Article

Practical Research on Integrating Folk Art into Public Art Education Courses

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Abstract: This study focuses on the feasibility and practical strategies for integrating folk art into public art education courses. By exploring the cultural heritage and educational value of folk art, it analyzes the current shortcomings in public art education and underscores the necessity of incorporating folk art into the curriculum. The study designs suitable content and methods, including traditional art optimization and diverse resource applications, to strengthen students' cultural identity and aesthetic development. Additionally, case studies demonstrate the tangible effects of integrating folk art into public art education, with results indicating a significant improvement in students' understanding and appreciation of local art. This research provides new insights for future public art course designs and proposes expanding folk art education with technological support.

Keywords: folk art; public art education; curriculum design; cultural heritage; teaching innovation

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization, the preservation and transmission of traditional culture in modern society are increasingly pressing issues. As an essential part of Chinese traditional culture, folk art holds rich historical and humanistic value, playing a unique role in shaping national identity, conveying aesthetic ideas, and enriching spiritual life. However, current public art education systems tend to overlook folk art, limiting students' awareness and understanding of traditional art forms. Thus, effectively incorporating folk art into public art education courses has become a pressing issue in the field of art education.The aim of this study is to explore the feasibility of integrating folk art into public art education and to design a teaching plan that meets the needs of contemporary education. Through an in-depth analysis of the characteristics and value of folk art, this study investigates ways to effectively convey its aesthetic, cultural, and educational significance within public art education. It also analyzes the practical implementation of folk art courses using actual teaching cases, examining how curriculum design can foster students' interest in local culture, enhance their appreciation for it, and develop their artistic sensibility and creativity.Research indicates that public art education is not only a path to cultivating students' aesthetic abilities but also an important tool for cultural heritage. Integrating folk art into public art courses helps students understand and pass on traditional culture, infusing art education with new vitality and allowing students to experience the convergence and interaction of diverse cultures. This innovative cultural education practice promotes a deeper understanding of traditional culture, fostering students' pride and confidence in their national heritage [1].

2. Overview of Folk Art

2.1. Definition and Characteristics of Folk Art

Folk art refers to art forms that originate spontaneously within local communities, created, applied, and disseminated by ordinary people as an expression of their daily lives. Unlike professional art, folk art is deeply rooted in everyday life, reflecting the wisdom, emotions, and customs of the working people. It is based on practicality, combining artistic expression with functional utility. Folk art encompasses diverse forms, including paper-cutting, New Year paintings, embroidery, pottery, and wood carving, characterized by simplicity, vibrancy, and unique styles that resonate with the masses.Folk art's main characteristics are its ethnic and regional qualities. Originating from specific geographic and social conditions, folk art from different regions displays distinct styles and features. For example, Northern paper-cutting is bold and expressive, while Southern embroidery is delicate and intricate. Another hallmark is its collective and transmissive nature, often passed down orally within families, communities, and social groups, emphasizing group identity and heritage. This collective creation imbues folk art with regional and national traits, making it a powerful symbol of local culture.Additionally, folk art is rich in symbolism and meaning. Artworks often embody reverence for nature, life, and aspirations for a better future, using symbolic imagery to convey blessings and wishes. For example, fish in New Year paintings signify prosperity, and the lotus symbolizes purity, reflecting the people's understanding and hope for life. Thus, folk art serves not only as a form of artistic expression but also as an emotional and spiritual legacy, providing valuable visual documentation and cultural wealth for traditional culture studies [2].

2.2. Cultural and Educational Value of Folk Art

As a culturally and historically rich art form, folk art has immense cultural and educational value. First, folk art serves as an important carrier of national culture, containing traditional customs, religious beliefs, and ethical values that reflect the life wisdom and aesthetic taste of the working people. For instance, New Year paintings, paper-cutting, and embroidery often use symbolic imagery to express wishes for happiness, harmony, and abundance. These patterns and symbols are not just artistic elements but also bear profound cultural meanings, making folk art a unique means of conveying national spirit and values. Therefore, folk art bridges cultural heritage, providing the new generation with a window into understanding and inheriting national traditions.Secondly, folk art has unique educational value, contributing significantly to the cultivation of students' aesthetic, hands-on, and cultural identity skills [3]. Integrating folk art into public art education enriches students' artistic experience, helping them appreciate traditional craftsmanship's beauty and complexity and enhancing their understanding and identification with national culture. Folk art education often involves hands-on production, allowing students to engage directly in activities like paper-cutting, clay sculpting, and embroidery, thus experiencing the charm of traditional art firsthand. This practical teaching not only improves students' manual abilities but also stimulates their creativity and imagination, fostering a sense of love and respect for traditional culture.Folk art also nurtures students' aesthetic awareness and cultural inclusivity. Each region has its unique folk art forms, and by learning various types, students can experience a range of cultural expressions, broadening their artistic perspectives. This multicultural art education helps students understand and appreciate the beauty of diverse cultures, fostering cultural inclusivity and preparing them to adapt to a globalized society. Thus, folk art is not only a powerful tool for art education but also an essential pathway to developing students' comprehensive cultural awareness, enriching modern art education with distinctive national characteristics and cultural depth [4].

3. Current State and Challenges of Public Art Education Curriculum

3.1. Objectives and Content of Public Art Education

The core objectives of public art education are to cultivate students' artistic literacy, aesthetic ability, and humanistic quality, enabling them to understand and appreciate artworks while expressing themselves and conveying emotions through art. Public art education extends beyond teaching art techniques, focusing on fostering students' cultural awareness and diverse aesthetic perspectives, allowing them to perceive and understand artistic expressions across cultural contexts. Additionally, public art education aims to enhance students' creativity, imagination, and critical thinking through art, providing them with a richer emotional and spiritual experience in daily life.Typically, public art education covers various aspects, including visual arts, performing arts, and art theory. Visual arts encompass painting, sculpture, photography, and more, helping students acquire basic artistic skills and techniques. Performing arts include drama, dance, and music, enabling students to understand artistic expressiveness through body and voice [5]. Art theory, covering art history, criticism, and philosophy, helps students develop a systematic and theoretical understanding of art.However, current public art education courses often focus on Western art history and classical forms, with limited emphasis on local culture and traditional art, particularly in the area of folk art. This has limited students' ability to develop a deep understanding of their national art traditions, presenting challenges in fostering diversity and inclusiveness in art education. Additionally, public art education's practical activities are often classroom-based, lacking real-life connections, which restricts students from integrating art knowledge into their daily lives. This limitation in content design partly diminishes the effectiveness of public art education, hindering its goal to foster multicultural understanding and artistic literacy comprehensively.

3.2. Deficiencies and Potential Improvements in the Current Curriculum

The current public art education curriculum exhibits some limitations in content design, teaching methods, and cultural diversity, which restrict its potential for fully developing students' artistic literacy and cultural identity. Firstly, the curriculum content is relatively narrow, focusing primarily on Western art and classical forms while giving limited attention to local culture. As a result, students often engage with Western painting, sculpture, and music but have minimal exposure to folk art, which is rich in ethnic characteristics [7]. This Western-centric approach hinders students' understanding of indigenous art and their development of cultural identity and national pride.Secondly, the teaching methods are relatively traditional, lacking interaction and hands-on experiences. Art courses often rely on lectures and skill training, offering students little autonomy in creating and exploring. Folk art, however, emphasizes hands-on practice and collective participation, and traditional teaching methods fail to allow students to experience its unique appeal fully. Additionally, the highly theoretical approach limits students' understanding of the cultural essence behind artworks, constraining their artistic perception and creativity.To address these issues, the key to improving the current curriculum lies in introducing multicultural and varied teaching approaches to deepen students' multidimensional understanding of art. Specifically, it is essential to increase the proportion of local culture in the curriculum, integrating folk art as a core component of public art education so that students can learn about and experience the richness of their national culture. In teaching methods, project-based learning and practical activities, such as handicraft creation and community visits, can be introduced to provide students with hands-on experience in folk art. Additionally, modern technology, such as Virtual Reality (VR) and multimedia presentations, can be used to present traditional art interactively, greatly enhancing students' interest and engagement.In summary, improving curriculum content and teaching methods will better meet students' diverse learning needs, allowing them to gain artistic skills and develop respect for and recognition of multiculturalism. Such an innovative curriculum system will contribute to building students' cultural confidence

and aesthetic literacy, providing a solid foundation for their artistic education and personal growth [6].

4. Integrating Folk Art into Public Art Education: Approaches and Methods

4.1. Designing and Optimizing Teaching Content

Integrating folk art into public art education requires systematic design and optimization of teaching content to ensure that the cultural essence and artistic features of folk art are understood and appreciated by students. Firstly, representative folk art forms, such as paper cutting, New Year paintings, clay sculptures, and embroidery, can be selected as the focus of study. These art forms are not only visually appealing but also exhibit distinct characteristics in style, craftsmanship, and cultural symbolism. The curriculum can be structured around these themes, guiding students to understand the artistic value and cultural roots of folk art through activities like showcasing artworks and explaining historical contexts and cultural significance.Moreover, the curriculum should emphasize hands-on practice, allowing students to experience folk art techniques through actual creation. Unlike traditional painting or sculpture, folk art creation emphasizes manual skills and material usage. The curriculum can include group work and manual activities to immerse students in the process of creating folk art. For example, in a paper-cutting class, students can complete basic paper-cut designs under the teacher's guidance, while in embroidery, they can practice simple stitches to appreciate the precision and patience required by traditional crafts. Such practical activities enhance students' hands-on skills and foster concentration and creativity.Additionally, interdisciplinary elements can be incorporated into the curriculum, connecting folk art with history, literature, and geography to broaden students' knowledge. For instance, while studying New Year paintings, the teacher can explain the historical background of the characters and scenes depicted, helping students understand the social significance of the artwork. This interdisciplinary teaching approach allows students to learn artistic knowledge while deepening their cultural understanding through a well-rounded educational experience.Finally, the optimized curriculum should adopt diverse evaluation methods to encourage students to explore and express boldly. Traditional examination grading methods are insufficient for assessing students' understanding and creativity in art; thus, project exhibitions, class sharing, and personalized creations can be used as varied evaluation forms to stimulate students' interest in learning. Through systematic content design and optimization, folk art can be effectively integrated into public art education, helping students gain respect for and a sense of belonging to their local culture [7].

4.2. Innovation in Teaching Methods and Resources

Innovative teaching methods and resources are essential for effectively integrating folk art into public art education. Traditional classroom teaching methods struggle to impart the spirit and techniques of folk art to students fully. Therefore, new teaching approaches need to emphasize interaction, experience, and diversity, encouraging students to explore actively and engage in the artistic creation and experience.First, project-based learning can be employed, designing folk art studies as projects with multiple stages, from understanding historical background and learning techniques to showcasing and sharing completed works. Project-based learning can guide students to explore each learning stage in depth. For example, when learning clay sculpture, students can research its history and cultural background, watch videos of artisans at work, and then create their clay sculptures. This multi-stage learning experience not only deepens students' understanding of folk art but also strengthens their engagement and sense of accomplishment.Furthermore, modern technology can be used to support folk art teaching with a wider range of resources. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) can provide immersive experiences of folk art from different regions, allowing students to "visit" and appreciate artworks such as New Year paintings, embroidery, or paper cuts in detail and in their

cultural context. Additionally, a digital resource library containing folk art backgrounds, craft processes, and representative works can be created, allowing students to access and study information at any time. Digital resource sharing can also help teachers integrate diverse teaching content in the classroom, making lessons more interactive.Additionally, inviting folk artists or artisans for guest lectures or workshops provides students with the opportunity to learn techniques and creative concepts directly from the artists. This face-to-face approach not only allows students to experience the charm of artistic creation but also fosters respect and understanding of traditional crafts through direct interaction with artisans. Moreover, such activities help students understand the thought processes and skill development behind artistic creation, inspiring their interest and enthusiasm for folk art.Finally, establishing on-campus and off-campus folk art practice bases can extend classroom learning to extracurricular experiences. Students can engage in traditional art-making processes, such as paper cutting and New Year painting production, or participate in community art activities through internships or volunteer work. Such experiential learning not only strengthens students' cultural identity but also fosters emotional invest-ment in local art, allowing them to understand and preserve folk art on a deeper level.Through these innovative teaching methods and resources, public art education can become more inclusive and practical, helping students experience and understand the es-sence of folk art firsthand in a modern, diverse learning environment, laying a solid foun-dation for building cultural confidence and artistic literacy [8].

5. Case Study Analysis

To better demonstrate the effectiveness of integrating folk art into public art educa-tion, this section presents a case study of a middle school that incorporated "paper-cut-ting" into its public art curriculum. Located in northern China, where paper-cutting has a long history and diverse expressions, the school chose this art form due to its popularity among local residents. However, with modernization accelerating, younger generations have had decreasing exposure to this traditional art. To preserve and pass down the craft of paper-cutting, the school collaborated with local paper-cutting artists, incorporating it into the public art curriculum to help students recognize and appreciate its cultural value.The paper-cutting project was structured as a comprehensive, multi-stage learning process. First, students learned about the history and cultural background of paper-cut-ting through multimedia presentations and video interviews with artists, recognizing that paper-cutting is not only a craft but also an integral part of local folklore. Next, during the skill-based instruction phase, an artist guided students through basic techniques such as folding, perforating, and cutting, helping them grasp the core techniques of traditional paper-cutting. Through hands-on practice, students experienced the intricacy and chal-lenge of paper-cutting, which sparked their interest in the craft and cultivated their man-ual skills and creativity. Finally, students created individual works based on the theme of "tradition and innovation" and displayed them in a school art exhibition. This display not only showcased their learning achievements but also allowed students to express creativ-ity and share a sense of accomplishment.The course had a positive impact, and student feedback was enthusiastic. Many students mentioned that although they had limited knowledge of paper-cutting before, the course taught them not only the techniques but also the cultural depth and beauty of the art form. One student noted that the creative process of paper-cutting revealed the joy of craftsmanship and the charm of art, sparking an interest in other traditional art forms. Additionally, parents actively supported the course, with many students bringing their creations home to share with family and friends, thus further promoting paper-cutting culture within their families and communities. This interaction enriched students' learning experience and established a constructive link for cultural transmission between home and school.This case demonstrates that integrating folk art into public art education can effectively enhance students' interest in and recog-nition of local culture, fostering their artistic literacy and cultural pride. Through project-

based teaching methods and practical activities, students were able to engage with the essence of traditional art, deepening their understanding of national culture. In the future, this course model could be expanded nationwide to include other folk art fields, such as embroidery and pottery from southern regions, utilizing culturally tailored curriculum designs to further promote traditional art. This practical case provides a feasible path and valuable insights for promoting folk art education and adds diversity and cultural depth to public art education.

6. Future Research Directions

While significant progress has been made in integrating folk art into public art education, there remain many future directions for further exploration. First, the continued innovation of teaching methods is an essential area. Future research could investigate how to apply digital technology more effectively in education, using tools like Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) to allow students to "immerse" themselves in the creative processes and cultural backgrounds of folk art. Through virtual experiences, students could access folk art from various regions anytime and anywhere, gaining a more immersive learning experience. Combining technology with art education not only enriches course content but also increases student engagement and interest.Second, future research could focus on the design and implementation of personalized learning. Given the differences in cultural background, interests, and learning styles among students, developing personalized learning solutions is a promising direction to enhance the effectiveness of folk art education. Research could explore how to design customized learning tasks and resources based on students' interests and abilities, providing an art experience that better suits each student's development. For instance, modular courses for various skill levels in folk art could allow students to choose between paper-cutting, clay sculpting, embroidery, and other art forms based on their interests, facilitating more effective learning and greater cultural identification.Moreover, improving evaluation methods is another key area for future research. Current art education assessments tend to emphasize skill mastery, lacking a comprehensive consideration of students' cultural understanding, creativity, and emotional expression. Future research could explore diversified assessment systems that combine process evaluations, project exhibitions, and student self-reflection, offering a holistic view of students' progress in folk art learning. Such assessments would not only better reflect students' learning outcomes but also strengthen their emotional connection to and cultural appreciation for folk art.Finally, further research is needed on strategies for promoting folk art within public art education. Researchers could explore ways to establish broader resource-sharing and support systems through collaborations among schools, communities, museums, and folk artists. For example, schools could regularly organize student visits to folk art exhibitions, invite artists to give live demonstrations, or establish off-campus practice bases, giving students more opportunities to experience traditional art firsthand. This combination of resource integration and practical promotion would provide sustainable support for the long-term development of folk art in public art education, fostering a wider transmission of traditional culture among younger generations.In summary, future research should adopt a multi-faceted approach encompassing technological applications, personalized learning, evaluation methods, and promotion strategies to develop a more comprehensive and in-depth model for folk art education. Through continuous innovation and improvement, folk art will be more effectively integrated into public art education, allowing students to gain a multi-layered cultural experience and artistic literacy, thereby laying a solid foundation for the preservation and promotion of local culture.

7. Conclusion

This study explores the integration of folk art into public art education, revealing that this fusion not only enriches art curriculum content but also enhances students' cultural

identity and artistic literacy. Case analysis confirms the effectiveness of project-based teaching, digital resources, and interdisciplinary methods, demonstrating the value and feasibility of folk art in education. In the future, technological support, personalized learning, assessment methods, and resource integration should be strengthened to foster the sustainable development of folk art education. Integrating folk art into public art education is not only a means of cultural preservation but also provides students with a diverse cultural experience and space for personal growth.

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