.3. Experiential teaching and learning

Using theme-based, project-based, and other teaching methods to integrate Qilu costume culture into elementary school aesthetic education, activities such as museum costume object visits, traditional costume handmade experiences, Qilu costume theme exhibitions, etc. can be carried out. These activities can improve students' sense of participation and enhance their aesthetic ability and creativity in the process of practical experience.

4.3.4. Diversified evaluation

To establish a diversified evaluation system for aesthetic education, diversified evaluation indicators are

established for aesthetic perception, cultural heritage, creativity performance, process performance, teamwork, self-reflection, etc. Various forms of evaluation are also synthesized, such as teacher evaluation, student evaluation, and parent evaluation, so as to reflect more accurately the students' level of aesthetic education and potential for development, to respect their individuality, and to promote their all-round development.

5. Conclusion

Aesthetic education should be practiced under the spiritual leadership and construction orientation of excellent traditional culture, and excellent traditional culture should penetrate the heart of every youngster through aesthetic education. Qilu costume styles, colors, and patterns, intangible cultural heritage crafts, and so on are the costume culture resources that can be deeply excavated, introduced, and integrated into elementary school aesthetic education teaching. Teachers should combine the characteristics of elementary school aesthetic education teaching, broaden the scope of aesthetic education, expand the path of aesthetic education, enrich students' minds with the effective practice of excellent traditional culture, and provide effective suggestions for the innovation and development of aesthetic education in Shandong.

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