

The Value Logic and Practical Path of Empowering Dance Teaching in Higher Vocational Preschool Education with China's Excellent Traditional Culture

Ting Zhang, Hao Wang, Sha Liao

Sichuan Preschool Educators College, Mianyang 621000, Sichuan, China

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: The excellent traditional Chinese culture serves as the spiritual foundation for dance instruction in higher vocational preschool education, enhancing students' professional dance skills and cultural identity while integrating cultural heritage preservation, aesthetic cultivation, and professional skill training. This paper explores how traditional culture supports dance teaching in higher vocational preschool education and identifies existing challenges: low alignment between traditional cultural dance resources and educational needs; insufficient collaborative mechanisms among schools, kindergartens, and communities; superficial teaching approaches that fail to convey cultural significance fully. To address these issues, the article proposes optimization strategies: selecting teaching content tailored to professional requirements; establishing a collaborative education model involving schools, kindergartens, and communities to form a comprehensive teaching system; and incorporating cultural elements into daily instruction to achieve effective cultural education outcomes.

Keywords: Excellent traditional Chinese culture; Higher vocational preschool education; Dance teaching; Value logic; Practical approaches

Online publication: April 30, 2026

1. Introduction

The Chinese government has recently introduced new national guidelines for aesthetic education in schools. Under policy directives and the "Aesthetic Education Infiltration Initiative," it is imperative to integrate China's outstanding traditional culture into all aspects of teacher training programs. As the primary institution for cultivating preschool educators, vocational colleges' early childhood education programs should move beyond outdated teaching methodologies and embrace their mission of nurturing students through artistic appreciation and cultural immersion. While the industry widely recognizes the aesthetic value of traditional folk dances, existing research tends to focus narrowly—either providing broad interpretations of cultural

significance or concentrating on undergraduate-level educational studies—with limited practical applications tailored specifically for vocational preschool teachers. Current teaching practices face challenges such as insufficient access to traditional cultural resources, ineffective collaboration among schools, kindergartens, and communities, and superficial cultural interpretation—all unresolved issues requiring resolution. This study adopts cultural empowerment as a starting point to elucidate the intrinsic value of integrating traditional culture into vocational preschool dance instruction, establishing a practical pathway from technical skill development to cultural enrichment. It addresses gaps in existing research and promotes synergistic progress between enhancing aesthetic education outcomes and preserving traditional cultural heritage ^[1,2].

2. The value logic of empowering dance teaching in higher vocational preschool education through China's outstanding traditional culture

2.1. The fundamental approach to inheriting cultural genes and fostering cultural identity

Preschool education serves as the most natural and crucial phase in national cultural enlightenment, with its fundamental purpose being to convey ethnic aesthetic concepts and ethical values through tangible artistic forms. Consequently, pre-service teachers trained in vocational preschool education programs act as the most effective and direct bridge for preserving ethnic culture. Integrating traditional Chinese folk dances—such as the Tibetan Xianzi dance with its flowing long sleeves and the Dai dance characterized by its distinct “three-bend” posture—into dance instruction transcends mere physical skill training; it represents a profound interpretation and active reconstruction of ethnic culture. This approach transforms teaching from mechanical imitation of movements into genuine appreciation of cultural spirit, enabling students to naturally awaken their awareness of ethnic cultural roots through bodily rhythms. Only when educators themselves internalize and embrace these ethnic aesthetics and cultural essence can they effectively fulfill their cultural enlightenment responsibilities in early childhood education, transforming dance instruction into a vivid vehicle for patriotic education and cultural heritage preservation ^[3,4].

2.2. The internal drivers for improving the quality of dance education in preschool education

Current dance education in vocational preschool programs exhibits significant shortcomings. Classrooms predominantly emphasize technical skill training while neglecting cultural depth; teaching methods rely heavily on rote imitation with minimal guidance for student creativity, resulting in highly repetitive content that hinders steady quality improvement. Integrating China's outstanding traditional culture represents the most critical breakthrough to overcome this educational stalemate. From a curricular perspective, traditional culture substantially enriches dance course materials. Regional folk dances, playful children's game dances, and festival-related performances can all be incorporated into classrooms, fundamentally transforming the previously monotonous and limited curriculum. This approach not only creates teaching resources that align with children's innate characteristics while being rich in cultural significance, but also addresses the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical kindergarten instruction.

The aesthetic principles of traditional culture have played a clear and conscious role in driving the paradigm shift in teaching logic: traditional aesthetic concepts such as “vivid rhythm,” “unity of imagery,” and “harmony between ritual and music” naturally guided dance instruction from standardized, single-action

training to context-based, aesthetic teaching. Consequently, tedious skill drills evolved into comprehensive experiences rich in context, poetic quality, and depth; the aesthetic caliber of classroom instruction was genuinely elevated, and knowledge density significantly increased. More importantly, this approach sparked students' desire for active exploration of the folk culture underlying dance, shifting them from passive imitation to proactive creation. As a result, the teaching process was optimized, and dance education naturally transitioned toward higher quality and greater substantive depth ^[5].

2.3. An essential requirement for strengthening the comprehensive competencies of future early childhood educators

The educational objective of higher vocational preschool education is not merely to cultivate practitioners skilled in dance demonstrations, but rather to nurture early childhood educators with cultural literacy and reflective capabilities. Consequently, the integration of China's outstanding traditional culture serves as a natural foundation for shifting preschool teacher training from a "skill-oriented" approach to a "quality-oriented" one.

First, foster genuine emotional development through aesthetic appreciation: Since the body language of traditional folk dance inherently embodies humanistic values, students' aesthetic perception and artistic empathy are naturally awakened as they learn the rhythm and beauty of dance movements, thereby transcending the limitations of mere mechanical imitation. Subsequently, achieve effective cognitive enhancement through cultural immersion: By analyzing the folkloric background and historical origins of folk dance, students evolve from performers of dance skills to interpreters of ethnic culture, truly mastering the method of transforming dance movements into culturally rich instructional content.

Furthermore, given the distinctive dynamic nature of traditional culture, it provides clear guidance for students to implement teaching through creativity. Preschool children possess strong visual perception and a natural inclination for play-based learning; therefore, pre-service teachers with a solid foundation in traditional culture can adapt specialized movements—such as the stretching techniques of Jiaozhou Yangge dance and the knee-shaking motions of Tibetan string music—into age-appropriate introductory teaching materials for young learners.

3. Practical challenges in leveraging China's outstanding traditional culture to enhance dance instruction in higher vocational preschool education

3.1. Insufficient resource alignment: A mismatch between teaching offerings and students' learning needs

The current systematic teaching resources for traditional cultural dance education in higher vocational preschool education programs exhibit several distinct and identifiable shortcomings. These resources fail to align with students' professional needs and cognitive foundations, manifesting in three key aspects: First, textbook materials are disconnected from student realities. Existing textbooks are primarily designed for specialized art institutions and undergraduate dance programs, focusing on complex technical systems and abstract cultural theories. This significantly conflicts with the characteristics of vocational preschool education students—whose foundational knowledge is limited, training cycles are short, and practical application is prioritized. Students struggle to master these concepts and find it difficult to apply them in early childhood teaching contexts. Second, faculty capabilities remain fragmented. While most dance

instructors possess solid professional skills, they lack expertise in interpreting traditional culture and adapting content for preschool pedagogy. Consequently, while they can demonstrate folk dance movements, they cannot explain their cultural significance or design age-appropriate dance activities, resulting in superficial cultural transmission. Third, digital resources are fragmented. Most online folk dance materials consist of performance videos or folklore recordings, lacking standardized course packages that include cultural analysis, movement breakdowns, and instructional case studies. This poses substantial challenges for teachers in selecting and integrating effective educational resources.

3.2. Ineffective coordination mechanisms: Insufficient collaboration among multiple stakeholders (university, kindergarten, and community)

The preservation and educational application of traditional culture must be grounded in the deep integration of schools, kindergartens, and cultural institutions—it cannot rely solely on classroom instruction. Currently, the “school-kindergarten-community” framework has yet to establish a genuine, standardized, and efficient collaborative education system. Specifically: First, there exists a supply-demand mismatch between vocational colleges and kindergartens. School teaching reforms often prioritize their own pedagogical logic, failing to adequately align with kindergarten aesthetic education practices and thematic activity needs. Consequently, essential traditional dance teaching materials from kindergartens fail to reach school curriculum developers promptly or comprehensively, resulting in talent cultivation that diverges from actual workplace requirements. Second, sustainable mechanisms for collaborating with social cultural resources remain lacking. Current partnerships between schools and intangible cultural heritage inheritors, local theater troupes, and cultural centers mainly involve short-term lectures and performances rather than systematic integration of heritage techniques and folk cultures into curricula. As a result, heritage inheritors rarely teach in classrooms, and social cultural resources struggle to be naturally transformed into instructional assets.

3.3. The superficialization of teaching transformation: The difficulty in shifting from formal imitation to cultural education

This represents the most prominent and fundamental bottleneck in leveraging traditional culture for dance education: teaching remains confined to superficial borrowing of cultural symbols without achieving genuine transformation through cultural essence immersion or practical educational implementation. This issue can be summarized into three aspects. First, instruction prioritizes form over substance—focusing primarily on replicating folk dance movements and postures while inadequately exploring the cultural contexts they embody, such as ethnic history, living environments, and aesthetic values. Consequently, students grasp only the technical forms but miss the cultural core, leaving heritage transmission lacking spiritual foundation. Second, there exists a disconnect between learning outcomes and practical application: students may perform dance movements accurately but fail to effectively integrate traditional dance into early childhood educational activities, hindering their transition from “learners” to “educators.” Third, evaluation systems emphasize technical skills over cultural literacy—current assessments focus solely on precision and proficiency metrics while neglecting critical dimensions like cultural understanding, pedagogical adaptation, and creative innovation. This reinforces a skill-oriented teaching approach, ultimately undermining the goal of cultural education.

Given that the three major challenges—resource alignment, collaborative mechanisms, and teaching transformation—are interwoven and mutually constraining, the resource gap limits the substantive foundation

of instruction; ineffective collaboration obstructs the flow of resources and demands; while superficial transformation directly undermines the fundamental value of cultural empowerment. To achieve both enhanced teaching quality and cultural preservation, these three issues must be addressed systematically and in a structured manner.

4. Practical approaches for enhancing dance instruction in higher vocational preschool education through China's outstanding traditional culture

4.1. Precisely align with demands to enhance the efficiency of adapting traditional cultural resources

The fundamental solution to the mismatch between available educational resources and students' learning needs lies in transforming authentic traditional cultural materials into curriculum-based teaching resources that support the development of preschool education programs in higher vocational colleges, align with students' cognitive patterns, and meet the requirements of future job markets. Therefore, these key aspects must be prioritized.

- (1) Establish a well-structured, modular school-based teaching resource repository. Organize professional teachers, curriculum experts, and key kindergarten educators to deconstruct and reorganize folk dance materials for early childhood education, forming three-tiered course modules: Basic Cultural Perception – Core Vocabulary Learning – Creative Teaching Transformation. Specifically, the foundational module establishes cultural connections through folk documentaries and cultural narratives; the core module selects 2–3 representative dance styles, extracting child-friendly core movements and games; the transformation module designs concrete activity tasks such as “adapting traditional dance movements into children’s gesture dances,” ensuring that school-based resources are directly applied in teaching practice.
- (2) Establishing a teacher training system that equally emphasizes dual-competency characteristics and cultural literacy represents a clear and crucial direction for current teacher professional development: This approach prioritizes both specialized teaching skills (the “primary teacher” role) and consciously strengthens the role of cultural interpreters and inheritors (“secondary teacher” role), thereby integrating these dual competencies. The system should incorporate a two-way complementary program for teachers—integrating external cultural resources by inviting intangible cultural heritage bearers and folklore experts to deliver lectures and workshops on campus, while leveraging high-quality demonstration kindergartens as collaborative platforms to establish practical bases where teachers directly design and organize traditional cultural activities suitable for children aged 3–6, effectively enhancing their instructional adaptation skills. More importantly, teachers’ cultural understanding depth, instructional transformation capabilities, and practical achievements should be incorporated into professional performance evaluation systems with corresponding metrics, supported by incentive and development mechanisms. This naturally and powerfully guides teachers toward improving their cultural literacy, ensuring the sustainable implementation and long-term growth of a truly effective “dual-competent, culturally literate” teacher training framework ^[6].

4.2. Establish a collaborative education mechanism involving schools, kindergartens, and communities to create a closed-loop teaching system

Overcoming the limitations of a single teaching entity, we establish an educational community centered on talent cultivation, fostering deep integration among higher vocational colleges, kindergartens, and social-cultural institutions to create a virtuous cycle of resources, needs, and evaluation.

- (1) Establish a demand-oriented and dynamically updated collaborative curriculum development mechanism. Form a Curriculum Development Committee with partner kindergartens, using the practical needs of kindergarten festival activities and thematic teaching as the core basis for curriculum content updates. Jointly develop traditional cultural teaching resource packages encompassing dance case studies, lesson plans, music materials, and props to achieve seamless integration between school instruction and kindergarten practice.
- (2) To establish a sustainable, project-driven collaborative practice model, it is essential to move beyond the limitations of temporary collaborations. This involves proactively partnering with local cultural centers and intangible cultural heritage protection centers to establish permanent practice bases, institutionalizing students' folk culture fieldwork and internship experiences. Furthermore, leveraging practical initiatives such as the "Intangible Cultural Heritage Young Inheritors" program, students are guided by inheritors to design micro-dance teaching plans and conduct trial lessons, with their outcomes jointly evaluated by both kindergartens and the inheritors.

4.3. Deepen the transformation and application of teaching to achieve a leap from "skill transmission" to "cultural immersion"

Since the fundamental purpose of teaching is to cultivate students' cultural literacy and foster their innovative teaching capabilities, it is essential to redesign the instructional process and reform the evaluation system, thereby genuinely guiding learning toward greater depth and practical application.

- (1) Implement an immersive teaching model grounded in cultural context, following a clear and deliberate logical progression: cultural origin exploration → bodily engagement → educational transformation. Before introducing specific dance styles, establish a cultural setting rich with regional characteristics and folk narratives; during movement practice, guide students to understand the connections between dance movements and daily life, emotions, and aesthetic experiences; upon completion of instruction, seamlessly transition to children's dance education.
- (2) To establish a comprehensive, performance-oriented and creative evaluation system, it is essential first to reform the singular end-of-term skills assessment model by systematically incorporating indicators such as cultural comprehension and interpretation, instructional design, and micro-teaching practice. This shift moves the evaluation focus from motor skills to cultural literacy and teaching innovation capabilities, thereby naturally guiding instruction from mere formal imitation toward authentic cultural inheritance.

In summary, these three approaches are interconnected and complementary to each other, which can be summarized as follows: appropriate resources form the foundation of teaching, collaborative mechanisms ensure effective implementation, and in-depth transformation constitutes the ultimate goal. Therefore, to genuinely integrate China's outstanding traditional culture into dance instruction in higher vocational preschool education, all three elements must advance simultaneously and in tandem^[7].

5. Conclusions

The outstanding traditional Chinese culture will continue to provide rich cultural nourishment and clear value guidance for dance education in higher vocational preschool institutions. This paper offers a clear, structured analysis of the value rationale and practical approaches for integrating these two elements: Traditional cultural forms, represented by folk dances, contribute to cultivating students' aesthetic literacy, enhancing cultural understanding, and facilitating cultural preservation—thereby naturally improving classroom teaching quality and achieving comprehensive educational objectives. We should proactively optimize the instructional adaptability of traditional cultural resources and systematically establish a collaborative “school–kindergarten–community” education framework, ensuring cultural elements are genuinely integrated into teaching practices to address current challenges such as insufficient resource allocation, weak collaboration, and ineffective transformation. The ultimate goal of this systemic reform is to cultivate high-caliber preschool educators with solid dance skills, cultural literacy, and innovative thinking, thereby strengthening cultural confidence at the educational foundation and providing robust, lasting support for the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese national culture.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Lin Z, 2023, Practice and Path Analysis of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Higher Vocational Dance Education. *Home of Drama*, 23: 158–160.
- [2] Wu T, 2024, Exploration of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Higher Vocational Dance Curriculum Teaching. *Shangwu*, 21: 105–107.
- [3] Yang Z, 2025, Investigation into Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Higher Vocational Dance Teaching under the Context of Cultural Confidence. *Guangxi Education*, 24: 164–168.
- [4] Tang Z, 2025, Research on AI-Enabling Integration of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Higher Vocational Aesthetic Education Reform. *Modern Vocational Education*, 17: 35–38.
- [5] Zhou S, 2025, Significance and Innovative Paths of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into University Dance Teaching. *Daguan (Forum)*, 10: 150–152.
- [6] Sun X, 2025, Value Assessment and Practical Strategies for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into University Dance Teaching. *Journal of Changchun Normal University*, 44(06): 131–134.
- [7] Yue H, Zhang W, 2022, Practical Challenges and Implementation Paths for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Higher Vocational Education. *Heilongjiang Higher Education Research*, 40(12): 138–143.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.