

Innovative Research on the Practical Path of "Intangible Cultural Heritage Aesthetic Education" in Local Normal Universities

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Abstract: Under the dual background of the "14th Five-Year Plan" for educational modernization and the construction of a cultural power, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) aesthetic education, as an important part of humanistic quality education, has received unprecedented attention. Zhejiang Province, being one of the provinces with the most concentrated ICH resources in the country, has listed Wu Opera as one of the first pilot projects for the "Digital Transformation of ICH Aesthetic Education". This paper takes the Wu Opera practice of Zhejiang Normal University as an example to explore the innovative research on the practical path of "ICH Aesthetic Education" in local normal universities. Mainly using methods such as literature review, investigation, and statistics, it sorts out the experience and achievements in ICH aesthetic education of this university, and based on the space for optimization found during the investigation process, provides guidance for universities to formulate the development path of ICH aesthetic education practice.

Keywords: Education Modernization during The 14th Five-Year Plan, Local Normal Universities, Intangible Cultural Heritage Aesthetic Education, Wu Opera

1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist of China clearly proposes to "promote cultural confidence and self-improvement, and create a new brilliance of socialist culture", elevating the protection of intangible cultural heritage to the level of national cultural security strategy. The Implementation Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving the Art Education Work in Schools in the New Era (2020) for the first time included "digital technology empowering art education teaching" in the national policy framework. The "14th Five Year Plan for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage" of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2021) also emphasizes "building a long-term mechanism for the integration of intangible cultural heritage into the national education system". The policy dividend promotes the deep integration of intangible cultural heritage and art education into a new stage of development.

As one of the provinces with the highest concentration of intangible cultural heritage resources in China, Zhejiang Province currently has 257 national intangible cultural heritage projects and 1064 provincial-level intangible cultural heritage projects. Its "Work Plan for Implementing the Project of Inheriting and Developing Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture" (2022) clearly lists Wu Opera as one of the first pilot projects for "digital transformation of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education". As the only traditional drama project in Zhejiang Province selected for the "Representative List of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage", Wu Opera's aesthetic program of "singing, reciting, acting, and fighting" and the regional cultural characteristics of "poetry, painting, and Jiangnan" have become a natural carrier for solving the problems of "fading regional characteristics" and "lack of emotional resonance" in traditional aesthetic education.

As the core battlefield for cultivating aesthetic education teachers in primary and secondary schools, local normal universities undertake the dual mission of "intangible cultural heritage inheritance" and "aesthetic education and education". However, according to data from the Chinese Academy of Educational Sciences (2023), 76% of aesthetic education teachers in primary and secondary schools nationwide graduated from normal universities, but the proportion of intangible cultural heritage related content in their curriculum system is less than 15%; The research conducted by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Research Center of Zhejiang University in 2023 also pointed out that 89% of the "intangible cultural heritage into campus" projects are stuck in "one-time exhibitions" and have not formed a

sustainable teaching loop. In this context, Zhejiang Normal University, relying on the "Zhejiang Intangible Cultural Heritage Research Base", has been promoting the Wu Opera Campus Inheritance Project since 2015, and building a "curriculum club practice" three in one aesthetic education ecology. Its experience has important research value. This article takes the inheritance practice of Wu Opera in the school as a sample to explore the innovative path of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education in local normal universities, providing theoretical support and practical reference for the active inheritance of intangible cultural heritage under the background of educational modernization.

2. Research status

The Western aesthetic education theory has undergone three hundred years of evolution, completing a paradigm shift from epistemology to value theory, from disciplinary separation to cross-border integration. Baumgarten laid the foundation for the discipline of aesthetics with the improvement of sensory understanding, Kant constructed a trinity framework of intellectual, moral, and aesthetic education through "judgment," Schiller pioneered the concept of "aesthetic education" and proposed the theory of "game impulse. After the 19th century, Dewey's "Art as Experience" and Foucault's "Aesthetics of Survival" enriched theoretical dimensions, while the contemporary DBAE model and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences strengthened interdisciplinary integration. On a practical level, Harvard University integrates aesthetic education into courses on "Aesthetics and Interpretive Understanding", Stockholm University achieves interdisciplinary transformation of aesthetic abilities through the "Institute of Aesthetic Education", Yale University's "Professional Assistance Education" and Oxford University's "Self directed Learning" models each have their own characteristics, forming a diversified educational paradigm.

The research on aesthetic education in China began with Cai Yuanpei's concept of "aesthetic education replacing religion" and gradually became a hot topic after 1999. In 2019, Hu Qi and others analyzed the mechanism of aesthetic education in universities from the perspective of cultural education. [1] In 2020, Yan Jiayue explored the construction of an aesthetic education evaluation system. Huo Kai's team has continued to pay attention to aesthetic education reform and teacher construction in recent years.[2] In 2022, Zhang Wei emphasized the cultural inheritance value of aesthetic education, forming a research pattern that combines practicality and applicability.[3]

Research on local normal universities often focuses on issues such as education reform and professional training, and there is a relative lack of research on the integration of intangible cultural heritage. Wang Shihan proposed in 2013 that normal university libraries participate in the protection of intangible cultural heritage, [4], but the overall results are limited. The research on the integration of intangible cultural heritage and aesthetic education in universities has been on the rise in recent years. In 2017, Huang Jiying, Zhang Hua, and others focused on the campus aesthetic education practice of intangible cultural heritage dance, forming a research system covering different stages of education.[5]

As a national level intangible cultural heritage, Wu Opera has formed a basic accumulation of related research. In 2008, Fang Hongye analyzed its cultural roots and innovative directions.[6] In 2013, Li Zhen reconstructed the history of Wu Opera.[7] In 2014, Wang Jing focused on the current status of Wu Opera inheritance at Zhejiang Normal University. [8] In 2021, Zheng Xiaoli explored its integration with ideological and political education, providing empirical support for the inheritance of local opera on campus. [9] Overall, the research on aesthetic education at home and abroad has formed a mature theoretical system and practical model, but there is still a gap in the research on intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education in local normal universities. The research value of the inheritance and practice of Wu Opera in Zhejiang Normal University is highlighted as a result.

3. Research necessity

3.1 National strategic perspective: the dual mission of cultural confidence and educational modernization

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly proposes to "promote cultural confidence and self-improvement, and create new brilliance of socialist culture", elevating the protection of intangible cultural heritage to the level of national cultural security. Currently, China has 1557 national level representative intangible cultural heritage projects. However, according to monitoring data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, about 37% of traditional theatrical intangible

cultural heritage is facing a crisis of a shortage of inheritors, with an average of 68% of inheritors over the age of 60 (China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Development Report (2023)). As a "living fossil" of Chinese opera, 11 out of the 32 existing traditional plays of Wuju are at risk of extinction due to the death of their inheritors. In this context, the Ministry of Education has included "intangible cultural heritage into campuses" in the "14th Five Year Plan" key project plan for the inheritance and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture, requiring universities to become the core battlefield for the active inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. As a key provincial normal university, Zhejiang Normal University can directly respond to the national strategic demand of "enhancing the influence of Chinese civilization dissemination" by constructing an innovative model of "intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education".

The "Modernization of Education in China 2035" proposes to "develop high-quality education with Chinese characteristics and advanced levels in the world." However, there are still three major structural contradictions in current school aesthetic education: firstly, there is an imbalance in content supply: according to a special survey conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2023, the proportion of intangible cultural heritage related content in aesthetic education courses in normal universities nationwide is less than 12%, and 87% of courses are still in the stage of static knowledge transmission; Secondly, there is a lag in technological integration: the utilization rate of digital resources in traditional art education classrooms is only 31%, and the coverage rate of VR/AR and other technology applications is less than 15% (White Paper on the Development of Digital Art Education by the Central Academy of Electronic Education); Thirdly, the evaluation system is single: skill assessment accounts for 73% of the existing aesthetic education evaluation, and there is a lack of evaluation on cultural understanding and innovative literacy (report by the Aesthetic Education Research Center of East China Normal University). The inheritance practice of Wu Opera at Zhejiang Normal University can systematically solve the above problems and provide replicable solutions for educational modernization by constructing a "digital intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education ecology".

3.2 Reform of aesthetic education system: value reconstruction of intangible cultural heritage resources in breaking through the paradigm of aesthetic education

There is a "triple disconnect" in current aesthetic education in universities: the disconnect between course content and regional culture (excessive reliance on Western art theory systems), the disconnect between teaching forms and practical experience (mainly classroom lectures), and the disconnect between evaluation systems and cultural understanding (focusing on skill assessment). The practice of inheriting Wu Opera is carried out through "immersive workshops" (such as painting Wu Opera masks and surveying ancient stage buildings) and "field sampling system" (conducting research in the birthplace of Wu Opera, Jinhua, Quzhou, and other places every semester), constructing a spiral aesthetic education model of "perception understanding creation". This paradigm shift brings aesthetic education back to its essential function of being a 'cultured person'. The art of Wu Opera has a natural interdisciplinary nature: its musical structure can be linked to music theory, clothing patterns can be associated with design aesthetics, and performance programs can be linked to physical education. The School of Fine Arts at Zhejiang Normal University will attempt to integrate elements of Wu opera into the course of "Folk Art Styling", while the School of Music may offer an elective course on "Comparison of Wu Opera Voice and Ethnic Vocal Music". This cross disciplinary dialogue breaks through the disciplinary barriers of traditional aesthetic education. What is more noteworthy is that the "craftsman spirit" in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (such as the 36 processes required for the production of Wu opera costumes) is inherently compatible with the "cultivation of aesthetic judgment" in aesthetic education.

3.3 The current situation and problems of the practice of intangible cultural heritage art education in college art education

At present, there are still shortcomings in the integration of intangible cultural heritage into aesthetic education courses in universities. Many universities still focus on Western art theory in their aesthetic education courses, with less involvement in intangible cultural heritage. At Zhejiang Normal University, although the practice of inheriting Wu opera has achieved certain results, the curriculum still needs to be further improved to meet the learning needs of students for intangible cultural heritage. The implementation of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education requires a professional teaching staff. However, there are currently deficiencies in both the quantity and quality of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education teachers in universities. Many teachers have limited understanding of intangible

cultural heritage and lack systematic teaching abilities. In the practice of inheriting Wu Opera, although intangible cultural heritage inheritors have been invited to participate in teaching, the training of teachers and the construction of the team still need to be strengthened. Although students have a certain interest in intangible cultural heritage, their participation in intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education is still relatively low due to limitations in curriculum design and teaching methods. In the practice of inheriting Wu opera, the enthusiasm of students' participation needs to be further improved to ensure the effective implementation of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education.

At present, the evaluation mechanism of intangible cultural heritage in college aesthetic education is not yet perfect. Lack of scientific and reasonable evaluation criteria and methods makes it difficult to comprehensively evaluate the teaching effectiveness of intangible cultural heritage art education. In the practice of inheriting Wu opera, it is necessary to establish a scientific evaluation system to promote the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education.

4. Research Significance

4.1 Cultural inheritance and educational value of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education practice in local normal universities

Local normal universities have unique advantages and responsibilities in cultural inheritance and education. Taking Zhejiang Normal University as an example, the school actively carries out the practice of Wu Opera, providing a new platform for the inheritance of this national intangible cultural heritage. As an important component of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, Wu Opera carries rich historical information and cultural memory, and is a witness to the development of national history. By carrying out the inheritance practice of Wu Opera at Zhejiang Normal University, we can cultivate a new generation of inheritors and avoid the gradual decline of this ancient art form in modern society. This not only helps to protect and inherit the precious cultural heritage of Wu Opera, but also promotes Wu culture to a wider social group through the influence of universities, enhancing society's awareness of the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

Intangible cultural heritage art education has irreplaceable educational value in college art education. Firstly, it provides an inexhaustible driving force for the development of aesthetic education in universities, enriching the content and forms of aesthetic education. The integration of Wu Opera has made aesthetic education no longer limited to traditional high art, but includes artistic works with local flavor and ethnic folk charm. These naturally friendly art forms can better infect and inspire people, and stimulate strong patriotism and love for the hometown among college students. Secondly, intangible cultural heritage art education helps to build a good art education teaching ecosystem and promote innovation in the content of art education courses in universities. By integrating intangible cultural heritage such as Wu opera into the aesthetic education system of universities, the teaching content can be greatly enriched, opening a door to the traditional art palace for students, allowing them to appreciate the charm of intangible cultural heritage while enhancing their aesthetic taste and artistic cultivation.

In addition, intangible cultural heritage art education also helps to enhance the cultural connotation of art education in universities. Intangible cultural heritage has a profound and diverse cultural heritage, with obvious regional representativeness and Eastern aesthetic characteristics, containing rich historical information and profound cultural heritage. Integrating intangible cultural heritage into aesthetic education in universities can help students develop healthy mainstream values and fully reflect the function of moral education in universities.

Meanwhile, intangible cultural heritage art education also contributes to achieving the educational goals of higher education art education. Through the study and practice of intangible cultural heritage, students can gain a deeper understanding of the spiritual connotations and value pursuits of traditional culture, thereby establishing a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values. By carrying out the "Wu Opera into Campus" activity, students not only feel the charm of traditional Chinese opera art, but also stimulate their love for local culture. The cultivation of cultural confidence is of great significance for achieving the goal of moral education and talent cultivation in universities. Meanwhile, through intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education, students' innovative spirit and practical ability can be cultivated. The practice of Wu Opera in aesthetic education in universities provides students with an innovative platform. Students can cultivate innovative thinking and practical abilities by participating in the performance, creation, and research of Wu opera. The cultivation of this innovative spirit plays an important role in nurturing innovative talents for the new era.

4.2 Exploration of innovative paths for intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education driven by Wu Opera practice

Zhejiang Normal University's active exploration in the practice of Wu Opera has provided new ideas and methods for the innovative development of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education. The development of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education helps to enhance the sense of identity and pride in national culture. By studying and inheriting intangible cultural heritage, students can gain a deep understanding of their own ethnic cultural traditions and historical origins, thereby establishing correct cultural and value systems. At Zhejiang Normal University, the practice of inheriting Wu Opera not only allows students to experience the charm of traditional Chinese opera art, but also inspires their love for local culture. The cultivation of cultural confidence is of great significance for achieving the goal of moral education and talent cultivation in universities.

In addition, the development of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education also helps to promote the innovative development of intangible cultural heritage. The reform of school aesthetic education encourages students to innovate on the basis of learning and inheriting intangible cultural heritage, combining modern elements with traditional culture to create works with contemporary characteristics. Zhejiang Normal University is based on the actual development of Wu Opera art, keeping up with the trend of the times, promoting creative transformation and innovative development, and creating a number of new forms of Wu Opera cultural works represented by dances such as "Wu Yun" and "Wu Kui". This innovation not only contributes to the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, but also enables it to radiate new vitality in modern society.

The development of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education also helps to improve the curriculum system of aesthetic education in universities. Traditional college aesthetic education courses often focus on imparting Western art theories and aesthetic concepts, with relatively less involvement in Chinese traditional art and intangible cultural heritage. Integrating intangible cultural heritage such as Wu opera into the aesthetic education system of universities can greatly enrich teaching content, increase the diversity and fun of courses. At the same time, by integrating Wu opera into aesthetic education courses, it can also promote innovation in aesthetic education teaching methods. For example, a "live inheritance" approach can be adopted, inviting Wu opera inheritors to enter the campus and provide on-site teaching and guidance for students. This "live inheritance" approach not only allows students to directly experience the essence of traditional art, but also cultivates their practical ability and innovative spirit.

4.3 Structural reshaping of the aesthetic education system in universities: the value of inheriting Wu opera

The practice of Wu Opera at Zhejiang Normal University is of great significance for the improvement and innovation of the aesthetic education system in universities. The development of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education helps to improve the curriculum system of aesthetic education in universities. Traditional college aesthetic education courses often focus on imparting Western art theories and aesthetic concepts, with relatively less involvement in Chinese traditional art and intangible cultural heritage. Integrating intangible cultural heritage such as Wu opera into the aesthetic education system of universities can greatly enrich teaching content, increase the diversity and fun of courses. At the same time, by integrating Wu opera into aesthetic education courses, it can also promote innovation in aesthetic education teaching methods. For example, a "live inheritance" approach can be adopted, inviting Wu opera inheritors to enter the campus and provide on-site teaching and guidance for students. This "live inheritance" approach not only allows students to directly experience the essence of traditional art, but also cultivates their practical ability and innovative spirit.

In addition, the development of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education also helps to create a good campus cultural atmosphere. By organizing events such as the Wu Opera Culture and Art Festival, exhibitions, and performances, a strong atmosphere of intangible cultural heritage can be created. These activities not only showcase the cultural charm of Wu opera, but also attract more students to participate, deepening their understanding and love for intangible cultural heritage. Meanwhile, students can be encouraged to spontaneously organize club activities related to Wu Opera, creating a positive and uplifting atmosphere for the inheritance of campus culture. This good campus cultural atmosphere not only helps students' learning and growth, but also enhances the overall cultural and educational quality of universities.

Zhejiang Normal University emphasizes top-level design and strengthens systematicity in the

inheritance practice of Wu Opera. Through the combination of practice and research, in class and out of class, on campus and off campus, online and offline, etc., professional education and ideological education are closely integrated, highlighting two-way progress and continuously enhancing the effectiveness of education. This systematic promotion approach can provide reference for other universities and help them carry out their work more scientifically and effectively in the implementation of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education. Through this systematic approach, Zhejiang Normal University has not only achieved significant results in the inheritance of Wu Opera, but also provided valuable experience and reference for the improvement and innovation of the aesthetic education system in universities.

4.4 Demonstration of aesthetic education ecological construction based on the coexistence of school and local cultures

The practice of Wu Opera at Zhejiang Normal University has important demonstrative significance for the integration of local culture and higher education. Local normal universities have unique advantages in promoting the integration of local culture and higher education. By integrating local intangible cultural heritage such as Wu opera into aesthetic education courses, it can promote the inheritance and development of local culture, while also injecting new vitality into higher education. This integration not only helps to protect and inherit local culture, but also enhances the quality of education and cultural connotations in universities.

The Wu Opera activities held by Zhejiang Normal University not only allow students to experience the charm of traditional Chinese opera art, but also inspire their love for local culture. Through this activity, the school has successfully integrated local culture with higher education, creating a good atmosphere for cultural inheritance. This integration not only contributes to the inheritance and development of local culture, but also enhances the quality of education and cultural connotations in universities. The successful experience of Zhejiang Normal University in the inheritance and practice of Wu Opera provides useful reference for similar higher normal universities. By carrying out the "Wu Opera into Campus" activity, the school has not only cultivated students' cultural literacy and innovative spirit, but also made positive contributions to the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage. This successful practical model can provide reference for other normal universities and promote the promotion and implementation of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education nationwide.

The development of intangible cultural heritage art education helps to promote innovation in art education theory and practice. By integrating intangible cultural heritage such as Wu opera into aesthetic education courses, the connotation of aesthetic education theory can be enriched and the path of aesthetic education practice can be expanded. This innovation not only contributes to the theoretical development of aesthetic education, but also provides new ideas and methods for aesthetic practice. At Zhejiang Normal University, through the "Wu Opera into Campus" activity, the school has successfully integrated intangible cultural heritage with aesthetic education, forming a distinctive aesthetic education practice model. This practical model not only enriches the content and form of aesthetic education, but also provides new cases and experiences for the development of aesthetic education theory. Through this innovative practice, the school not only cultivates students' cultural literacy and innovative spirit, but also makes positive contributions to the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage.

5. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of modernizing education and building a strong cultural nation during the 14th Five Year Plan period, intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education has become the core content of humanistic quality education in universities and has received high attention. As a province with abundant intangible cultural heritage resources, Zhejiang's representative opera genre, Wu Opera, has been listed as one of the first pilot projects for the digital transformation of intangible cultural heritage art education. Our research group takes the inheritance practice of Wu Opera at Zhejiang Normal University as a case study, focusing on the innovative path of "intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education" practice in local normal universities. We use literature review, survey, statistical methods, etc. to sort out the school's experience and achievements in curriculum construction, teaching innovation, and other aspects. At the same time, in response to the optimization space of curriculum systematicity and teacher professionalism discovered through research, a practical development framework is constructed to provide guidance for universities to formulate intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education programs, and to assist in cultural inheritance and educational modernization.

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