

Original Paper

A Study on the Practice of Folk Dance Culture in Kindergarten

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Abstract

China is characterized by a long history of development and a rich and colorful national culture. Folk dance culture shines in the field of excellent traditional culture. However, the progress of social development has led to the gradual extinction of folk dance. Preschool education, as the beginning stage of education in a person's life, is a favorable time to embrace folk dance culture. By integrating folk dance into the stage of preschool education, it is conducive to carry forward the traditional culture of the nation and fostering national self-confidence and national pride in children while passing on the excellent traditional culture. Therefore, it is urgent to explore the path of combining folk dance culture with early childhood education.

Keywords

folk dance, folk dance culture, practical application in kindergarten

1. Introduction

China is a country characterized by a long history and a vast territory. For a long time, each ethnic group in our country has created a colorful and shining ethnic culture through their own wisdom, which has formed a "pluralistic" cultural pattern in our country. Different national cultures, with different types, present different national cultural characteristics. Like stars twinkling in the night sky, these cultures have always shone brightly, serving as an important factor in increasing the global influence of the Chinese nation and its inner vitality. As such, they are an inseparable part of the excellent culture of the Chinese nation. On May 27, 2022, General Secretary Xi said, "Chinese excellent traditional culture, as the wisdom crystallization and essence of Chinese civilization, represents the root and soul of the Chinese nation, and our firm footing in the world's cultural stirring." In the process of development, each ethnic group has developed its own distinctive language culture, writing culture, and folk dance

culture. We have conducted a series of reflections on the combination of folk dance culture and early childhood education curriculum, with the aim of further inheriting and promoting Chinese national culture.

2. The Development Status of Folk Dance

Folk dance, which originated from primitive dance, was an important way to carry out religious activities and sacrifice to ancestors in ancient times in China. At the same time, dance is also one of the main forms of celebrating festivals and entertaining the public in ancient China. Folk dance is an important part of China's traditional dance, which vividly shows the national characteristics of each ethnic group in China and has high cultural value. However, with the continuous development and construction of society, the continuous growth of market economy and the increasing level of science and technology, people's life has become more and more colorful, and people choose the way for leisure and entertainment is not only dance; at the same time, people's aesthetic concept is also changing. These factors cause folk dance to step out of people's lives and gradually disappear from the public's view.

At present, folk dances are facing the status quo of ethnicity passing away, the disappearance of popularity and the disappearance of inheritors. Ethnicity is the essence of folk dance. However, many contemporary dancers, in order to meet the aesthetic concept of today's society, adapt folk dances without a correct and comprehensive knowledge of folk dances. They abandon the most characteristic national elements of folk dance in the process of dance adaptation or creation and replace them with current trend elements. As a result, folk dances have lost their distinctive ethnicity in terms of performance form and content presentation. Due to the loss of ethnicity, the popular base of folk dance is also fading. The inheritance of any culture cannot exist for a long time if it leaves the help of people. However, the rapid development of China's market economy has made young people more inclined to choose professions that can bring them more benefits, while folk dance is often not among their choices. As a result, folk dance is facing the situation that there is a lack of inheritors. In view of this, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of folk dance. The early childhood period is the starting point of a person's lifelong learning and development. If folk dance culture is integrated into early childhood education, we can seek to make folk dance culture to take root and grow into a huge tree in the hearts of children.

3. The Development Status of Folk Dance in Kindergartens

China, as a multi-ethnic country, has witnessed the development of a bright ethnic culture created by the mutual exchange and intermingling of various ethnic groups in its history. It is especially important to promote ethnic culture. Early childhood education is the beginning of national education, the starting stage of learning, and plays a role in laying the foundation for the development of children throughout their lives. Therefore, it is very crucial to integrate ethnic culture into kindergarten curriculum.

Traditional Chinese dance represents an important part of national culture and can help children learn to understand it to the greatest extent possible. In kindergarten activities, folk dances are usually presented in the form of morning exercises and dance performances, which promote children's physical and mental development and help them learn about folk culture in these activities and gain an initial understanding of it. However, the problem is that the integration of folk dances into morning exercises is rather simple, and it is not possible to integrate all the characteristics of folk dances into morning exercises; at the same time, there is no systematic curriculum for the teaching of folk dances, and it is at the stage of self-development in kindergartens. In the process of teaching, teachers cannot effectively integrate folk dance with kindergarten curriculum, and the integration method is mostly combined with morning exercises in a single form.

This reflects the fact that teachers have little learning in this area and lack not only the relevant knowledge and theory but also practical experience. And also, parents of children seldom connect folk dance with their children's lives. The family's education for children rarely involves the knowledge of ethnic culture, but more about social order. Although some parents send their children to dance training institutions in order to cultivate their artistic accomplishments, only a small portion of children plan to learn and practice folk dance.

4. The Problems and Causes of the Folk Dance Culture Development in the Kindergarten

4.1 Analysis of the Problems and Causes on the Children Side

4.1.1 The Transient Duration of Children's Interest In Traditional Folk Dances

The continuous development of the activities gradually reveals that the children have burned out on the activities with caring out by minority dances at different stages, which is related to the age characteristics of the children. Children's physical and mental development requires constant exploration and discovery of new things, looking for new interesting points, otherwise they will easily lose interest.

4.1.2 Children's Lack of Expression of Beauty and Their Vulnerability to Peer Interference

Although children can feel the beauty of folk dance, they often use simple words such as "beautiful" and "nice" to describe it due to their lack of life experience and limited vocabulary. Moreover, some children lack the ability to think independently and are easily influenced by their peers to imitate other children's expressions, and lack the ability to think independently. The reason for this is that children inevitably copy and imitate as they gain knowledge and skills from interacting with their peers.

4.1.3 Children's Lack of Self-confidence and Concentration

Because the developmental level of each child varies, each child has a different understanding and awareness of beauty, which results in a variety of expressions in the process of appreciating, feeling and creating beauty. However, some children can feel the beauty of minority dances and express their understanding, while others are afraid to express their feelings. It is difficult for teachers to take into account the developmental differences of each child and design activities that are relevant to each child.

This is a result of the differences in the developmental levels of individual children, and the differences in children's developmental abilities also affect the implementation of the activities and the achievement of the final goals.

4.2 Analysis of the Problems and Causes on the Teacher Side

4.2.1 Teachers' Lack of Awareness and Ability to Develop Curriculum Resources

Since teachers lead the curriculum and play a decisive role in the development and utilization of curriculum resources, improving teachers' own theoretical foundation and professional level is an important condition for the full development and utilization of kindergarten-based art curriculum resources. However, the current situation is that many kindergarten teachers do not have a clear understanding of "curriculum resources", and their awareness of curriculum resource development is still in the initial stage of formation. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the training of teachers on the theoretical basics of curriculum resources, so that they can form a correct concept of curriculum resources and awareness of curriculum resource development, and continuously improve their ability to develop curriculum resources.

4.2.2 Teachers' Lack of Good Folk Dance Art Literacy

Whether teachers have folk dance art literacy serves as a prerequisite for developing folk dance kindergarten-based curriculum resources. If teachers have good folk dance art literacy, they can expand their horizons and provide assistance when developing curriculum resources. As a result, teachers are better able to plan, develop, and select and identify curriculum resources, and to integrate them organically, on two levels: breadth and depth. First, the breadth of teachers' folk dance art literacy is demonstrated by their understanding of the basic content of folk dance, and teachers should be proficient in a few typical folk dances such as Mongolian and Uyghur at least. Secondly, the depth of teachers' folk dance art literacy is demonstrated by teachers' understanding of folk dance that based on a more accurate grasp of the sources, distribution, meanings, ideological and emotional expressions and aesthetic meanings of folk dance, and have the ability to effectively interpret them in the context of the current culture.

4.2.3 Deficiency of Teachers' Ability to Implement Folk Dance

Given that many teachers' ability to control folk dance has yet to be improved, it is difficult for them to implement the kindergarten-based curriculum of folk dance effectively. The questionnaires and analyses distributed show that there are still a few teachers who do not have a deep understanding of the meaning of folk dance and do not fully master the skills related to teaching folk dance. Most teachers do not choose folk dance as their teaching activities and do not integrate good folk culture with the curriculum that they teach. This reflects that they still lack the importance of folk culture and do not realize the important influence of good folk culture on children's growth and development.

5. Analysis of the Problems and Causes on the Kindergarten Side

5.1 The Single Subject of Kindergarten-based Curriculum Resources Development

The principle of curriculum resource development is to adapt to the regional developmental and cultural differences, meeting the characteristics of kindergartens and the individual development of children. Therefore, in addition to curriculum experts, kindergarten leaders and kindergarten teachers, the subjects involved in the development of kindergarten-based curriculum resources should also include children, their parents and relevant community members. Most kindergarten-based curriculum resources development is mainly teacher-led, with occasional attention to the main role of children. However, this dilutes the subjective role of parents and relevant community members in curriculum resource development. The development of indigenous art curriculum resources should advocate the plurality of participating subjects.

In the process of the kindergarten-based curriculum resource development of folk dance, parents should become important participants in the construction of the curriculum, and their parents who are familiar with and love folk dance can be an important source of kindergarten-based curriculum resources of folk dance in the kindergarten. The development and utilization of curriculum resources requires the support of the society, especially the community where the kindergarten is located. For kindergartens, it is necessary to create a platform to provide opportunities for community members to participate in the development of kindergarten folk dance curriculum resources, to establish extensive contacts with experts and scholars who are proficient in folk dance art, and to cooperate with community arts organizations, institutions and museums. So that folk dance art education in and out of the kindergarten can be organically integrated. From this basis, extensive use of community resources can be realized to enrich the content of folk dance garden-based curriculum resources.

5.2 Lack of Appropriateness of the Content of Folk Dance Education Activities

There are three main sources of folk dances used in kindergartens, one of which is the folk dance curriculum based on kindergarten-based textbooks, which has been practiced by kindergartens for many years and has strong reference teaching; the second is folk dances obtained from the Internet, some of which have been adapted by others, and the meaning of folk dance is missing; the third is folk dance resources obtained from traditional villages, which are more original, with uneven difficulty of movements, and not suitable for children to learn.

5.3 Imperfect Evaluation System of Kindergarten-based Curriculum Resources Development

Evaluation of kindergarten educational activities is an important part of the evaluation of kindergarten education. The evaluation of kindergarten-based curriculum resource development is to make value judgments about the whole process, including the determination of the development purpose, the development process, and the development results. However, the current situation is that the traditional education evaluation mechanisms do not cover this aspect, and the evaluation system for the development of kindergarten-based curriculum resources is not perfect. The development and utilization of kindergarten-based curriculum resources requires a lot of human, material and financial

resources for kindergartens, and a lot of energy for teachers. In the case of an imperfect evaluation system, kindergarten teachers' enthusiasm for curriculum resource development and utilization is reduced, which affects the quality of activities.

5.4 Analysis of Social Aspects and Reasons

Kindergarten lacks funds for curriculum development. It is well known that the economic foundation determines the superstructure, and all educational activities in kindergartens are subject to the constraints of economic conditions. As some kindergartens in less developed areas are located in the local economic development is relatively backward, the government's financial support for basic education, especially preschool education is very little, kindergartens have little funding for the development of kindergarten-based curriculum. Since the development of curriculum resources is a process that needs to be constantly developed and updated, the lack of research funding makes it more difficult to develop kindergarten-based curriculum.

6. Exploration on the Development Path of Folk Dance in Kindergarten

6.1 Scientificization of Teaching Contents

Preschool children are still at a stage where they are curious about all kinds of things, so their attention is easily scattered and it is difficult for them to focus on the same thing for a long time. The teaching of folk dance, as a systematic and long-term process, requires scientific teaching contents, because it is conducive to grasp children's attention and improving teaching efficiency.

During the teaching process, teachers should screen the teaching resources and choose ethnic cultural resources with more obvious ethnic characteristics for organic integration as well as efficient allocation, and at the same time they combine the ethnic characteristics of different ethnic groups to design the content of ethnic minority dance teaching. It is necessary to take into the full consideration about the acceptance ability and physical development rules of children, and to teach within the acceptance range of children. Take Dai as an example, teachers can choose the famous Dai dance-- "Peacock Dance" when teaching both with distinctive national characteristics and within the acceptance range of children.

6.2 Improvement of Teachers' Comprehensive Quality

Since folk dance has its own uniqueness, it requires teachers to have certain relevant knowledge, such as knowledge of folk dance, folk culture and corresponding folk dance skills. At the same time, teachers should have certain experiences in teaching folk dance and be able to guide children to learn the dance in an orderly manner.

The following are two aspects of how to improve teachers' comprehensive literacy. On the one hand, teachers can personally strengthen their theoretical learning, and use their spare time to read more, and collect and study relevant dance teaching materials and learn ethnic theory knowledge, which continuously improve their knowledge reserves. On the other hand, kindergartens should give full play to their auxiliary role in teaching, and increase and strengthen the professional training of early

childhood teachers and improve their dance skills. On the basis of *Kindergarten Education Guideline*, kindergartens should govern and standardize teachers' dance teaching behaviors and promote the innovation of dance teaching methods, so as to promote the efficiency of dance teaching for children.

6.3 Optimization of the Teaching Environment

The environment undoubtedly plays a subtle role in children's learning and development. In view of this, teachers can create a relaxed and pleasant teaching environment through the creation of ethnic theme walls, highlighting the infectious power of ethnic culture. Through effective communication with children, teachers can explore and analyze their mental activities from the perspective of children as the basis for the design of the dance curriculum.

Meanwhile, teachers can choose appropriate ethnic music according to the state of children in the selection of music. For example, in the afternoon playtime, teachers can choose such cheerful and relaxing songs as *Lift up Your Veil* to create a cheerful and relaxing game environment, which can help fully mobilize children's passion for learning and their love for folk culture.

7. Significance of Folk Dance Culture in Kindergarten Development

Firstly, by combining folk dance culture with kindergarten curriculum, we can better develop children's aesthetic ability and improve their dance appreciation and performance ability. Secondly, we can promote the development of children's motor skills on the basis of conforming to the law of their physical and mental development. For example, the learning of folk dance movement "moving neck" can exercise the cervical flexibility of children; the learning of Dai dance movement "peacock hand" is conducive to the development of children's imagination and creativity. At the same time, those ethnic dance cultures with distinctive ethnic characteristics can easily capture children's curiosity, so as to achieve the purpose of sowing the seeds of ethnic culture in children's hearts. Third, folk dance culture, as an important expression of our national culture, represents the crystallization of the wisdom of our working people. The exchange and integration of various ethnic dance cultures is the expression of the Chinese national community. Through the organic combination of folk dance culture and early childhood curriculum, children realize that all ethnic groups are one big family, which achieves the initial sowing of Chinese national community consciousness in the hearts of children.

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