

Research on the Curriculum System Construction of Aesthetic Education of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Universities under the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract: Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the abundant intangible cultural heritage resources in the regions along the route provide unique cross-cultural aesthetic materials for aesthetic education in universities. However, the existing aesthetic education system in universities has not yet developed a systematic curriculum construction plan targeting the aesthetic attributes of intangible cultural heritage. This study focuses on the curriculum system construction of aesthetic education of intangible cultural heritage in universities, and it elaborates on three levels: theoretical perspectives, core elements, and systematic pathways. First, the study defines the aesthetic attributes of intangible cultural heritage and their educational value, introduces the theory of interculturality as an explanatory framework for cross-cultural aesthetic education, and conducts a typological analysis of the aesthetic resources of intangible cultural heritage in the regions along the Belt and Road. Subsequently, the study proposes a multi-level aesthetic literacy positioning model for curriculum objectives, a knowledge organization and integration mechanism based on aesthetic categories, and a modular and progressive curriculum implementation framework. Finally, the study constructs a two-dimensional curriculum module of aesthetic perception and cross-cultural understanding, a logic for transforming teaching resources based on intangible cultural heritage aesthetic symbols, and an evaluation index system for the development of aesthetic competence. This research aims to provide a systematic curriculum design framework for aesthetic education of intangible cultural heritage and to promote theoretical renewal and structural optimization of aesthetic education in universities within the context of cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage; Aesthetic Education; Curriculum System; Interculturality; Belt and Road

Introduction

The regions along the Belt and Road bring together diverse intangible cultural heritage resources, and these resources contain unique aesthetic attributes and cross-cultural aesthetic values, thereby offering new possibilities for the expansion and paradigm transformation of aesthetic education in universities. The current aesthetic education system in universities largely follows a classical framework centered on Western visual art, and it does not adequately incorporate the bodily, processual, and embedded aesthetic characteristics embodied by intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, the system lacks specialized curriculum designs aimed at cultivating cross-cultural aesthetic competence. Against this background, the construction of a curriculum system for aesthetic education of intangible cultural heritage has significant research significance and educational necessity. On the one hand, this study helps to expand the theoretical boundaries of aesthetic education by introducing an interculturality perspective into the curriculum design logic, and it responds to the new demands for aesthetic judgment and perceptual transformation competence in multicultural convergence contexts. On the other hand, the systematic construction of the curriculum system can provide universities with an operable organizational framework for the aesthetic teaching of intangible cultural heritage, and it can remedy the structural deficiencies of existing curricula in areas such as goal orientation, content integration, implementation architecture, and evaluation indicators. Based on the above understanding, this study proceeds from three dimensions, namely theoretical perspectives, core elements, and systematic pathways, and it attempts to provide a theoretical basis and a design framework for the

transformation of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources from the regions along the Belt and Road into university curricula.

1. Theoretical Perspectives and Cross-Cultural Dimensions of Aesthetic Education of Intangible Cultural Heritage

1.1 The Aesthetic Attributes of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Their Educational Value

Intangible cultural heritage, with its intangibility, vitality, and embodied nature, constitutes a unique type of aesthetic object. Unlike the static visual presentation of tangible cultural heritage, the aesthetic attributes of intangible cultural heritage are manifested in body movements, sound rhythms, oral expressions, and ritual contexts, thereby forming a process-oriented and participatory model of aesthetic experience. This type of aesthetic attribute does not take isolated formal beauty as its core; instead, it depends on the perceptual habits and value identification of cultural communities, and it presents a characteristic of the integration of aesthetics and life. From the perspective of aesthetic ontology, the aesthetics of intangible cultural heritage can be understood as an "embedded" form of aesthetics, and the generation of its aesthetic feelings relies on specific cultural contexts and bodily practices^[1].

In the context of aesthetic education in universities, the aesthetic attributes embedded in intangible cultural heritage possess irreplaceable educational value. On the one hand, these attributes expand the object boundaries of aesthetic education by incorporating everyday skills, oral traditions, and ritual behaviors into the realm of aesthetic cognition, thereby enriching the types of aesthetic experience for learners. On the other hand, the aesthetics of intangible cultural heritage emphasize cross-sensory integration and the participation of body schemas, and this emphasis helps to correct the bias in traditional aesthetic education that overemphasizes visual art and formal analysis. By engaging with the aesthetic resources of intangible cultural heritage, learners can develop the ability to recognize heterogeneous cultural expressions of beauty, and thus they can establish a multicultural cognitive framework at the aesthetic level.

1.2 The Intervention of Interculturality Theory in Aesthetic Education

The theory of interculturality focuses on the new spaces generated by different cultural systems in the processes of contact, dialogue, and mutual translation, and its core concepts include boundary negotiation, reciprocal understanding, and the third space. Introducing this theory into aesthetic education means that intangible cultural heritage is no longer regarded as a closed cultural specimen to be appreciated, but rather as a dynamic field where aesthetic meanings are generated at the intersection of different cultural perspectives. From the perspective of interculturality, the task of aesthetic education is not to transmit established aesthetic standards, but to facilitate learners' perceptual transformation and value negotiation between different aesthetic systems, thereby enabling them to develop a more flexible aesthetic judgment.

This theoretical intervention has a structural impact on the cognitive approach to aesthetic education of intangible cultural heritage in universities. This theory shifts aesthetic education from one-dimensional cultural introduction to two-way aesthetic dialogue, and it establishes an inter-subjective reflexive relationship between the learners' own cultural identities and the external aesthetic resources. Within this framework, the aesthetics of intangible cultural heritage is not reduced to exoticism or formal elements; instead, it becomes a medium for stimulating cross-cultural aesthetic sensitivity. The theory of interculturality urges curriculum design to pay attention to tensions, ambiguities, and creative misunderstandings in aesthetic understanding, and it treats these phenomena as key opportunities for the development of aesthetic competence rather than as obstacles to be eliminated^[2].

1.3 Typological Characteristics of Intangible Cultural Heritage Aesthetic Resources along the Belt and Road

The regions along the Belt and Road cover diverse cultural spheres including East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe, and the aesthetic resources of their intangible cultural heritage can be classified typologically according to aesthetic media and modes of perception. The first type consists of oral and performative resources, which include epic chanting, folk

songs, and ritual dramas, and their aesthetic characteristics are embodied in the temporal organization and rhythmic structures of sound. The second type comprises craft and artifact resources, such as carpet weaving, metalwork, and ceramics, and their aesthetic attributes are attached to the materials, textures, and traces of human hands in the production process. The third type includes festival and bodily practice resources, which cover traditional dances, martial arts, and competitive activities, and their aesthetic quality derives from the dynamic configuration of the body in time and space.

This typological analysis reveals the common structure and differentiating dimensions of the aesthetic resources of intangible cultural heritage in the regions along the Belt and Road. At the common level, most of the resources exhibit a strong symbolic and ornamental aesthetic tendency, and their formal language is closely associated with collective memory and cosmological concepts. At the differentiating level, different regions show significant divergences in aesthetic treatment: the intangible cultural heritage in grassland nomadic cultural areas emphasizes linear rhythms and abstract symbols, whereas that in oasis agricultural areas tends toward complex geometric patterns and color contrasts; the coastal areas of the Mediterranean display a preference for symmetry, proportion, and mimetic representation, while some regions in East Asia underscore the aesthetic logic of blank-leaving and suggestion. These typological characteristics provide a classification basis and a comparative framework for the selection and organization of aesthetic resources in the subsequent curriculum system.

2. Core Elements and Structural Logic of the Curriculum System for Aesthetic Education of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Universities

2.1 A Multi-Level Aesthetic Literacy Positioning Model for Curriculum Objectives

The curriculum objectives of aesthetic education of intangible cultural heritage in universities need to go beyond the one-dimensional settings in traditional art education that emphasize either skill acquisition or work appreciation. The multi-level aesthetic literacy positioning model divides the curriculum objectives into three progressively advancing levels: the bottom level is the aesthetic perception level, which focuses on learners' sensitivity and differentiation with respect to perceptual elements such as sound, movement, material, and space in intangible cultural heritage resources; the middle level is the aesthetic understanding level, which emphasizes learners' cognitive grasp of the intercultural logic and meaning-generation rules carried by the aesthetic symbols of intangible cultural heritage; the top level is the aesthetic creation level, which points to learners' ability to use intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources for cross-cultural aesthetic expression and formal regeneration. These three levels form a vertical structure that moves from perceptual reception to rational analysis and then to comprehensive production, and this structure avoids the tendency toward flattening in goal setting^[3].

The design logic of this model lies in positioning aesthetic literacy as a competence of transformation in multicultural convergence contexts rather than as a standard of aesthetic judgment within a single cultural system. The model emphasizes that the relationship between the perception level and the understanding level is not a linear sequence but a structure of mutual conditioning and cyclical progression: the systematic accumulation of perceptual experience requires the guidance of a conceptual framework to be transformed into transferable aesthetic competence, and the deepening of the understanding level, in turn, depends on continuous return to the perception level for verification and revision. Given the diversity of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources along the Belt and Road, the model further requires that each level set differentiated perceptual weights and depths of understanding according to the types of resources (oral and performative, craft and artifact, festival and bodily practice), thereby providing an operational reference framework for the selection and implementation of subsequent curriculum content.

2.2 Knowledge Organization of Curriculum Content and the Integration Mechanism of Aesthetic Categories

The core difficulty faced by the knowledge organization of curriculum content lies in how to transform the intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources distributed across different cultural spheres into educational content with internal logic. This study proposes a knowledge organization mechanism that uses aesthetic categories as integrative threads, which means that the mechanism extracts several cross-cultural aesthetic categories from the intangible cultural heritage aesthetic

resources along the Belt and Road and takes these categories as the basic organizational units of curriculum content. These categories include "rhythm and meter," "pattern and symmetry," "posture and configuration," "material and texture," and "symbol and metaphor." Under each category, the mechanism brings together intangible cultural heritage aesthetic cases from multiple cultural spheres, and it uses the horizontal comparison of categories to reveal the variation patterns and common characteristics of the same aesthetic form across different cultural contexts. This organizational approach replaces the traditional arrangement model based on geographical regions or ethnic groups.

The theoretical basis of the integration mechanism of aesthetic categories lies in the commensurability and comparability of aesthetic forms. This mechanism shifts the structural logic of curriculum content from external classification of knowledge points to the exploration of the internal construction rules of aesthetics, and it guides learners to focus on the organizing principles and deformation boundaries of formal language itself. At the operational level, three analytical dimensions are established under each category: the perceptual description dimension (which includes parameters such as time unit, periodic pattern, and accent distribution under the category of rhythm), the formal analysis dimension (which includes elements such as symmetry type, repetition mode, and contrast intensity under the category of pattern), and the cross-cultural comparison dimension (which includes similar configurations and differential expressions of body dynamics across different cultures under the category of posture). This knowledge organization approach enhances the theoretical abstraction level of curriculum content while preserving the concreteness of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources, and it provides learners with transferable aesthetic analysis tools^[4].

2.3 Modular and Progressive Architecture Design for Curriculum Implementation

The architecture design of curriculum implementation needs to respond to the tension between the experiential depth requirements of aesthetic education of intangible cultural heritage and the temporal and spatial constraints of university teaching systems. The modular design breaks down the curriculum content into several functionally independent teaching units, and each module corresponds to a specific type of aesthetic competence training or an in-depth study of a certain aesthetic category; for example, the auditory aesthetic module focuses on rhythm and timbre perception, the bodily aesthetic module focuses on posture and dynamic configuration analysis, and the visual aesthetic module focuses on pattern and color relationship identification. The modules are relatively independent of each other, a feature that allows learners to choose different combinations of modules according to their own starting points, and it also supports systematic learning of a complete sequence. This modular structure gives the curriculum system flexibility and accommodates the diverse needs of interdisciplinary learners.

The progressive architecture specifies the vertical logical relationships among the modules, and it forms a curriculum implementation sequence that moves from perceptual reception to rational analysis and then to comprehensive expression. The preliminary stage sets up perception-oriented modules, which focus on intensive sensory contact and formal feature recognition training, and these modules lower the entry requirements regarding cultural background knowledge. The intermediate stage establishes comparison and transformation modules, which guide learners to establish categorical correspondences among different intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources and to complete the transformation from aesthetic perception to aesthetic description. The advanced stage sets up integration and generation modules, which require learners to use the previously accumulated aesthetic category tools to independently analyze unfamiliar intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources or to produce cross-cultural aesthetic expressions based on multiple resource elements. This progressive structure follows the intrinsic ontogenetic sequence of aesthetic competence, and it provides the curriculum implementation with clear stage-specific objectives and measurable pathways for progression.

3. Systematic Construction Pathways of the Curriculum System for Aesthetic Education of Intangible Cultural Heritage

3.1 Two-Dimensional Curriculum Modules of Aesthetic Perception and Cross-Cultural Understanding

The construction of the two-dimensional curriculum modules takes the coordinated development of aesthetic perception competence and cross-cultural understanding competence as its basic logic. The modules in the aesthetic perception dimension focus on the direct grasp of sensory materials in

intangible cultural heritage resources, and they cover the auditory dimension (such as the pitch contour and rhythmic patterns in epic chanting), the kinesthetic dimension (such as body trajectories and dynamic changes in traditional dances), and the tactile-visual dimension (such as texture contrasts and color distributions in weaving crafts). This module adopts a structured perception training method, which guides learners to decompose the elements of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic forms and identify their relationships while setting aside background cultural knowledge, thereby cultivating learners' sensitivity and analytical attitude toward different aesthetic systems. The materials for perception training are selected from representative intangible cultural heritage items along the Belt and Road, and the selection excludes any presuppositions of cultural superiority or geographical bias^[5].

The modules in the cross-cultural understanding dimension are built upon the foundation of perception training, and they focus on the ways in which aesthetic forms relate to the cultural meaning networks on which they depend. These modules guide learners to investigate the differences in meaning generation of the same aesthetic category (such as symmetry, repetition, or accumulation) across intangible cultural heritage resources from different regions, as well as the functional transformations of the same aesthetic symbol in different cultural contexts. The module design introduces a comparative framework from an interculturality perspective, and it requires learners to make a competence leap from "identifying differences" to "understanding the logic behind differences" and then to "conducting aesthetic dialogue across differences." Articulation links are set between the two sets of modules to ensure that the accumulation of perceptual experience and the construction of a comprehension framework form a mutually supportive relationship rather than two separate training sequences.

3.2 The Transformation Logic of Teaching Resources Based on Intangible Cultural Heritage Aesthetic Symbols

The transformation process of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic symbols into teaching resources needs to follow a logic of recontextualization from the original context to the educational context. In the original context, intangible cultural heritage aesthetic symbols carry the perceptual habits and value codes of a specific cultural community, and their aesthetic meanings are closely intertwined with ritual occasions, intergenerational transmission relationships, and bodily memory methods. The transformation in the educational context does not simply strip away these original associations; instead, it establishes an operational rule of "selective retention and structural reorganization." Specifically, the retained content includes the formal features of the aesthetic symbols and their internal organizational rules (such as the relationship between rhythmic units, the generative rules of patterns, and the geometric configurations of body postures), whereas the stripped content includes those ritual taboos and conditions of community closure that are difficult to reproduce or inappropriate to replicate in educational settings.

The transformation logic further specifies the presentation levels and cognitive thresholds of teaching resources. The primary transformation level takes decontextualized formal elements as the main objects of presentation, and this level allows learners to focus on the perceptual attributes of aesthetic symbols without being disturbed by cultural unfamiliarity. The intermediate transformation level gradually introduces limited contextual information, and it shows the variant forms of the same aesthetic symbol across multiple cultural spheres, thereby highlighting the flexible boundaries of formal language. The advanced transformation level restores the selective association between the aesthetic symbol and its originating cultural system, and it requires learners, on the premise of mastering formal analysis tools, to complete the inference and interpretation of the meaning-generation mechanism of the symbol. This three-level progressive transformation logic enables intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources originally embedded in specific ways of life to maintain their aesthetic educational value while acquiring teachability in university educational settings^[6].

3.3 The Evaluation Index System for Aesthetic Competence Development in Curriculum Assessment

The construction of the curriculum evaluation system needs to shift from knowledge testing to process-oriented description of competence development. This study proposes an evaluation index system for aesthetic competence development as the assessment framework, and this system contains three first-level index dimensions: precision of aesthetic perception, depth of aesthetic analysis, and breadth of aesthetic transformation. The precision of aesthetic perception includes secondary indicators such as the discrimination threshold of auditory elements, the accuracy of capturing movement features, and the linguistic matching degree of material tactility, and these indicators are recorded using

descriptive rating scales rather than numerical scoring methods. The depth of aesthetic analysis covers the correct recognition rate of aesthetic categories, the inductive ability regarding formal organization rules, and the accuracy in distinguishing similarities and differences in cross-case comparisons, and the assessment method takes learners' analytical texts as the basis, focusing on the coherence of their analytical frameworks and the appropriateness of their use of evidence.

The breadth of aesthetic transformation is an innovative dimension in the evaluation system, and it points to learners' performance ability when they transfer the acquired aesthetic categories and analytical tools to unfamiliar intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources. This dimension includes three secondary indicators: the appropriateness of category transfer (whether learners can recognize known aesthetic categories in unseen intangible cultural heritage materials), the originality of comparison construction (whether learners can establish new comparative relationships that go beyond classroom examples), and the cross-cultural comprehensibility of aesthetic expression (whether the aesthetic expressions created by learners in generative tasks possess formal logical self-consistency). The collection of evaluation data adopts the portfolio method, and it integrates the traces of learners' performance in various tasks such as perception training records, category analysis assignments, and cross-cultural aesthetic creations. The entire index system does not set absolute standards; instead, it uses each learner's individual ability baseline as a reference and tracks the trajectory of change and the trend of structural optimization within the course period.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the curriculum system construction of aesthetic education of intangible cultural heritage in universities under the Belt and Road Initiative. Starting from the aesthetic attributes and the theoretical perspective of interculturality, this study establishes a multi-level model of curriculum objectives, a knowledge integration mechanism based on aesthetic categories, and a modular progressive implementation architecture. Furthermore, it designs two-dimensional curriculum modules, a transformation logic of teaching resources, and an evaluation system for competence development. This framework combines the typological characteristics of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources with the theory of interculturality, and it forms a systematic curriculum plan that takes aesthetic perception, understanding, and creation as the vertical thread and perception training and cross-cultural dialogue as the horizontal dimension. Future research can be deepened along the following directions: further refining the operationalization standards of the evaluation indicators for aesthetic competence development, exploring the differences in responses of learners from different disciplinary backgrounds to the modular curriculum, expanding to more intangible cultural heritage aesthetic resources along the Belt and Road that have not yet been systematically organized to enrich the coverage of the aesthetic category library, and examining the articulation mechanisms between this curriculum system and other humanities and social sciences courses to explore the possibilities of cross-curricular integration.

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