
The Current Situation and Problems of Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Kindergarten Curriculum in Jiangxi Province

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to: 1) explore the status of the integration of intangible cultural heritage and kindergarten curriculum; 2) analyze the problems in the integration process. The study adopts qualitative methods, including literature review and field data collection, based on interviews with 31 participants and questionnaire information from 182 kindergarten teachers, and presents the results in a descriptive and analytical way. The study found that from the perspective of teachers, most teachers have a positive attitude towards intangible cultural heritage, but their cognition is insufficient, especially their limited understanding of local intangible cultural heritage resources, which affects the integration of intangible cultural heritage in the curriculum. From the perspective of curriculum, the status of the integration of intangible cultural heritage and kindergarten curriculum is not ideal, the frequency of curriculum development is low, the content selection is single, and the artistic intangible cultural heritage projects are given priority, resulting in an imbalance in the curriculum field and insufficient development of other intangible cultural heritage resources. These problems limit the deep integration and effective inheritance of intangible cultural heritage in kindergarten education. This study summarizes the status and problems of integration and provides experience for its further development.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Kindergarten Curriculum, Integration, Current Situation and Problems

1. Introduction

As a key link in the inheritance of national and ethnic culture, intangible cultural heritage carries rich folk-customs, wisdom and beliefs. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China clearly emphasizes the protection of intangible cultural heritage, and the National 14th Five-Year Plan such as cultural industry began to shift; a strategic

development framework was established for China cultural industry, an alliance between the cultural industry and the high-level technology. Along with the Outline of the Long-Term Goals for 2035, it also highlights the importance of cultural heritage protection. The formulation and implementation of these policies fully reflect the country's high recognition of the importance of intangible cultural heritage. Research by many scholars has pointed out that the protection of intangible cultural heritage should not only remain verbal, but should be effectively integrated into educational practice, especially in the early childhood education stage. By combining education with entertainment, allowing children to have contact with, and understand these cultural treasures from an early age will help cultivate their sense of identity and respect for traditional culture. Therefore, one needs to take systematic and scientific measures with proper respect to comprehensively protect and inherit historical and cultural heritage so as to ensure that it can continue in modern society and benefit future generations.

Under the guidance of national policies, the continuous efforts of intangible cultural heritage inheritors and the attention of more young people have promoted the rise of "national tide fever" in Chinese society. Intangible cultural heritage elements such as Hanfu, traditional festivals, and dramas have gradually entered the public eye. Through careful planning and organization, a series of hot topics have been formed, effectively guiding the public's in-depth attention to intangible cultural heritage. These topics not only highlight the unique charm of intangible cultural heritage but also make people deeply aware of the urgency and importance of intangible cultural heritage inheritance.

As an important part of China's basic education system, kindergarten education shoulders the important task of cultivating children's lifelong development and all-round development. In recent years, the country has continuously increased its attention to the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage by kindergartens, which has far-reaching significance for cultivating children's cultural identity, aesthetic ability and innovative spirit.

2. Research Objectives

The present study aims:

1. To investigate the current state of integrating intangible cultural heritage into kindergarten curricula in Jiangxi Province.
2. To identify and analyze the challenges encountered during the integration of intangible cultural heritage into kindergarten curricula in Jiangxi Province.

3. Research Method

The research steps of this study are as follows:

1. Collecting relevant literature on the integration of intangible cultural heritage into kindergarten curriculum. The researcher collected data from relevant documents and research reports.
2. Using a qualitative research method.
3. Obtaining valid information from the respondents. Through field research, data and information are collected through surveys, observations and interviews.
4. Exploring the research field, including kindergartens, education departments, and intangible cultural heritage museums. Teachers from four kindergartens in Shangrao City, Jiangxi Province are the subjects of this current situation survey.
5. Using cultural analysis curriculum theory, "cultural awareness" theory, and Taylor's principle to interpret all collected material information to guide the research and analyze the results.
6. Summarizing the research results, presenting the research data in a descriptive and analytical way, and preparing to publish articles in international journals.

4. Results

From the research results it can be presented as follows.

4.1. *The Current Situation of Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Kindergarten Curriculum in Jiangxi Province*

4.1.1. *The Status of Kindergarten Teachers' Cognition of Intangible Cultural Heritage*

Firstly, preschool teachers have a low overall level of awareness of intangible cultural heritage. The survey results show that although some teachers have some knowledge of intangible cultural heritage projects, their overall level of awareness is low. Specific data show that 38.5% of teachers have only a general understanding of intangible cultural heritage, only 12.1% of teachers say they know intangible cultural heritage very well, and about 25% of teachers show little or no understanding of intangible cultural heritage. This result reflects that although most teachers have heard of intangible cultural heritage activities and expressed a desire to learn more, there are still significant deficiencies in systematically mastering the specific content of intangible cultural heritage.

Secondly, preschool teachers lack knowledge of the region's intangible cultural heritage resources. After careful sorting and in-depth analysis, as of December 2024, Jiangxi Province has announced 88 national intangible cultural heritage representative projects and 560 provincial intangible cultural heritage representative projects. These projects cover multiple categories such as folk literature, traditional skills, traditional drama, and folk customs, reflecting Jiangxi's profound historical and cultural heritage. For example, the first batch of provincial intangible cultural heritage lists in Jiangxi include 62 projects, of which 19

are included in the national intangible cultural heritage list. These intangible cultural heritage projects are not only highly recognized by the public, but are also an important carrier of Ganpo culture, providing important support for promoting regional cultural exchanges, as well as mutual learning and skillful telling of Jiangxi stories. Shangrao City, Jiangxi Province has rich intangible cultural heritage resources, but the survey found that preschool teachers generally have a low level of awareness of local intangible cultural heritage resources. Although most teachers are locals, only about 16% of teachers said they are very familiar with or relatively familiar with local intangible cultural heritage resources, 42% of teachers only have a general understanding, and nearly 30% of teachers have a limited understanding of local intangible cultural heritage resources. Through interviews, the researchers learned that most teachers could list some common intangible cultural heritage items, such as paper-cutting, opera, and traditional handicrafts. However, they lack an in-depth understanding of the specific characteristics, historical background and cultural connotations of these items.

4.1.2. The Status of Kindergarten Teachers' Concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Firstly, most teachers have a positive attitude towards intangible cultural heritage. Through a questionnaire survey and interview analysis of 182 teachers from four kindergartens in Shangrao City, Jiangxi Province, the results show that more than 65% of teachers said they like intangible cultural heritage very much or relatively much, and less than 3% of teachers said they do not like it at all. This shows that most teachers have a positive attitude towards intangible cultural heritage. During the interview, a teacher mentioned,

In recent years, the influence of traditional culture in society has gradually increased. For example, during some traditional festivals, people will celebrate in various forms. For example, the Shiren Temple Fair in Shangrao is not only a blessing activity, but also a display platform for traditional culture. As educators, we should follow this trend and let children understand and love traditional culture from an early age, especially the excellent culture of our Jiangxi, so that they can be proud of their hometown.

Secondly, most teachers believe that developing intangible cultural heritage courses in kindergartens has educational value. Survey data show that 68% of teachers believe that carrying out intangible cultural heritage courses in kindergartens has important educational value, and only 5.5% of teachers believe that it is not very valuable or has no value at all. This result shows that teachers generally agree that intangible cultural heritage, as a representative of excellent traditional culture, has a positive significance for cultivating children's cultural identity and sense of belonging. For example, Shangrao's Yiyang Opera, as a national intangible cultural heritage, is not only an important part of Chinese opera culture, but also a treasure of local culture. By incorporating similar local intangible cultural heritage content into kindergarten courses, it can help children better understand and inherit China's excellent traditional culture and enhance cultural confidence.

4.1.3. Current Situation of Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Kindergarten Curriculum

Firstly, kindergartens generally offer relatively few courses related to intangible cultural heritage. The survey results show that the integration of intangible cultural heritage and kindergarten curriculum in Jiangxi Province is not ideal. Most teachers reported that the frequency of conducting intangible cultural heritage courses is low. Only 12% of teachers said that they often conduct intangible cultural heritage courses, while the proportion of conducting few or no courses at all reached 23%. At the same time, the survey found that most kindergartens have held "intangible cultural heritage into campus" activities, such as the Gannan tea-picking opera and Jingdezhen handmade porcelain-making skills display. Although these activities have increased children's interest in intangible cultural heritage to a certain extent, the systematization and sustainability of the courses are still insufficient.

During the interview, a teacher mentioned,

I also tried to carry out intangible cultural heritage activities in the class but found that there was a lack of projects that could be developed in depth. For example, in the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage into Campus' activity, the children were very interested in the performance form of Gannan tea-picking opera but found it difficult to understand the specific content of the play. I myself lack the relevant knowledge and skills and can only take the children to recognize some basic opera roles or make simple handicrafts, and it is difficult to carry out more in-depth courses.

In addition, teachers also said that festival-related intangible cultural heritage courses are relatively easy to carry out because children have life experience and the courses combine ideological with political education. However, other types of intangible cultural heritage courses require more support.

Secondly, kindergartens carry out intangible cultural heritage content selection. Considering the teachers' level of awareness of intangible cultural heritage, and for the convenience of investigation, the researchers reclassified and specifically listed the types of intangible cultural heritage. They also investigated the teachers' choice of content when carrying out intangible cultural heritage. From the survey results, it can be found that kindergarten teachers have obvious tendencies when choosing to carry out intangible cultural heritage content. After statistics and analysis, it was found that the frequency of activities such as traditional music, traditional dance and traditional drama was relatively high, which played a positive role in inheriting and promoting the excellent traditional Chinese culture. In addition, intangible cultural folk heritage projects are also closer to children's lives and easy to carry out. The reason why other categories of intangible cultural heritage projects are less implemented may be related to the teachers' understanding of intangible cultural heritage and the many difficulties encountered in the process of development.

Thirdly, kindergartens are not balanced in the areas of intangible cultural heritage courses. The survey results show that there is a clear imbalance in the development of courses. Specifically, art courses account for the highest proportion, reaching 42.3%, which is closely related to the fact that teachers tend to choose traditional art projects with simple forms and significant effects when selecting content. Examples are the *Wuyuan Nuo* dance, and the *Shangrao Xinhe Luantanqiang*. Language courses account for 28.7%, and social courses account for 16.9%, indicating that teachers use language narration more often when teaching, and the children's way of gaining experience is relatively single-focused. This uneven curriculum development reflects the limitations of teachers in the design of intangible cultural heritage courses. On the one hand, artistic intangible cultural heritage projects are more likely to attract children's attention due to their intuitiveness and fun, and teachers are relatively more confident in organizing such activities. On the other hand, with intangible cultural heritage courses in the fields of language and society, although equally important, teachers often feel overwhelmed when carrying them out due to the lack of intuitive experience and rich teaching resources.

4.2. Problems in The Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Kindergarten Curriculum in Jiangxi Province

Through the above investigation and research, one can see that many kindergarten teachers have deeply realized the importance of traditional culture and have shown great enthusiasm in developing intangible cultural heritage-related courses. However, due to the combined effect of various factors, the implementation of intangible cultural heritage courses in kindergartens still faces many challenges.

4.2.1. Teachers' Intangible Cultural Heritage Literacy Restricts the Implementation of Intangible Cultural Heritage Courses in Kindergartens

The inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage is not only the responsibility of intangible cultural heritage inheritors, but also the responsibility of every educator. With the release of the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage," more teachers have begun to realize the importance of intangible cultural heritage and are willing to guide children to participate in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. However, teachers have a shallow understanding of intangible cultural heritage, lack an in-depth understanding of specific intangible cultural heritage projects, and have limited access to intangible cultural heritage resources in daily life. At the same time, many intangible cultural heritage projects are highly professional, which limits teachers' learning and practical ability.

As key supporters, active participants and guides of children's learning, teachers play a vital role in promoting intangible cultural heritage courses. However, the relative lack of teachers' cognitive level of intangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage literacy has also restricted the development of kindergarten intangible cultural heritage courses to a certain extent. For example, in the design of intangible cultural heritage courses, some teachers can only teach at a basic knowledge-explanation level, and it is difficult to integrate the core value and essence of intangible cultural heritage into teaching activities.

Therefore, it is particularly important to explore how to help teachers improve their intangible cultural heritage literacy and how to use various resources to support intangible cultural heritage activities in the research. This not only requires strengthening teachers' intangible cultural heritage knowledge training but also requires improving teachers' practical ability and curriculum design ability through various means such as cooperating with intangible cultural heritage inheritors and developing local intangible cultural heritage curriculum resources.

4.2.2. Insufficient Systematic Development of Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources

Intangible cultural heritage is a unique cultural form passed down from generation to generation, rich in history, with extensive social connections, and is closely related to the lives of young children. However, geographical restrictions make it difficult for young children to access certain projects. Therefore, it is crucial to protect and pass on intangible cultural heritage, and children need to be made aware of these cultural heritages in a variety of ways.

Given the age and cognitive level of young children, as well as the wide variety of intangible cultural heritage in China, it is a challenge to select projects suitable for young children and develop a systematic resource library. At present, intangible cultural heritage resources are underdeveloped, and there is a lack of professional early childhood education resource libraries, which makes it difficult to meet curriculum needs. Therefore, building a systematic intangible cultural heritage resource library is crucial to improving the quality of the curriculum, and requires joint efforts from the government, educational institutions and intangible cultural heritage inheritors to promote the digitization and education of intangible cultural heritage resources.

The preparation work for the intangible cultural heritage curriculum is arduous, including project history, skills, forms and resource transformation. All these require teachers to cooperate in research and make rational use of community and social resources.

4.2.3. The Forms of Activities for Carrying Out Intangible Cultural Heritage Are Relatively Simple

The survey found that when teachers carry out intangible cultural heritage activities, they mostly use collective teaching methods, the content is concentrated in the fields of art and folklore, and the educational value of intangible cultural heritage is not fully explored. This limitation leads to the single form and narrow scope of intangible cultural heritage courses, which is difficult to fully stimulate children's interest. It is not conducive to the diversified development of children and the improvement of intangible cultural heritage cognition. It further affects children's pride in traditional culture and the formation of local and national identity. Therefore, it is of great value to provide teachers with design ideas and methods for intangible cultural heritage courses to help them integrate resources and expand the scope of courses.

4.2.4. Kindergartens and parents do not support intangible cultural heritage very much

Kindergarten support and home-school co-education are crucial to early childhood education. Although young children are the main targets of learning and teachers play a leading role in educational activities, the lack of support from kindergartens and parents will greatly reduce the effectiveness of the course and reduce the channels for young children to deeply understand the course content. At present, parents have limited knowledge of intangible cultural heritage and do not understand the significance of intangible cultural heritage courses. They believe that they are not very helpful for children's growth and transition from kindergarten to primary school, which reflects that teachers have not fully explored the multi-field value of intangible cultural heritage. In addition, kindergartens rarely provide activity venues, material support or invite professional talents for guidance, which makes it difficult for teachers to carry out intangible cultural heritage courses. Therefore, research should develop intangible cultural heritage projects from multiple fields and forms to construct effective courses to maximize the value of intangible cultural heritage and attract support from kindergartens.

5. Discussion

5.1. Selection of Research Concepts

Lawton (1983) proposed that the curriculum originates from the need for cultural heritage and is a process of social and cultural selection. Social culture is the accumulation of life experience, and "common cultural heritage" is its core, covering nine cultural systems. Lawton emphasized that curriculum planning should be based on cultural analysis, focusing on the essence of knowledge, student characteristics and social background.

The cultural analysis curriculum theory advocates selecting valuable content from social culture as the core of the curriculum. When intangible cultural heritage is integrated into the kindergarten curriculum, it is necessary to balance cultural characteristics and curriculum goals, grasp the connotation of intangible cultural heritage, such as that found within traditional music and skills, and avoid limitations. At the same time, the selection of intangible cultural heritage should be close to the lives of children, guiding them to discover and understand intangible cultural heritage in life, and therefore enhancing the practical significance of the curriculum.

In this article, the researcher uses the cultural analysis curriculum theory to explain the history and development of the integration of intangible cultural heritage and kindergarten curriculum. From the initial start-up stage to the current rapid growth stage, the history and development of the integration of intangible cultural heritage and education are elaborated in detail, presenting a clear research direction.

"Cultural awareness" refers to an individual's deep understanding of his or her own culture, including its origin, history, characteristics and development direction (Fei, 2010). This theory is of great significance for analyzing the current situation of the integration of intangible cultural heritage and education and constructing a preschool intangible cultural heritage curriculum system. Cultural awareness emphasizes the accurate understanding of the status and role of culture. As part of the precious tradition of Chinese civilization, intangible cultural heritage is a spiritual asset shared by all ethnic groups and has played a role in promoting the progress and improvement of society. In addition, cultural awareness also means accurately grasping the inherent laws of cultural development, understanding the dynamic changes of culture in the process of evolution, extinction and innovation; and protecting and inheriting culture on this basis. Cultural awareness further requires one to actively assume the responsibility of cultural inheritance and innovation and ensure the sustainable development of culture through the scientific development and utilization of cultural resources. In this study, "cultural awareness" specifically refers to the conscious cognition of intangible cultural heritage, that is, correctly understanding the status and role of intangible cultural heritage. This involves grasping its development laws, and actively assuming the responsibility of inheriting and innovating that intangible cultural heritage.

In this article, before exploring the curriculum practice in depth, a thorough analysis of the current situation is necessary, which is an indispensable foundation for constructing the curriculum. This study uses the cultural consciousness theory analysis method to analyze the teachers' cognition and attitude towards intangible cultural heritage. This is found within the process of integrating intangible cultural heritage with kindergarten curriculum and providing a theoretical basis for the current integration of intangible cultural heritage and that same kindergarten curriculum. Secondly, in the process of kindergarten intangible cultural heritage curriculum design, this theory guides the setting of curriculum goals and the selection of curriculum content as a basis and standard.

Tyler (1976) proposed the famous curriculum development principle, namely the Taylor principle. The Taylor principle systematically explains the entire process of curriculum development, covering four main aspects: first, determine the curriculum objectives; second, select appropriate learning experiences based on the curriculum objectives; third, organize these learning experiences; and finally, implement an evaluation.

This article applies to the Taylor principle to design the kindergarten intangible cultural heritage curriculum. The intangible cultural heritage of Jiangxi Province should be reasonably and continuously integrated into the kindergarten intangible cultural heritage curriculum. In addition, overall planning and design should be carried out from the aspects of kindergarten intangible cultural heritage curriculum objectives, curriculum content, curriculum implementation, and curriculum evaluation.

Intangible cultural heritage constitutes the core of national cultural heritage, which includes folk customs, wisdom, beliefs and other aspects. The national level strongly supports the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. From 2003 to 2024, China issued about 10 national-level intangible cultural heritage protection and inheritance-related policy documents, all of which

emphasize the urgency of protecting these precious heritages. The formulation and implementation of these policies reflect the country's recognition of their important value. It is generally believed in the academic community that the protection of intangible cultural heritage should be closely integrated with education, especially in the early childhood education stage. Children should be able to recognize and respect traditional culture through entertaining ways. Therefore, it is necessary to protect and inherit historical culture in a comprehensive manner with a respectful attitude. Further, systematic and scientific methods should be implemented to ensure that it continues to play its unique role in modern society.

"Education is life" is the core concept advocated by Dewey, in which the word "life" includes both material and non-material dimensions, involving social customs and people's beliefs. Education should be closely linked to social life and close to children's daily life. As the cultural heritage and its manifestations passed down from generation to generation by various ethnic groups, intangible cultural heritage comprehensively covers all areas of children's lives. These intangible cultural heritage projects are not only the carriers of historical culture, but also an indispensable resource in early childhood education. Integrating intangible cultural heritage into early childhood education can enable children to appreciate the charm of traditional culture by way of their own participation and further cultivate their cultural confidence and national identity. At the same time, participating in traditional festivals and folk activities can enable children to intuitively feel the power of social customs and beliefs, which has a positive impact on the formation of their personality and values.

In short, integrating intangible cultural heritage with kindergarten courses can not only promote the development of children in all aspects, but also promote the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage.

5.2. Researcher's Viewpoint

In the current research on the status of intangible cultural heritage activities in kindergartens, scholars' attitudes show certain differences. Yu & Wu (2022) pointed out that there are many problems in the development and utilization of intangible cultural heritage curriculum resources in kindergartens. Examples of these problems are teachers' neglect of intangible cultural heritage life courses, and the lack of intangible cultural heritage materials that make it difficult to support the development of courses. A further problem is teachers' mentality of "avoid complexity and keep it simple," which leads to a single selection of intangible cultural heritage curriculum projects. Lastly, there are difficulties in building a rich curriculum resource library. Relatively speaking, Li (2021) has a positive attitude towards the development of intangible cultural heritage courses in kindergartens from the perspective of necessity and feasibility. In terms of necessity, Lan (2019) believes that since the 21st century, the dominant position of Western culture has become increasingly prominent under the trend of globalization and integration, and the tendency of cultural homogenization has become increasingly obvious. The core of intangible cultural heritage protection lies in maintaining the nationality and regionality of culture. While advocating intangible cultural heritage education in kindergartens, Zhou (2021) emphasizes that the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage should not only be reviewed at the surface but should explore its connotation in depth to ensure that its rich surface beauty can be fully reflected and inherited.

Through the investigation of the current situation, this study attempts to build an effective curriculum system to help teachers teach intangible cultural heritage courses more smoothly in response to the problem of insufficient number of intangible cultural heritage courses. In view of the current situation of scarce intangible cultural heritage resources, the author proposes that since intangible cultural heritage is a cultural tradition formed in the long-term life practice of a certain region, it will be more convenient to use local intangible cultural heritage resources for kindergarten curriculum design. Thus, it can better maintain the national and regional characteristics of culture. Before the curriculum design research combining local intangible cultural heritage with kindergarten curriculum, the author suggests starting with those projects with no significant regional characteristics. This will help to more widely balance universality and regionality and then test the effectiveness of curriculum design. At the same time, the suggestions put forward by the researchers on the comprehensiveness of curriculum content and the playfulness of activities should also be taken seriously to enrich curriculum design.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study expounds on the current situation and existing problems of the integration of intangible cultural heritage and kindergarten curriculum in Jiangxi Province. The research results provide an important factual basis for the subsequent curriculum design. An in-depth exploration of the current situation of the integration of intangible cultural heritage and kindergarten curriculum is not only beneficial to the development of kindergarten-based curriculum but also plays an important role in effectively cultivating children's sense of identity and pride in China's excellent culture. It can also further enhance their understanding and sense of belonging to their hometown culture. In other words, the learning process of children is also the process of inheriting intangible cultural heritage.

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