



SURVEYING THE ZHUANG DANCE TEACHING SITUATION AT GUANGXI HECHI SENIOR HIGHSCHOOL, GUANGXI ZHUANG AUTONOMOUS REGION, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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Abstract

The research objective was to survey the Zhuang dance teaching situation at Guangxi Hechi Senior High School, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the People's Republic of China. This research adopted a qualitative methodology. The research tools included an interview form, an observation form, and an Index of Item-Objective Congruence form. Key informants were three Zhuang dance teachers, and data collection involved interviews and classroom observations, with analysis conducted using content analysis. **The research findings** revealed that Zhuang dance teaching at the school employs a systematic approach encompassing multiple dimensions. In terms of facilities, the dance classroom is equipped with basic professional equipment but has limitations in acoustic treatment and cultural artifact displays. Teaching content integrates technical training and cultural education, adapted to high school students' characteristics through modular design and peer collaboration. Teaching methods combine movement decomposition, group workshops, and modern technology to enhance engagement. Evaluation focuses on process and summative assessments, covering

skills, cultural understanding, and teamwork. These practices effectively promote students' mastery of Zhuang dance techniques and cultural inheritance, while there is room for improvement in facility optimization and cultural immersion depth.

Keywords: Zhuang dance teaching; Surveying; Cultural inheritance

Introduction

Zhuang dance originated in primitive society. At that time, the dance of Zhuang ancestors was closely related to sacrificial activities, witchcraft and other activities, which were used to pray for the protection of gods, obtain the success of hunting and ensure the safety of the tribe. It was a way for people to express their reverence for nature and gods. The figures in Huashan rock paintings vividly show the embryonic form of dance at that time. With the increase of exchanges between Zhuang areas and the surrounding areas, dance continues to evolve on the basis of absorbing and integrating other cultural elements. Some dance forms with regional characteristics appeared in the Tang Dynasty, such as the dance related to rice culture, which reflected the Zhuang people's emphasis on agricultural production and their expectations for harvest. During this period, Zhuang people's copper drum dance and pole dance were relatively mature and widely spread. As an important symbol of Zhuang culture, the dance movements formed around the bronze drum are rich and diverse, with a strong sense of rhythm and ceremony. The pole dance originated from People's Daily working life, reflecting the diligence and optimism of the Zhuang people. In the era of globalization and digitalization, Zhuang dance actively uses modern technology and new media platforms to spread and promote. Through network broadcast, short videos and other forms, let more people know and love Zhuang nationality dance. At the same time, Zhuang dance plays an important role in the tourism and cultural industry, becoming an important window to display Zhuang culture and injecting new vitality into the inheritance and development of Zhuang culture. (Liang, 2017)

The dance of Zhuang nationality in Guangxi is developing in many aspects. In terms of inheritance and protection, achievements coexist with challenges, and many dances are listed as intangible cultural heritage projects to highlight importance, which can be inherited by word of mouth, and professional talents

are scarce; In terms of popularization and promotion, festivals and cultural activities such as "March 3rd of Zhuang Nationality" are used to enter campuses, communities, enterprises, and even go abroad, such as bamboo pole dance, which is quite popular among local people; In terms of innovation and development, some regions try to integrate Zhuang dance with pop music and science and technology, but the overall sense of innovation is still lacking, and the works are difficult to attract attention; At the research level, although some scholars pay attention to the discussion, the research on national dance culture is scattered and lack of systematic, and the summary of its essential characteristics and laws is not deep and incomplete, which needs to be continuously improved and optimized. (Zhang, 2011)

Zhuang dance, as a vivid manifestation of Zhuang culture, embodies the nation's thousands year old history, beliefs, and customs, and is a key symbol of national identity and cultural recognition. In the face of the strong impact of globalization and modern multiculturalism, the inheritance of traditional Zhuang dance is facing numerous difficulties. The lifestyle and cultural consumption habits of the younger generation have changed significantly, resulting in fewer opportunities for them to come into contact with and understand their own traditional dance.

Schools have become important platforms for cultural inheritance. Hechi City in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is one of the concentrated areas of the Zhuang ethnic group. The first-year students of Hechi High School, as an important part of the local youth group, carrying out Zhuang dance teaching for them is an important measure to safeguard and inherit the national cultural genes, which helps to enhance the vitality and continuity of national culture. With the continuous update of educational concepts, quality-oriented education increasingly emphasizes around development of students, and art education has become an indispensable part of it. Dance education, as an important component of art education, plays an irreplaceable role in improving students' physical fitness, artistic literacy, aesthetic ability, and creativity. The unique rhythms, movements, and cultural connotations of Zhuang dance can provide students with a rich artistic experience. By investigating the teaching methods of Zhuang dance for first year students in Hechi High School, it can provide strong reference for the school to further improve its art education system and enhance the quality of quality-oriented education. (Wan, 2010)

The Hechi area is rich in unique Zhuang cultural resources. Integrating Zhuang dance into regular school teaching is a deep exploration and innovative utilization of local characteristic educational resources. This not only helps to create an educational model with regional characteristics and ethnic styles, but also enables students to enhance their sense of identity, belonging, and pride in their hometown culture during the learning process. It cultivates students' awareness of loving and inheriting their hometown culture, and at the same time provides a talent reserve for the innovative development of local culture. The current education field is actively promoting reform and innovation, encouraging schools to develop school-based courses in line with local characteristics and students' needs. Zhuang dance teaching, as a school-based curriculum practice with local characteristics, the effectiveness and innovation of its teaching methods are of great significance for promoting educational reform. By investigating the practical experience of Hechi High School in this regard, it can provide reference for other regions and schools to carry out characteristic school-based courses and promote the diversified development of education.

Research Objective

1. To survey the Zhuang dance teaching situation at Guangxi Hechi Senior High School, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the People's Republic of China.

Literature Reviews

Zhuang ethnic culture in Guangxi: Zhuang traditional culture is the material and ideological wealth with its own national characteristics formed in the process of production and development, which is composed of the mutual connection and integration of rice culture, song culture and bronze drum culture. Its characteristic cultural forms are diverse, ancient cultural remains include ancient human remains, ancient tombs and so on; Material culture covers rice farming, bronze and bronze drums, traditional clothing, diet, living and other aspects, such as hydrangea, Zhuang brocade, five-color glutinous rice in Wuming area; Spiritual culture involves language, religious belief, life etiquette, traditional festivals, folk art, literature, etc. Activities such as "March 3rd" song fair and

Luoyue Tourism and Culture Festival in Wuming area, throwing hydrangea and grabbing fireworks are the embodiment of spiritual culture. (Wang, 2018)

Living environment of Zhuang nationality in Guangxi: In terms of natural environment, the living environment of the Zhuang people in Guangxi is unique, and the terrain is rich and diverse. In terms of natural environment, the living environment of the Zhuang people in Guangxi is unique, and the terrain is rich and diverse. Divided into two layers, the upper layer lives people, the lower layer is used for raising livestock and placing farm tools and debris, can adapt to the hot and humid, mountainous environment, with ventilation, moisture-proof, anti-animal and other advantages, some Zhuang people also live in modern buildings and bungalows. Zhuang villages are located near the mountains and by the water, often located at the intersection of rivers, big rivers, or mountainside slopes, etc., surrounded by green trees, there are generally large banyan trees in front of the village, implying both human and animal prosperity.

Basic information about Zhuang dance: The source of Zhuang dance Zhuang folk dance originated from folk and was closely connected with people's production and life, religious beliefs, etc. It is an important way for Zhuang people to express their emotions and inherit culture. The following is an explanation of its origin from different aspects. (Wang, 2018)

Zhuang folk dances are mostly originated from daily production and life scenes. For example, the "Pole dance" is created by the Zhuang people to celebrate the harvest. It vividly shows the joy of people after the harvest, makes the labor scene artistic, and extracts the dance movements and emotional expressions from life, reflecting the Zhuang people's love for life and cherish the fruits of labor. For example, the "Mafengguai dance", which imitates the shape of frogs, originated from the Zhuang people's totem worship of frogs. In the long-term development, Mafengguai dance shows its respect for totems with its unique dancing posture, such as raising hands and bending elbows, and bending legs and legs, etc., carrying the ancient beliefs and cultural memories of Zhuang people, reflecting the close connection between dance and primitive beliefs. And "Shigong dance" was originally created to celebrate the gods and was closely related to religious sacrifice activities. With the changes of The Times, although its function has changed, and now it has become a form of performance for people to have good

sustenance for the spiritual world and welcome visitors from afar, the fact that it originated from religious sacrifice reflects the breeding process of Zhuang folk dance in the soil of religious culture, and bears witness to the profound impact of Zhuang religious belief on the origin of dance.

The characteristics of Zhuang nationality dance: Rhythm characteristics: The unity of cohesion and expansion. The movement combination makes the rhythm gentle and harmonious, and the movement difficulty is not high. Dancers need to have regular rhythm of hands and feet to express cohesive characteristics. At the same time, its rhythm often reflects the characteristics of primitive, primitive and rough, which is closely related to Zhuang music and can show the humanistic customs of Zhuang people. Style characteristics: Different from the soft sense of ordinary dance, it is a unique style that integrates the magnificent and beautiful mountains and rivers. The creative environment is free, different dance styles used to be different, and then merged to form a modern and widely spread new style, which can reflect the magnificent beauty of mountains and hills and streams. Moreover, there are many kinds of Zhuang dance and various styles. For example, the duet dance will give the magnificent and beautiful to male and female dancers respectively and integrate them. Application characteristics: There are many kinds of Zhuang dances, and different dances were applied to different situations in the early Zhuang society. War dance movement range and performance tension is large, used to strengthen their own momentum; Tea picking dance is based on the movement of tea picking, expressing the enthusiasm and yearning for life; Hydrangea dance combines dance and sports entertainment, high appreciation; The shrimp fishing dance imitates the movements of fishing activities and conveys a similar message to the hydrangea dance. (Gong, 2019)

Research Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative methodology. The research tools included an interview form, an observation form, and an Index of Item-Objective Congruence form. Key informants were three Zhuang dance teachers, and data collection involved interviews and classroom observations, with analysis conducted using content analysis.

Results

The results of interview: Dance Studio Facilities and Spatial Configuration, the physical environment in which dance instruction occurs plays a critical role in shaping students' learning experiences, especially in the context of traditional and culturally specific dance forms. Based on interview data with three dance instructors at a senior high school in Hechi, Guangxi, this section analyzes the spatial layout, physical infrastructure, and functional adaptability of the dance studio used for Zhuang dance instruction.

Spatial Dimensions and Functional Zoning, the main dance studio occupies approximately 120 square meters and follows an open-plan rectangular design, which is conducive to both large-group instruction and small-group choreography. The central area is unobstructed, allowing for full-bodied movement, ensemble coordination, and flexible formations. A full-length mirror measuring 2.5 meters by 8 meters spans one wall of the studio, providing students with real-time visual feedback during practice and performance training. Adjacent to the mirrored wall is a row of height-adjustable ballet barres, which are used not only for warm-up routines but also for foundational exercises in balance, posture, and core strength. The open floor space enables seamless transitions between different instructional formats, including individual practice, partner work, and whole-class sequences.

At the rear of the studio is a 30-square-meter multipurpose area, equipped with foldable seating and a small projector setup. This space is often used for peer observation, reflective discussion, and cultural presentations, allowing for the integration of theoretical and visual learning alongside physical training.

Dance-Specific Flooring and Safety Enhancements, the flooring consists of professional-grade grey vinyl, a standard in contemporary dance studios due to its durability, non-slip surface, and shock-absorbent properties. The surface supports dynamic movements such as leaps, squats, and floor work—common in Zhuang dance—while minimizing injury risk. In addition, the studio recently acquired a portable practice mat, which is used during intensive training or choreography rehearsals involving complex transitions or partner lifts. This

mobile equipment enhances safety without compromising the flexibility of the teaching space.

Lighting, Acoustics, and Multimedia Support, the lighting system is composed of track-mounted spotlights and dimmable LED fixtures, allowing instructors to adjust brightness levels to suit different teaching scenarios. However, the system currently lacks color-changing capabilities, which limits the studio's ability to simulate theatrical lighting conditions often required during performance preparation. All three instructors identified this as a key area for improvement, especially for developing students' stage adaptability and visual responsiveness.

The studio is equipped with a multimedia system, including Bluetooth-compatible speakers, a digital whiteboard, and projection facilities. These tools are used for instructional demonstrations, video playback, and synchronized movement training. Nevertheless, ambient noise from ceiling fans and air conditioning units remains a concern. Plans are in place to install acoustic panels and wireless microphones to improve sound clarity and reduce auditory distractions during rhythm- and cue-based instruction.

Supporting Facilities and Cultural Display Area, surrounding the dance studio are several auxiliary spaces that support daily teaching operations. These include a storage room for dance props and costumes, gender-segregated changing rooms, and a teacher preparation area. These facilities contribute to the smooth logistical management of classes and rehearsals.

On one side of the studio is a small cultural display area, which features traditional Zhuang dance artifacts such as handbells, masks, and miniature bronze drums. While the exhibit serves an introductory function, instructors expressed concern that its current design lacks interactivity and narrative depth. Suggestions were made to incorporate multimedia storytelling elements, such as digital touchscreens or augmented reality tools, to transform the space from passive exhibition into an active cultural learning zone.

Spatial Flexibility and User-Centered Design, one of the studio's notable strengths is its adaptability. Portable railings, movable seating, and

collapsible equipment allow teachers to reconfigure the space for a variety of instructional purposes—from warm-ups and choreography labs to informal student-led rehearsals. This user-centered design supports not only pedagogical variety but also students' sense of ownership over the learning environment.

Discussions

The findings of this research affirm the educational value of ethnic dance instruction as both an artistic discipline and a means of cultural transmission. In the case of Zhuang dance at Guangxi Hechi Senior High School, instruction transcends technical training and becomes a channel through which students engage with intangible cultural heritage. The pedagogical strategies align with constructivist and experiential learning theories, emphasizing embodied knowledge, student autonomy, and contextualized understanding.

From a music education perspective, the Zhuang dance program embodies key principles of aesthetic education and multicultural pedagogy. It fosters sensory awareness, rhythm internalization, kinesthetic expression, and cultural empathy—core competencies in comprehensive music and movement education. The observed integration of rhythmic training through live percussion, melodic phrasing in movement flow, and multimodal stimuli (e.g., voice, music, gesture) aligns with Orff Schulwerk and Dalcroze-inspired frameworks, which emphasize whole-body musical engagement. Dance, in this context, becomes a powerful medium for developing musicality and bodily intelligence simultaneously.

Furthermore, the curriculum contributes meaningfully to the formation of cultural identity. According to cultural identity theory, individuals shape their self-understanding through participation in culturally meaningful practices. The integration of Zhuang myths, rituals, and symbols into the choreography and performance context helps students locate themselves within a broader historical and social narrative. This process affirms personal and collective identity, especially for students of Zhuang descent, while also fostering intercultural appreciation among peers from other ethnic backgrounds. The study highlights the need for integrated curriculum models that include not only physical skill development but also theoretical, historical, and aesthetic dimensions. The success of the program demonstrates how local cultural resources can be leveraged to enrich educational experiences and strengthen identity formation.

among adolescents. It also illustrates the potential for traditional dance to coexist with modern pedagogical tools and interdisciplinary teaching approaches.

However, challenges remain. Resource limitations, particularly in terms of authentic materials and immersive technologies, may hinder the full realization of cultural learning. Furthermore, as some students struggle to connect symbolic gestures with cultural meaning, there is a clear need to strengthen interpretive teaching strategies and scaffold cultural literacy alongside technical progression.

This study highlights the need for integrated curriculum models that include not only physical skill development but also theoretical, historical, and aesthetic dimensions. The success of the program demonstrates how local cultural resources can be leveraged to enrich educational experiences and strengthen identity formation among adolescents. It also illustrates the potential for traditional dance to coexist with modern pedagogical tools and interdisciplinary teaching approaches.

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New Knowledges

These areas for improvement, schools can further enhance the effectiveness of their Zhuang dance teaching programs and ensure that students receive a comprehensive and enriching learning experience. This will not only promote the preservation and transmission of Zhuang dance culture but also foster a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity among students.

Enhancing Zhuang Dance Education



Figure 1: survey the Zhuang dance teaching situation at Guangxi Hechi Senior High School.

Conclusions

Overall, the interview findings reflect a teaching culture deeply rooted in respect for heritage, shaped by pedagogical reflection, and oriented toward both technical excellence and cultural authenticity. Through interviews with Zhuang dance instructors, it was revealed that teaching practices at Guangxi Hechi Senior High School exhibit a clear commitment to cultural preservation, student-centered pedagogy, and systematic curriculum planning. Teachers highlighted the importance of adapting studio space, integrating cultural narratives, and

employing various media to support both technique and tradition. In conclusion, the observations revealed an instructional environment that is methodologically diverse, student-focused, and deeply grounded in cultural heritage. Teachers skillfully facilitated learning experiences that were both physically rigorous and intellectually enriching, allowing students to develop a comprehensive and meaningful relationship with Zhuang dance.

Recommendations

Recommendations for this research

1. Adaptation of Folk Song Materials for Children: Invite music education experts to collaborate with Zhuang ethnic folk song cultural heritage bearers to simplify traditional folk songs, adjusting complex melodic structures and dialect lyrics.
2. Developing a Comprehensive Teaching Resource Package: Integrating resources such as folk song audio, animated videos, interactive courseware, and picture book stories to form a standardized teaching resource package.
3. Expand the sample and comparative studies: Subsequent research should break through the limitations of a single institution, selecting kindergartens from different regions within Guangxi (such as Liuzhou, Guilin, Baise, etc.) and with different types of operation (public, private, rural) for investigation.

Recommendations for Future research

1. Integrate folk song instruction deeply into games, stories, and dances. For example, design games that guide young children to complete tasks by listening to melodies. Create stories that blend music, allowing children to experience the cultural essence of folk songs through role-playing.
2. Combine folk song rhythm teaching to enhance children's participation and memory retention. Design music teaching aids with the theme of Zhuang folk songs to help children feel the unique rhythm, and arrange the display area of Zhuang folk songs stories to create a strong atmosphere of folk songs culture.
3. Organize music education experts, linguists, and early childhood educators to systematically adapt traditional Zhuang folk songs.
4. Organize music education experts and kindergarten teachers to systematically adapt traditional Zhuang folk songs. Simplify the complex lyrics

and melodies while preserving ethnic characteristics and reducing learning difficulty; create illustrated folk song picture books and animated short films, using vivid visual images to help young children understand the songs' meanings; develop interactive music teaching aids to provide diverse resources for teaching.

5. Regular specialized training sessions on Zhuang ethnic folk songs for kindergarten teachers are conducted, covering topics such as Zhuang music theory, dialect pronunciation techniques, traditional singing methods, and teaching strategies for young children.

6. Invited folk song inheritors and music education experts give lectures and workshops, organizing field trips for teachers to deepen their understanding of Zhuang folk song culture; a teacher exchange platform is established to encourage sharing of folk song teaching cases and experiences, promoting innovation and optimization of teaching methods.

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