

Ethnic Musical Instruments Entering Campus: A Case Study of Longhui Experimental Primary School in Yiwu

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Abstract: As a core carrier of traditional Chinese music culture, ethnic instrumental music embodies the aesthetic value of Chinese civilization and the achievements of Chinese musical art. However, under the impact of Western instruments and global pop culture, it faces inheritance dilemmas such as a shrinking audience and disconnection from younger generations. In response to national and local inheritance policies, Yiwu Longhui Experimental Primary School (LEPS)—located in the economically developed and culturally inclusive Yiwu—has promoted ethnic instrument teaching (focusing on bamboo flute, guzheng, and erhu). This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, including questionnaires for 480 students, in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, and classroom observations, to explore the school's practices. It summarizes successful experiences such as scientific curriculum planning, interdisciplinary integration, and school-organization cooperation, identifies problems including inadequate teaching methods, insufficient professional teachers, and limited teaching content, and proposes corresponding countermeasures. The research aims to provide practical references for ethnic musical instrument education in primary and secondary schools.

Keywords: ethnic musical instruments, instrument teaching, longhui Experimental Primary School, practical research, aesthetic education, cultural inheritance

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Ethnic musical instruments like bamboo flute, guzheng, and erhu are treasures of Chinese traditional culture, but their inheritance is challenged by Western musical instruments and global pop culture, leading to a shrinking audience and disconnection from youth. The "Ethnic Musical Instruments Entering Campus" campaign has become a key strategy for cultural preservation and aesthetic education reform. LEPS, a pioneer in school-based ethnic instrument courses, offers a representative model, especially given its location in the internationally oriented Yiwu.

1.2 Research Significance

Theoretically, this study enriches the theoretical framework of traditional music education by examining the integration of ethnic instruments into primary school education, addressing the research gap in practical inheritance compared to Western instrument pedagogy. Practically, it summarizes effective teaching strategies, helps improve teachers' professional competence, and highlights the educational value of such programs in enhancing students' aesthetic literacy, cultural identity, and national self-confidence.

1.3 Literature Review

Existing scholarly work on ethnic instrument education primarily clusters around three interconnected aspects:

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Theoretical exploration: Scholars like ^[1] Zhao (2024) emphasize the moral education and cultural cultivation functions inherent in ethnic instrumental music, proposing strategic frameworks for school-based curriculum development. Similarly,^[2] Li (2024) advocates for establishing independent, dedicated courses for ethnic instruments within basic education to ensure structured learning. Practical implementation paths: Researchers such as ^[3] Zhang (2024) propose "cultural immersion" teaching methods to counteract student cognitive biases and address the chronic shortage of specialized teachers. Meanwhile, ^[4] Tie & Guo (2023) have constructed a detailed three-stage developmental model (encompassing cognitive introduction, practical skill training, and creative innovation guidance) alongside a multi-stakeholder collaborative mechanism involving schools, communities, and cultural institutions. School-based teaching status and challenges: Studies by ^[5] Li (2024) introduce innovative pedagogical methods like contextual teaching and cooperative learning tailored for ethnic instruments. ^[6] Li (2023) identifies persistent dilemmas in implementation, including severe teacher shortages and imperfect evaluation systems, proposing an integrated implementation framework that combines school-based curriculum design with local cultural resources. However, a conspicuous gap remains: few studies have undertaken a systematic, multi-method analysis of ethnic instrument education practices within specific, culturally diverse regional contexts like Yiwu. This gap underscores the novelty and contextual relevance of the present research, which aims to provide a detailed, localized case analysis.

1.4 Research Methods

Literature Review: Systematic analysis of academic studies from CNKI, Wanfang Data, and Du Xiu Academic.

Questionnaire Survey: 480 questionnaires distributed to LEPS students to investigate their perceptions, attitudes, and learning difficulties.

In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with teachers (principal and project coordinator) and 15 stratified sampled parents.

Educational Field Observation: Observations of classroom teaching, extracurricular clubs, and school performances.

2. Investigation and Analysis of LEPS's Initiative

2.1 Value and Significance

Fulfilling Aesthetic Education Goals: Aligned with national policies, LEPS integrates ethnic instruments into the core curriculum, enriching aesthetic education content.

Cultivating Aesthetic Ability: Through school-based courses and thematic concerts (e.g., "Silk and Bamboo Elegance"), students refine technical skills and enhance aesthetic sensitivity.

Enhancing Cultural Identity: By learning class pieces like Jasmine Flower and Galloping Horses, combined with cultural activities (e.g., "National Music Floats" week), students foster cultural identity and national pride.

2.2 Investigation Results

Teacher Interviews: Key challenges include unbalanced teaching staff (intermittent external experts and internal teachers lacking specialized training), fluctuating student interest due to pop culture and academic pressure, and outdated teaching materials focusing on rote skills.

Parent Interviews: Parents support the program for cultivating children's patience and cultural awareness, suggesting more parent-child activities. Their main concern is time conflict with academic study, advocating for a reformed evaluation system emphasizing progress over results.

3. Main Forms and Approaches

School-Based Curriculum: A three-tiered framework: enlightenment courses (Grades 3-6), art clubs, and campus performances, supported by specialized teaching guides and venues.

Integration with Regular Music Classes: Teachers integrate cultural context (e.g., comparing Mongolian morin khuur with Jiangnan silk and bamboo music) and link music theory with ensemble practice.

Club Activities: Annual "Campus Ethnic Instrument Competitions" stimulate learning motivation, forming a "competition-driven learning" cycle.

4. Key Experiences

Scientific Curriculum Planning: Phased courses for different grades (enlightenment for Grades 1-2, skill training for Grades 3-4, ensemble for Grade 5, and integrated appreciation for Grade 6) with strict teaching management.

Interdisciplinary Integration: Linking ethnic instrument teaching with History (e.g., Zenghouyi Chime Bells) and Chinese Culture to promote comprehensive cultural inheritance.

School-Organization Cooperation: Partnering with professional orchestras and intangible cultural heritage institutions to invite artisans for instrument-making demonstrations and workshops.

5. Problems and Countermeasures

5.1 Main Problems

Inadequate teaching methods (over-reliance on "teacher-demonstration, student-imitation") and rigid evaluation systems focusing on technical skills.

Insufficient professional teachers (heavy workload and Western music backgrounds).

Limited teaching content (outdated materials, lack of cultural context and off-campus practice).

5.2 Countermeasures

Optimize Teaching and Evaluation: Adopt student-centered methods (e.g., Kodály, Orff-Schulwerk) and a multi-dimensional evaluation system (50% performance skills, 25% cultural knowledge, 25% appreciation ability) with qualitative feedback.

Strengthen Teacher Team: Recruit professional ethnic instrument teachers and provide training (expert lectures, apprenticeships with folk artists) and digital resources.

Enrich Teaching Resources: Update textbooks with cultural content and diverse repertoires, and organize field trips to museums and heritage sites.

6. Conclusion

Ethnic musical instruments are vital carriers of cultural identity and national confidence. LEPS's initiative has achieved remarkable results through scientific curriculum planning, interdisciplinary integration, and school-organization cooperation, but faces challenges in teaching methods, teacher competence, and content. To promote sustainable development, educational institutions should reform teaching systems, build comprehensive evaluation mechanisms, strengthen teacher training, and deepen social cooperation. Under the "double reduction" policy, LEPS's practice provides a replicable model for inheriting traditional music culture and promoting its creative development globally.

Project Source:

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