



Exploration on the Multiple Values and Path Optimization Strategies of National Dance Aesthetic Education in General Education Courses in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract. This paper delves into the aesthetic education values of national dance in general education courses in colleges and universities. In response to the challenges faced by the current teaching situation, it puts forward detailed and systematic optimization paths. In view of the challenges currently faced by national dance teaching, based on in-depth case studies and field investigations, this paper proposes specific optimization measures from multiple dimensions such as course design, teaching methods, teaching staff construction, and resource support, aiming at all-round and multi-level improvements to enhance the teaching effectiveness of national dance in general education courses in colleges and universities and build a more complete and efficient national dance teaching system in colleges and universities to cultivate compound talents in the new era.

Keywords: General education courses; National dance; Aesthetic education values; Optimization paths

1 Introduction

In the ongoing higher education reform for comprehensive development, general education courses are key to boosting students' overall abilities. Integrating ethnic dance into these courses helps inherit cultures and foster students' aesthetics and well-being, meeting society's talent needs. However, issues like surface-level cultural study, old-fashioned teaching, and scarce resources hold back its aesthetic potential. Thus, exploring and enhancing this value is crucial for dance education reform.

2 The Connotation and Cultural Background of Ethnic Dance

In the galaxy of human civilization, ethnic dance shines like a bright pearl. It is not only a visual and auditory feast but also a bond that links the past and the present.

Originating from the rich soil of diverse regional cultures, the steps and rhythms of ethnic dance conceal the footprints of our ancestors, ancient beliefs, and millennia-old customs, and are the external manifestation of the national soul. It can be either passionate or gentle, and its many stories never end, continuously nourishing the souls of future generations and allowing the bloodline of national culture to be passed down and inherited.

2.1 The Cultural Background of Ethnic Dance

The emergence and development of ethnic dance are closely intertwined with the living environment, historical changes, and cultural inheritance of each ethnic group. It is both a vivid expression of national culture and a condensation and reflection of the national spirit. These dance forms stem from the living environment, historical changes, and cultural inheritance of each ethnic group, embodying the external manifestation and internal spirit of national culture [1]. Meanwhile, ethnic dance also carries rich connotations such as the memories, beliefs, and customs of the ethnic group. For example, in Tibetan dance, the Dro dance, with its steady steps and slow rhythm, shows the Tibetan people's awe of nature and their deep inner peace, as if telling the ancient stories on the plateau, which is a eulogy to the snow-capped mountains and grasslands. The Mongolian horse-head fiddle dance is passionate and unrestrained. The dancers, through their vigorous and forceful movements, simulate the posture of galloping horses, vividly expressing the boldness and love for prairie life of the Mongolian people. The Uyghur knife dance is full of strength and passion. The dancers hold knives and their steps are flexible and changeable, reflecting the brave and fearless spirit and unique wisdom of the Uyghur people. These ethnic dances are like living history books, vividly recording the development process and spiritual characteristics of each ethnic group.

2.2 The Classification of Ethnic Dance Forms

Traditional dances often have strict inheritance contexts and standardized movements, which may be related to the ancient legends and religious beliefs of the ethnic group. Ritual dances appear in specific religious ceremonies, coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings, and other important occasions and have strong symbolic meanings. Festival dances are an indispensable and joyous element in ethnic festivals. For example, in the Torch Festival dance of the Yi ethnic group, people sing and dance around the torches to celebrate the harvest and a good life. Folk dances are widely spread in the daily life of the people and are the ways for the common people to amuse themselves and express their emotions. In China, each ethnic group has its iconic dance style. The dragon dance and lion dance of the Han ethnic group are magnificent, symbolizing good luck and reflecting the Han people's longing for a better life. The Axi Dance in the Moonlight of the Yi ethnic group is lively and brisk, with a fast rhythm, showing the youthful vitality of the young men and women of the Yi ethnic group. The peacock dance of the Dai ethnic group, with its graceful posture and flexible hand gestures imitating the form of a peacock, fully displays the Dai people's pursuit of beauty

and their love for nature. These rich and diverse ethnic dance forms together constitute the diverse and splendid dance cultural landscape of the Chinese nation.

2.3 The Special Status of Ethnic Dance in General Education in Colleges and Universities

In general education in colleges and universities, ethnic dance has an irreplaceable special status. First of all, through learning, appreciating, and performing the dances of different ethnic groups, students can gain an in-depth understanding of the spiritual connotations of various ethnic cultures, enhance their understanding and respect for different cultures, and promote the formation of a sense of multicultural identity [2]. Secondly, as a unique art form, ethnic dance can provide students with a learning experience different from other courses, helping them expand their horizons, cultivate their aesthetic taste and innovative ability [3]. Finally, the learning process of ethnic dance is also a process of cultural inheritance. Through learning and inheriting ethnic dance, students can better understand and inherit the cultural traditions of their own ethnic group, enhance their cultural confidence and national pride. This is of great significance for cultivating students' patriotic feelings and national spirit [4].

3 The Aesthetic Education Value of Ethnic Dance in General Courses in Colleges and Universities

The aesthetic education value of ethnic dance in general courses in colleges and universities is manifested in multiple aspects, including cultural inheritance, multicultural identity, aesthetic appreciation, physical health, and teamwork. The following is a detailed discussion on the aesthetic education value of ethnic dance in general courses in colleges and universities.

3.1 Cultural Inheritance and Multicultural Identity

Ethnic dance serves as an important bond for cultural inheritance. In general courses in colleges and universities, students can gain an in-depth understanding of the rich cultural characteristics, long historical backgrounds, and profound values of various ethnic groups through learning and performing ethnic dances. This in-depth understanding can not only strengthen students' sense of identity with their own ethnic culture but also promote their understanding and respect for other ethnic cultures. Through learning ethnic dance, one can perceive the commonalities and subtle differences among different cultures. Meanwhile, such cross-cultural comparison and communication are helpful in eliminating cultural biases, increasing cultural identity, and promoting social harmony. Especially in general courses in colleges and universities, the role of ethnic dance is even more significant because it provides audiovisual experiences different from those of other disciplines [4].

3.2 Aesthetic Appreciation and Cultivation of Aesthetic Literacy

Ethnic dance offers a vast aesthetic world for college students. From music to movements, from costumes to stage presentations, every element contains unique aesthetic values. Music, as the soul of dance, has its own characteristics in different ethnic dances. For example, the music of Xinjiang ethnic dances has a lively rhythm, a beautiful melody, and is rich in ethnic flavor. Its unique scales and rhythm patterns add a strong artistic appeal to the dances. Dance movements are even more diverse. For instance, the delicate hand gestures and soft body postures in the peacock dance of the Dai ethnic group demonstrate an elegant beauty, while the bold horse-stepping and shoulder-shaking movements in Mongolian dances reflect a masculine beauty. In terms of costumes, the dance costumes of the Miao ethnic group are colorful, with exquisite patterns and gorgeous silver ornaments, which complement the dance movements and bring a visual feast to the audience. Through learning and appreciating ethnic dances, students' artistic appreciation abilities are exercised and their aesthetic horizons are continuously broadened. Participating in dance creation and performance further deepens the aesthetic experience and cultivates students' expressive abilities, teamwork spirit, and self-confidence. In this process, students are not just learning dances but also receiving a comprehensive aesthetic education. This experiential learning plays an irreplaceable role in improving aesthetic literacy [3].

3.3 Physical Health and Teamwork

Ethnic dance has a positive impact on the physical health and teamwork ability cultivation of college students. Dance requires the body to have good coordination, flexibility, and strength. During the process of practicing ethnic dances, students need to constantly stretch, twist, and jump, which is a very beneficial form of physical exercise for students who are in a static learning state for a long time. For example, the bending and stretching movements in Tibetan dances can exercise the strength of leg muscles and the flexibility of joints; the movements such as bending backward and spinning in Korean ethnic dances have a good training effect on the waist and the body's balance ability. Meanwhile, dance performance is often a process of teamwork. Whether it is a large ethnic dance drama or a small dance program, close cooperation among dancers is required. During the rehearsal process, students need to communicate with each other, coordinate movements and rhythms, which helps to cultivate their communication abilities and cooperation awareness. For example, when rehearsing a group dance, students should adjust their positions and movements according to the rhythm of the music and the choreography of the dance to ensure the uniformity of the whole team. This experience of teamwork can enhance students' self-confidence and enable them to learn how to give play to their own advantages in a collective. These abilities are of great significance for students in academic research and their future career paths [5].

4 The Current Situation and Challenges of Ethnic Dance Teaching in General Courses in Colleges and Universities

With the in-depth promotion of general education in colleges and universities, ethnic dance, as an important part of aesthetic education, has gradually revealed its current teaching situation and challenges. At present, some colleges and universities have problems such as the traditionalization of teaching contents and methods, the limitations of teaching staff and resources, and the singularity of the evaluation system in ethnic dance teaching.

4.1 The Traditionalization of Teaching Contents and Methods

In the current ethnic dance teaching in colleges and universities, there is a problem that the teaching contents and methods are overly traditional in some cases. The teaching contents focus on dance skill training and one-way instillation of traditional knowledge, lacking a close connection with modern life and the development of the times. This traditional teaching method often ignores the subjectivity and creativity of students. Meanwhile, the teaching methods are relatively monotonous, lacking diversity and interactivity, and it is difficult to stimulate students' learning interests and enthusiasm. To improve this situation, colleges and universities should pay attention to the renewal and expansion of teaching contents, introduce modern educational means, and enrich teaching methods to make ethnic dance teaching more vivid, interesting, and full of a sense of the times [6].

4.2 The Limitations of Teaching Staff and Resources

The insufficiency of professional dance teaching staff is one of the important challenges faced by ethnic dance teaching in colleges and universities at present. Many colleges and universities lack dance teachers with a cross-cultural vision and modern educational concepts, resulting in difficulties in improving teaching quality. Meanwhile, the limited resources such as teaching facilities, dance costumes, and props also affect the teaching effect and students' learning experience. To solve this problem, colleges and universities should strengthen the construction of the teaching staff, improve teachers' professional qualities and teaching abilities, and at the same time increase investment to improve teaching facilities and resource conditions and provide students with a better learning environment and conditions [4].

4.3 The Singularity of the Evaluation System

The existing evaluation system often focuses on skill assessment and ignores the evaluation of students' innovation, emotional expression, and cultural understanding. This single evaluation system is difficult to comprehensively reflect students' growth and progress in aesthetic education. To improve this problem, colleges and universi-

ties should establish a diversified evaluation system and pay attention to the evaluation of students' comprehensive qualities and abilities. Specifically, multiple evaluation methods such as student self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation can be introduced. Meanwhile, attention should be paid to the assessment and evaluation of students' innovation ability, emotional expression, and cultural understanding to comprehensively reflect students' growth and progress in ethnic dance learning [7].

5 Optimization Paths of Ethnic Dance in General Courses in Colleges and Universities

To fully exert the aesthetic education value of ethnic dance in general courses in colleges and universities, the optimization of teaching paths is of crucial importance. The following are the optimization paths in aspects such as course design, teaching methods, teaching staff construction, and resource support.

5.1 Course Design and Content Setting

Course design is the key to ensuring that ethnic dance plays its role in general courses in colleges and universities. During the design process, it should be ensured that the course content has both theoretical depth and provides practical opportunities.

5.1.1 Integration of Theory and Practice.

Course design should organically integrate theory and practice. In terms of theoretical teaching, besides covering the basic technical knowledge of ethnic dance, such as dance movements and rhythms, in-depth explanations of the historical origins, cultural backgrounds, and style evolutions of ethnic dance should also be provided. For example, when teaching the Yangko of the Han ethnic group, not only should students be taught the steps and movements of the Yangko, but also the origin and development of the Yangko and its relationship with the farming culture and folk festivals of the Han ethnic group should be introduced. Practical teaching should provide students with abundant opportunities to participate in dance creation and performance. Students can be organized into groups to create small dance works, allowing them to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned to practice. Through this way, students can experience the charm of ethnic dance from multiple dimensions and deeply understand the internal connection between dance and culture [2].

5.1.2 Case Analysis and Discussion.

Case analysis and discussion are important links in course design. By selecting typical ethnic dance works or ethnic dance dramas for analysis, students can gain an in-depth understanding of the dance movements, music, and cultural backgrounds. Case analysis should cover dance forms of different ethnic groups and explore their unique features. During the discussion process, teachers can guide students to think about the connections between dance and culture, history, and society, thereby deep-

ening students' understanding of ethnic dance. This method can not only cultivate students' artistic appreciation abilities but also stimulate their interests and participation enthusiasm. Importantly, their understanding of cultural diversity, aesthetic abilities, innovative thinking, and teamwork spirit will all be significantly enhanced, reflecting the great potential of ethnic dance courses in aesthetic education [3].

5.1.3 Practical and Performance Opportunities.

Practical and performance opportunities are important ways to improve students' dance skills. In course design, practical and performance opportunities should be provided for students to enhance their practical operation abilities. In the process of participating in dance creation and performance, students can cultivate teamwork spirit and obtain stage performance experience. Practical opportunities can include participating in school art performances, dance competitions, or community activities. Through these practical activities, students can obtain real performance experience, enhance their self-confidence, and establish connections with others [1].

5.1.4 Cross-cultural Exchange and Integration.

Cross-cultural exchange is an important part of course design. By introducing dance forms from different cultures and regions, students can expand their global vision. Schools can organize cross-cultural dance exchange activities and invite dance experts from different cultural backgrounds to give lectures and conduct workshops. Meanwhile, students from the school can also be selected to participate in international dance exchange activities to learn the dance features of other countries and ethnic groups. Through this cross-cultural exchange, students can expand their global vision, enhance their understanding and recognition of multiculturalism, and promote the integration and development of ethnic dance in the context of globalization. This cross-cultural exchange can enhance students' understanding and recognition of multiculturalism [2].

5.2 Innovation in Teaching Methods and Means

The innovation of teaching methods is of vital importance to ensure the attractiveness and effectiveness of ethnic dance courses. Traditional teaching methods often focus on theoretical knowledge, while modern teaching emphasizes practice and participation more. Innovative teaching methods should make full use of modern technology to enhance the interactivity of courses.

5.2.1 Group Cooperation and Interactive Learning.

By forming study groups, students can jointly complete dance creation and rehearsal, cultivate the spirit of teamwork, and at the same time stimulate their creativity and enhance their communication skills. In general courses in colleges and universities, this kind of interactive learning can effectively promote exchanges among stu-

dents and also cultivate students' leadership and organizational abilities, as they need to assign tasks and coordinate cooperation within the group [7].

5.2.2 Encouraging Students to Participate in Dance Creation.

By encouraging students to participate in dance creation, they can be helped to transform from passive learners into active participants. Courses should provide opportunities for dance creation and allow students to try choreographing and designing dances. Through this practice, students can develop their own artistic expression abilities and unique styles. Creative practice can include students independently designing dance movements, selecting appropriate music, and carrying out the choreography and performance of dances. Through participating in dance creation, students can exercise their creativity and expression abilities, which also helps to improve their self-confidence. In addition, creative practice can cultivate students' teamwork spirit, as they need to work with other classmates to jointly complete dance works.

5.2.3 Application of Modern Technological Means.

The application of modern technology in teaching has greatly enriched the course content and enhanced students' learning experience. For example, by using virtual reality (VR) technology, students can experience virtual stage scenes and observe and simulate various dance movements. Through virtual reality technology, students can practice dances in a simulated environment and obtain a more multi-dimensional dance experience. Video teaching resources are also an important teaching tool. Teachers can use video resources to display the performances of different ethnic dances, allowing students to visually perceive the styles and techniques of dances, increasing the sense of immersion and interactivity in learning; it can also increase students' interest in ethnic dance and attract them to participate in courses more. Meanwhile, the school's online teaching platform can also be utilized. Before class, dance video materials can be provided for preview. In class, key discussions and practices can be carried out to improve learning efficiency and participation. After class, students can conduct independent review [7].

5.2.4 Cooperation with Professional Dance Troupes.

Cooperation with professional dance troupes brings new vitality to the courses. Schools can invite professional dance troupes to perform and teach at school, providing students with high-level dance display and learning opportunities. Through cooperation with professional dance troupes, students can obtain direct guidance and learn about the latest trends in the dance industry. Meanwhile, cooperation with professional dance troupes can also provide practical opportunities for students. By participating in the performance activities of professional dance troupes, students can obtain real dance experience. In addition, the performances of professional dance troupes can stimulate students' interest and further promote their interest in learning ethnic dance.

5.3 Construction of Teaching Staff and Resource Support

The construction of teaching staff and resource support are the foundations for ensuring the successful implementation of ethnic dance courses. Schools should provide sufficient support to ensure the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

5.3.1 Construction of Teaching Staff.

Schools should employ teachers with rich dance experience and teaching abilities. Teachers should not only master the techniques of ethnic dance but also possess teaching skills to effectively impart knowledge. In addition, schools should provide continuous training and further education opportunities for teachers to maintain their professionalism and teaching abilities. Through regular teacher training and exchange activities, teachers can keep track of the latest developments in the dance industry and obtain advanced teaching resources. Meanwhile, the construction of the teaching staff also includes encouraging teachers to conduct interdisciplinary research. Ethnic dance is closely related to other disciplines, and through interdisciplinary research, teachers can improve their teaching levels and further promote the development of ethnic dance courses. Through these continuous education and development programs, schools can ensure the high quality and stability of the teaching staff [6].

5.3.2 Support for Teaching Resources.

Teaching resources are one of the key elements for ensuring the successful implementation of ethnic dance courses. Schools should provide venues suitable for dance teaching, such as spacious dance studios equipped with mirrors, as well as high-quality audio and lighting equipment. These facilities ensure the smooth progress of teaching activities and also provide a good environment for students' dance creation and rehearsal. Schools should also equip dance courses with necessary costumes and props. Dance costumes can help students better experience the characteristics of different ethnic dances, while props can enhance the expressiveness of dances. Sufficient support for teaching resources can improve students' learning experience and stimulate their interest in ethnic dance [4].

5.3.3 Financial and Cooperative Support.

Schools should provide sufficient financial support for ethnic dance courses to ensure their normal operation. The financial budget should cover aspects such as teachers' salaries, procurement of teaching resources, and organization of dance activities. For example, it should provide financial guarantees for purchasing new dance costumes and props, updating audio and lighting equipment, and inviting professional dance troupes. In addition, schools should actively expand cooperation channels and establish cooperative relationships with professional dance troupes, dance academies, cultural institutions, etc. By cooperating with professional dance troupes, practical opportunities and professional guidance can be provided for students; by cooperating with dance academies, teaching resources and teaching staff can be shared; by cooperating with cultural institutions, dance culture research and promotion activities can

be carried out, creating a broader space for the development of ethnic dance in general courses of comprehensive universities [4].

6 Conclusion

In the current pattern of diversified development of higher education, the aesthetic education value of ethnic dance in general courses in colleges and universities is multi-dimensional and far-reaching. It serves as a bridge for cultural inheritance and multicultural identity, a key to opening the door to aesthetic appreciation, and a carrier for shaping students' physical and mental health as well as teamwork spirit. In order to fully demonstrate its aesthetic education value, colleges and universities need to make all-round efforts, including carefully designing courses, innovating teaching methods, strengthening the construction of teaching staff, and providing sufficient resource support. In an era where cultural diversity is becoming increasingly prominent, the value of ethnic dance courses is even more significant. Colleges and universities should take active actions, formulate forward-looking course plans, organize diverse activities, build evaluation and feedback mechanisms, cooperate among various departments, conduct regular evaluations of courses, and continuously enhance the role of ethnic dance courses, making them an important part of college education and contributing to the cultivation of talents in the new era.

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