



Exploring the Integration of Traditional Decorative Patterns in Secondary School Art Education

Jingming Hong* and Xin Yu

Major in Fine Arts, Shenyang Aerospace University, Liaoning, 110136, China
*13770106020@163.com

Abstract. The fundamental purpose of middle school art education is not to cultivate all students into professional artists, but to provide systematic aesthetic education that enhances their ability to perceive, appreciate, and critically evaluate beauty. In the current context of multicultural integration, some students' aesthetic concepts have deviated to a certain extent, which highlights the urgency of educational guidance. Traditional decorative patterns, as an important part of China's cultural heritage, embody both profound historical depth and distinctive artistic value. Introducing these patterns into middle school art classrooms offers an effective way to stimulate students' interest in traditional culture and artistic practice. This approach not only nurtures curiosity and creativity, but also reinforces cultural identity while fostering confidence and pride. More importantly, experiencing tradition within a contemporary educational setting encourages students to consciously inherit and promote cultural values, thereby achieving a balance between cultural continuity and individual growth. By combining aesthetic training with cultural education, this pedagogical practice contributes to the enhancement of students' aesthetic competence and simultaneously promotes the preservation and innovation of cultural traditions. Ultimately, the integration of traditional patterns demonstrates the broader value of art education in shaping a new generation of students who are aesthetically literate, culturally confident, and socially responsible.

Keywords: traditional patterns, middle school art, Cultural Identity, art education.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Traditional Chinese patterns boast a time-honored history spanning 7,000 years since their inception. From the simple patterns of primitive society to the concise and bold bronze decorations of the slave society, and further to the exquisite and intricate patterns of flowers, birds, insects, fish, flying birds, beasts, and auspicious motifs in the feudal society, each embodies the unique artistic aesthetics of its corresponding era ^[1]. Traditional Chinese patterns possess independent design concepts and styles. Modern artists should embody the unique national style in their creations, understand the cul-

ture of the time, study the characteristics of traditional Chinese patterns, analyze their cultural connotations, and provide theoretical support for the teaching of traditional patterns in modern art education.

General Secretary Xi Jinping stated at the Symposium on Literature and Art Work held during the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that Chinese aesthetics emphasizes expressing aspirations through depicting objects and stresses the unity of knowledge, emotion, will, and practice^[2]. We must adhere to the stance of Chinese culture, inherit the genes of Chinese culture, and showcase the aesthetic style of China. We should "use the rules of the ancients to create a new prospect of our own" to achieve the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese culture. Therefore, it is crucial to expose students to traditional culture and cultivate their innovative capabilities during their middle school years.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although China has begun to attach great importance to art education, and the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly stated that we should fully implement the Party's educational policy, fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, promote quality-oriented education, advance educational equity, and cultivate socialist builders and successors who are well-rounded in moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic development^[3], middle school art classrooms in most regions are still plagued by problems. Students fail to derive enjoyment from art classes or acquire substantial knowledge through them, and they often cannot name a single traditional Chinese cultural element when asked.

While popular culture prevails, certain irresponsible media outlets have continuously engaged in the spoofing of traditional Chinese cultural content. Many students have become immersed in popular culture, which has given rise to vulgar cultural phenomena such as blind admiration for Japanese and Korean pop cultures and other undesirable practices. Middle school students are in a critical stage of self-awareness formation and development. In essence, the behavior of being obsessed with Japanese and Korean pop cultures is a form of reckless celebrity worship and irrational conduct. Indulging in such activities, middle school students are prone to neglecting their own identities and thus losing their sense of self.

1.3 Significance

With the economic development and the deepening of opening-up to the outside world, social culture has become increasingly diversified. Cultural diversity has gradually invigorated people's thinking, but it has inevitably brought about certain negative factors. In the ideological perception of students, it has exerted an impact on China's fine traditional culture and mainstream aesthetic tendencies, thereby complicating the student situation confronted by educators. The weakening of traditional culture education has further led to deviations in the aesthetic orientations of middle school students.

Japanese and Korean idol dramas enjoy great popularity among middle school students in China. Most of these dramas center on youth romance stories and feature good-looking protagonists. Owing to middle school students' lack of rational judgment on novel things, they are prone to blindly imitate the clothing styles, words and deeds of the characters in the dramas. Although such behaviors are regarded as the pursuit of fashion, they run counter to the behavioral norms for middle school students and on campus, which in turn triggers psychological pressure on students. In addition, some students neglect their academic studies under such influences, develop bad habits, and in extreme cases, even stray into the path of illegal and criminal activities.

1.4 Objectives

In 2011, the Ministry of Education had already provided clarifications and requirements in the preface of the *Art Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* it issued, stating that art curricula should adhere to the guidance of socialist core values and promote the dissemination of fine culture. It is evident that art teaching shoulders an important mission of inheritance, which is to ensure the promotion of traditional culture^[4]. Chinese traditional patterns embody unique design concepts and aesthetic styles. To reflect national characteristics in contemporary artistic creation, it is necessary to deeply understand the historical and cultural contexts in which these patterns were generated, systematically sort out their visual characteristics, and interpret their inherent cultural connotations, thereby providing theoretical support for the teaching of traditional patterns in modern art education. The practical exploration of introducing traditional patterns into middle school art classrooms not only helps stimulate students' learning motivation, cultivate their creative thinking and aesthetic ability, but also subtly promotes cultural inheritance and drives the innovative development of art education in China. Meanwhile, middle school students are in a critical stage of shaping their worldview, outlook on life, and values. The integration of rich and diverse elements of traditional Chinese culture into art classrooms constitutes a crucial initiative aligned with China's drive to cultivate high-caliber, well-rounded talents and build a culturally strong nation^[5].

2 Educational Value of Traditional Decorative Patterns in Art Education

Albert Einstein once stated, "Interest is the best teacher." In the previous art teaching of traditional patterns, teachers always emphasized the ability to create lifelike representations for students. Most teachers opted for having students copy established works in their teaching practice. However, this approach posed certain difficulties for students with weak foundations in art. Such students could barely gain a sense of accomplishment during the learning process, and naturally, their interest in learning could not be stimulated^[6]. In the teaching of traditional patterns, teachers can leverage the characteristics of diversified teaching to encourage students and guide them to develop new learning interests through ideological guidance. The teaching of traditional patterns in

middle school art courses should highlight the unique charm of these patterns and integrate relevant textbook content. It is advisable to flexibly adopt teaching methods such as comparative appreciation, style imitation and bold innovation, and guide students to create products like wall hangings, brooches or earrings based on traditional patterns. This practice can stimulate students' learning interest and enhance their participation and enthusiasm in the study of traditional patterns.

Ernst Gombrich stated in *The Story of Art* that "There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists."^[7]This remark indicates that art is a process of breaking boundaries within existing traditions. Therefore, art education should strike a balance between imparting traditional techniques and fostering creative thinking, enabling students to understand the context of art history. Integrating traditional patterns into middle school art classrooms can cultivate students' aesthetic and creative abilities. When teachers introduce traditional patterns into teaching and connect them with daily life, they help students learn about traditional patterns from different periods and appreciate the profound and extensive nature of China's traditional patterns. Under the guidance of teachers, students can apply the forms of traditional patterns to daily life and artistic creation, which promotes the development of their aesthetic taste and creativity. Take cloud patterns, which have existed since ancient times (see Fig. 1), as an example. Having evolved over thousands of years, they are now applied in numerous fields such as daily necessities, furniture, and clothing (see Fig. 2). Introducing knowledge about cloud patterns into art education can not only popularize relevant information about traditional cloud patterns among students, but also improve their artistic taste through learning and comparing different types of cloud patterns, thereby guiding them to create artworks using cloud patterns of varied designs.



Fig. 1. cloud patterns.



Fig. 2. The application of cloud patterns in various fields.

Integrating the content of traditional patterns into middle school art classes is not only an inheritance of traditional art, but also a promotion of art education. Given that middle school students are in adolescence, they have a strong curiosity about new things^[8]. Confronted with tedious textbook content and rigid teaching methods, they will inevitably feel bored and lack interest in learning. If teachers transform textbook content into tangible forms—for example, by guiding students to appreciate porcelains and costumes decorated with traditional patterns—it will help capture students' attention. It can also encourage students to understand the connotations of these patterns and try drawing them by hand. In this way, students can fully perceive the unique charm of China's traditional patterns, understand that art derives from life yet transcends it, and enhance their aesthetic ability in the process.

The Report to the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly pointed out that we must firmly grasp the orientation of the development of advanced culture and persist in carrying forward and cultivating the national spirit. The prevalence of the phenomenon of being obsessed with Korean and Japanese pop culture is an important manifestation of the negative impact of foreign negative culture on teenagers in China, and it is also not conducive to carrying forward and cultivating the national spirit. Middle school students are equipped with independent thinking and are capable of making independent judgments. Integrating traditional patterns into middle school classrooms can enable students to discover the unique charm of Chinese traditional patterns in class. Through constant exposure and subtle influence, students can foster a sense of cultural pride, thereby independently enhancing their awareness of cultural inheritance.

3 Integrating Traditional Patterns into Secondary Art Classrooms: Feasibility and Challenges

3.1 Feasibility

Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, President of the People's Republic of China, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, emphasized at the National Education Conference that we must adhere to the path of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and cultivate builders and successors of socialism who are fully developed morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and laboriously [9]. Integrating traditional patterns into middle school art classes serves as a concrete practice to promote the inheritance and development of national culture and an active response to the initiative of incorporating traditional culture into campus education.

From the perspective of current educational orientation, the state attaches great importance to the promotion and development of traditional culture. Introducing traditional pattern teaching into middle school art courses can not only help students acquire relevant historical and cultural knowledge, but also effectively stimulate their learning interest by transforming such knowledge into daily life works like wall hangings. This process helps to enhance students' hands-on ability and creative thinking, strengthen their sense of identity, confidence, and pride in fine traditional Chinese culture, thereby enabling them to consciously establish a sense of cultural inheritance and improve their aesthetic literacy. Therefore, the development of this research topic possesses sufficient practical feasibility and educational value.

3.2 Challenges

With the development of economy and culture, a multitude of foreign cultures have entered China and gained extensive popularity among young people. Western modern culture exerts a notable appeal to the youth, which has weakened the competitiveness of traditional culture to a certain extent. Against this backdrop, students generally have limited knowledge of traditional patterns, lack interest in them, and possess inadequate relevant knowledge reserves. To stimulate students' learning motivation, teachers can pre-produce traditional pattern wall hangings as teaching aids for display, guide students to independently collect relevant data and production materials, and encourage them to select their favorite patterns for creation. At present, the patterns known to students are mostly confined to common types such as cloud patterns, fire patterns, and water patterns, which results in a narrow scope of data collection and also poses certain difficulties for the implementation of teaching.

During the relevant teaching practice, the author of this paper also launched pattern-themed courses. It was found in the teaching process that students often regard art classes as similar to other subjects, perceiving that their teaching mode mainly consists of teachers' explanation and demonstration followed by students' copying and imitation. Most courses only utilize simple tools like paper and pencils, with relatively insufficient resources for handcraft-oriented teaching. In students' perception, painting

is often regarded as a formulaic activity that does not require extensive divergent thinking or independent design, but merely replication according to given models. In the teaching of traditional patterns, if teachers overemphasize the appreciation and analysis session, students are prone to feel bored and lose interest, thereby reducing their investment in innovation and affecting teaching effectiveness. Current teaching methods still follow the conventional model, failing to fully adapt to the requirements of educational reform and the development of the times. This not only restricts the improvement of students' innovative abilities, but also leads to a homogenization trend in their creative styles.

4 Pedagogical Practices of Traditional Patterns in Secondary Art Education

4.1 Teaching Analysis

The teaching of traditional patterns falls under the curriculum category of "**Design and Application**". In this domain, "**Design**" emphasizes connection with students' daily lives. This course is primarily designed to guide students to explore and comprehend the profound connotations of Chinese traditional patterns, as well as to recognize these patterns and their unique aesthetic appeal. It encourages students to adopt the form of wool knitting to craft traditional patterns into life-related works such as wall hangings, brooches and earrings. In doing so, it stimulates students' interest in traditional patterns, cultivates their creativity and hands-on skills, enhances their aesthetic appreciation and practical capabilities, and simultaneously inspires their love for traditional culture. Learning traditional patterns is not merely for the sake of inheriting traditions; its ultimate goal is to be applied to daily life. Therefore, on the basis of students' basic understanding of patterns, this course guides them to design cultural and creative products using traditional patterns, allowing them to experience the joy of creative living. Studies have shown that the integration of diverse teaching methods such as multimedia instruction, group collaboration and hands-on practice, coupled with the adoption of diversified assessment approaches, can significantly enhance students' understanding of and literacy in traditional culture. Moreover, the incorporation of pattern art into middle school art teaching is able to stimulate students' creativity and aesthetic taste, strengthen their cultural confidence, and thus provide an effective educational pathway for cultivating well-rounded talents equipped with international perspectives and a strong sense of national identity^[10].

4.2 Lesson Plan Design

Teaching Objectives.

Knowledge and Skills: Learn about traditional patterns, perceive their traditional charm, and adopt knitting techniques to craft these patterns into daily necessities.

Process and Methods: Study the organizational forms of patterns, grasp their characteristics, and apply the acquired knowledge to improve the quality of life.

Affective Objectives, Attitudes and Values: Cultivate students' affection for traditional art, and enhance their aesthetic appreciation and hands-on abilities.

Key Teaching Points. Through appreciation and explanation, students will understand the expressive forms of Chinese traditional patterns, and be able to create works based on the learned knitting techniques and apply these patterns to produce items related to daily life.

Key Teaching Difficulties. Enabling students to master several types of patterns and conduct creative practice with them.

Teaching Procedures. The class starts with a teacher's question: "If you were to choose a pattern for this wool wall hanging, what would you pick?" By displaying physical teaching aids, students' interest in decorative patterns is stimulated. Next, a video about traditional patterns is played to further expand students' visual cognition and thinking horizon, thus naturally introducing the theme of traditional patterns.

In the teacher's explanation section, the instructor first outlines the long history of Chinese patterns embedded in material cultures such as jade wares, lacquerware, and costumes. Typical patterns including cloud-and-thunder patterns, auspicious cloud patterns, ring band patterns, phoenix patterns, ruyi patterns, meandering stream patterns, and cloud head patterns are listed, with their origin periods, carriers, and formal characteristics explained respectively. During the explanation, illustrations are used to briefly elaborate on their evolution and cultural connotations. Other patterns are presented in the form of a line drawing collection for students' reference. The adoption of diverse pedagogical approaches, such as various appreciation courses, guided creative instruction, and situational experience activities, can effectively stimulate and cultivate students' capacities for open-minded thinking and creative thinking^[11].

On this basis, the teacher summarizes the close connection between traditional patterns and historical development, social life, as well as spiritual beliefs, and emphasizes their function as cultural symbols and their connotations of national emotions. Then students are guided to draw on their life experience, think about and give examples of pattern applications in daily items. Finally, by comparing the differences between hand-drawn "free patterns" and "adapted patterns", students are organized to observe and analyze, so as to understand the organizational forms and design logic of patterns.

Class Assignment. Create traditional pattern drawings, which will be made into wool wall hangings or ornaments in the next class.

Teacher-Student Mutual Evaluation. A combination of peer evaluation and teacher's final comments.

Class Summary. Summarize the learning content and emphasize the connection between patterns and daily life.

4.3 Summary of Teaching Reflections

This teaching design boasts the following advantages: the overall process is coherent and clear, the teaching language is explicit, the logical structure is rational, and it can effectively mobilize students' enthusiasm for participation. The lesson introduction session integrates teaching aids with multimedia resources, which successfully stimu-

lates students' interest in learning traditional patterns. The teaching content highlights key points, and the teaching methods demonstrate a certain degree of diversity.

Nevertheless, there are several aspects that could be improved: the depth of the explanation on the evolution of patterns needs to be enhanced; the design of student interaction and discussion sessions is relatively weak; teachers' verbal feedback in class can be more encouraging; in addition, it is recommended to increase the display of physical teaching resources (such as daily-life cases including costumes and curtains) to strengthen students' intuitive perception and cultural connection.

5 Conclusion

The integration of traditional culture education into middle school art teaching under the framework of core competencies bears profound practical significance. Strategies such as updating educational concepts, enhancing teachers' professional competence, developing teaching resources, reforming pedagogical approaches, and organizing extracurricular activities will help improve students' core competencies as well as inherit and promote the fine traditional culture^[12]. The ultimate objective of art education in middle schools is not to groom all students into professional artists, but rather to deliver aesthetic education to the entire student body, thereby enhancing their capacity to perceive, appreciate, and discern beauty. Amid the pervasive influences of cultural diversity, a notable deviation has emerged in students' aesthetic orientations. Against this backdrop, the fundamental purpose of developing this course lies in stimulating students' interest in traditional Chinese culture and art through the teaching of traditional patterns, fostering their cultural confidence and identity, and ultimately encouraging them to voluntarily inherit and promote traditional Chinese culture.

The integration of traditional patterns into middle school art curricula constitutes not merely an inheritance of traditional culture, but also a holistic approach to elevating students' aesthetic judgment, creative potential, and cultural identity. For future pedagogical practices, it is imperative to further optimize teaching methodologies, enrich instructional resources, strengthen students' hands-on experiential learning, and advance the in-depth application and sustainable development of traditional patterns in middle school art education.

References

1. Xia, X. (2014). A study on the application of traditional Chinese decorative patterns in character image design. *Modern Decoration (Theory)*, (5), 99–100.
2. Zhang, J. (2025, September 24). The unique implication of Chinese aesthetic spirit. *People's Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.rmlt.com.cn/2025/09/24/740115.shtml>
3. Guo, J., & Lü, W. (2023, March 21). Consistently implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. *Qinghai Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www.qhrb.com.cn>
4. He, M. (2017). A teaching research on traditional floral pattern design in junior high school art curriculum (Master's thesis, Hunan University of Science and Technology).

5. Liang, Y. (2025). Modern transformation of traditional cultural elements in secondary school art education. *Middle School Curriculum Coaching*, (33), 120–122.
6. Roldan D. Atienza & MA.(2020).Improve the Creativity and Critical thinking Ability of Middle School Students.*Journal of Research in Vocational Education*,2(3).
7. Gombrich, E. H., & Gombrich, E. H. (1995). *The story of art* (Vol. 12, pp. 155-159). London: Phaidon.
8. Bowler, L. (2010). The self-regulation of curiosity and interest during the information search process of adolescent students. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 61(7), 1332-1344.
9. Xi, J. (2023, August 31). Cultivating socialist builders and successors with all-round development in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education. Xinhua Net. Retrieved from <https://www.news.cn/20240831/f91e45ea2bf34fe6ab2b2c9400876694/c.html>
10. Tang, Y., Zhang, W., Luo, Q., Li, S., & Li, N. (2025). A study on the integration strategy of Yi ethnic patterns art and secondary school art teaching. *China National Exhibition*, (20), 4–6.
11. Chen, Q. (2025). On the significance of art education methods and thinking ability in secondary schools. In *Proceedings of the 11th Academic Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences* (Vol. 2) (pp. 15–17). Huai'an Yidishan Middle School.
12. Wang, Z. (2025). Research on the integration of traditional culture education into secondary school art education under the core literacy framework. *Public Art and Literature*, (05), 96–98. <https://doi.org/10.20112/j.cnki.ISSN1007-5828.2025.05.031>.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

