

Reform and Practical Exploration of Chinese Traditional Cultural Arts Curriculum in Guangxi Higher Education Institutions Based on Internationalization Needs-A Case Study of International Students in Guangxi

Tian Ye, Nong Haiyun

School of International Education, Nanning Normal University, Nanning, China

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Abstract: Amid globalization and the international dissemination of Chinese culture, Chinese traditional arts curricula for international students in Guangxi higher education institutions face systemic challenges, including insufficient faculty specialization, imbalanced regional resource allocation, fragmented curriculum structures, and superficial cultural identity cultivation. To address these issues, this study proposes a reform framework centered on a "dual-track" faculty system, where collaborative teaching between intangible cultural heritage inheritors and professional educators bridges gaps in technical expertise and intercultural communication competencies. The curriculum is redesigned into a "three-phase, four-dimensional" system, integrating tiered pedagogical designs with technology-enhanced learning (e.g., AR/VR applications) to align with ASEAN regional industrial demands. Concurrently, localized teaching resources are synergized with international practice platforms, fostering a tripartite reform model of "curriculum-resource-practice" integration. This research aims to elevate Chinese traditional arts education from cultural experience to value-based identity formation through faculty optimization, curriculum innovation, and evaluation mechanism refinement. Such reforms are critical to advancing the China-ASEAN cultural community by nurturing cross-cultural ambassadors equipped with both technical mastery and deep-rooted cultural understanding.

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, Chinese culture is being disseminated at an unprecedented speed and breadth through the Internet, new media, and diverse international exchange platforms. Its rich connotations and unique charm have garnered widespread global attention. Concurrently, international students in Guangxi have demonstrated a strong interest in Chinese traditional arts curricula, such as calligraphy, painting, music, and martial arts. They seek not only to explore the historical depth of Chinese culture but also to engage in interactive experiences and scenario-based teaching methods for more vivid and immersive learning. However, Chinese traditional arts education faces dual realities in an internationalized context: challenges including homogeneous

traditional teaching models, instructors' underdeveloped cross-cultural communication competencies, and incomplete assessment systems ; and opportunities to leverage modern information technologies, innovative pedagogical approaches, and diversified curriculum design to foster Sino-foreign cultural exchange and enhance global competitiveness.

2. Challenges Facing Chinese Traditional Arts Curriculum in Guangxi Higher Education Institutions

Chinese traditional arts curricula hold an irreplaceable role in inheriting and promoting China's outstanding cultural heritage. However, under current conditions, these courses confront multifaceted challenges. A review of relevant literature reveals inconsistent curriculum structures for Chinese traditional arts courses within international Chinese education programs across Guangxi higher education institutions. There is no unified standard for instructional content, pedagogical approaches, or expected learning outcomes. Some institutions offer these courses as electives, while others have not established them at all, resulting in a level of institutional prioritization far below their intrinsic cultural value. Consequently, the significance of Chinese traditional arts curricula remains inadequately emphasized in practical teaching, with their theoretical value misaligned with real-world application. Urgent reforms and innovations are needed to address these systemic shortcomings[1].

2.1 Structural Contradictions between Teacher Professionalization and Pedagogical Adaptability

2.1.1 Dual Deficiencies in Technical Proficiency and Cross-Cultural Competence Current

Instructors of Chinese traditional arts courses face a dilemma of "skill-pedagogy dissociation." On one hand, international Chinese language teachers lack systematic training in specialized arts skills (e.g., GuQin, Tai Chi, Tea ceremony), resulting in courses remaining at the level of "technical imitation" and failing to interpret cultural core values (e.g., teaching Tai Chi movements without contextualizing its "Yin-Yang balance" philosophy)[2]. On the other hand, teachers exhibit weak cross-cultural instructional capabilities, particularly when addressing ASEAN international students, as they fail to adapt methodologies to learners' cultural backgrounds. For instance, scholars such as Liang Zehong (2015) noted: "Vietnamese students' comprehension barriers regarding the philosophical essence of calligraphy (e.g., 'rhythmic energy' or qiyun) were not pedagogically resolved through targeted interventions". Additionally, cases of underutilized traditional musical instruments in U.S. Confucius Institutes further highlight how insufficiently skilled instructors directly undermine curriculum effectiveness[3].

2.1.2 Imbalanced Regional Resource Allocation and Faculty Training Mechanisms

The "core-periphery" resource disparity among higher education institutions in Guangxi profoundly reflects structural contradictions in regional educational resource distribution. In terms of faculty allocation, central cities like Nanning and Guilin leverage key universities (e.g., Guangxi University, Guangxi Normal University) to form resource clusters, while peripheral regions face chronic shortages of double-qualified teachers (those proficient in both theory and practice) . For instance, Guangxi Normal University's Teacher Training Center in Guilin—the region's core institution for faculty development—prioritizes resource allocation to central cities, leaving universities in Hechi and Baise struggling to recruit full-time intangible cultural heritage (ICH) inheritors or professional arts instructors. Consequently, courses are often temporarily taught by language faculty, resulting in superficial skill imitation rather than cultural depth[4].

In terms of infrastructure, central cities benefit from policy and funding advantages. Guangxi Minzu University in Nanning, for example, operates a dedicated ICH practical training base, whereas universities in Chongzuo and Laibin lack even basic traditional musical instruments, forcing instructors to replace hands-on practice with theoretical lectures. This gap perpetuates outdated pedagogical models: While Guilin-based institutions have begun integrating VR technology into calligraphy instruction, peripheral regions remain confined to the "teacher demonstration–student replication" approach, failing to innovate with modern tools or local cultural elements like Zhuang brocade or Dong ethnic polyphonic singing[5].

The stagnation of curriculum systems is directly tied to faculty structures. Central universities employ dual-track faculty systems through initiatives like the "Resident ICH Inheritor Program"—exemplified by Guangxi Art College’s workshops led by bronze drum casting masters. In contrast, underfunded peripheral institutions rely on sporadic guest lectures, preventing systematic curriculum development. As a result, institutions such as Hechi University still adhere to the 2015 teaching syllabus, lagging behind the Ministry of Education’s 2024 mandate for digital inheritance of intangible cultural heritage[6].

2.2 Discontinuities in Curriculum Systems and Disconnects in Practical Implementation

2.2.1 Fragmented Tiered Design and Demand Misalignment: Curriculum-Regional Positioning Imbalance

Guangxi’s higher education curricula lack dynamic responsiveness to ASEAN international students’ needs. For example, Guangxi University of Foreign Languages offers “language-culture + Southeast Asian service” modular courses but fails to design tiered content aligned with HSK proficiency levels. Beginners struggle to grasp cultural concepts like calligraphy’s “brushstroke interplay” due to limited Chinese character literacy, while advanced courses lack alignment with regional industrial demands. As China-ASEAN cooperation hub, Guangxi’s cross-border tourism and commerce sectors urgently require “culture-language-skill” interdisciplinary talent. However, curricula remain confined to a linear “cultural exposure → skill training” framework. For instance, martial arts instruction neglects real-world self-defense applications and fails to integrate career pathways (e.g., cross-border e-commerce, international exhibitions), hindering students’ ability to translate skills into professional competitiveness.

2.2.2. Insufficient Integration of Traditional Arts and Modern Technology: Dual Constraints of Resource Allocation and Innovation Capacity

Guangxi institutions exhibit stark “core-periphery” disparities in technological integration. While some universities have adopted VR calligraphy replication systems, these tools lack synergy with regional cultural IPs, reducing technology to superficial demonstrations. Most institutions still rely on the outdated “teacher demonstration–student replication” model. Furthermore, lagging online resource development during the pandemic resulted in tea ceremony videos prioritizing one-way skill transmission over embedded Chinese grammar instruction (e.g., imperative sentence structures in tea rituals), missing opportunities for “skill-language-culture” integrated pedagogy.

2.3 Synergistic Dilemmas in Resource Provision and Cultural Identity Alignment

Prominent deficiencies in localization and tiered development of teaching materials have created systemic barriers. There remains a critical shortage of bilingual textbooks tailored for ASEAN international students, with existing resources overly focused on theoretical frameworks while lacking innovation in integrating regional cultural elements (e.g., Zhuang bronze drum culture,

Sino-Vietnamese border folklore). This disconnect hinders students' ability to grasp the cultural essence behind artistic skills. Such imbalanced resource allocation not only constrains the practical implementation of curricula but also exacerbates the fragmentation of cultural dissemination.

Guangxi universities predominantly rely on language instructors temporarily doubling as artistic skill educators, lacking a dual-track faculty system integrating "ICH inheritors + specialized teachers". For instance, while certain institutions have attempted to invite bronze drum casting inheritors to conduct workshops, most universities in resource-constrained regions can only secure external expertise through sporadic lectures, failing to institutionalize systematic curricula. This monolithic faculty structure perpetuates outdated pedagogical content, as evidenced by courses like paper-cutting and martial arts still adhering to obsolete syllabi that disregard contemporary imperatives like "digital ICH preservation". Concurrently, faculty deficiencies in cross-cultural pedagogical competencies result in undifferentiated teaching approaches for ASEAN international students. For example, Vietnamese students' conceptual barriers in grasping philosophical principles like yin-yang balance remain unaddressed, reducing instruction to superficial "technical mimicry" rather than enabling profound cultural value transmission.

Tan Meixi (2023) observed that while university students in Guangxi exhibit high emotional identification with Chinese culture (88.84% reported learning about culture through classroom activities, per survey data), there exists a significant disconnect between cognition and behavioral engagement. The study revealed that only 12.85% of students could accurately articulate the essence of China's outstanding traditional culture, with this superficial engagement manifesting in cultural arts courses[7]. For instance, international students participate in festivals like the "March 3rd Song Fair" yet struggle to transform fleeting interest into sustained cultural literacy, as curricula fail to integrate career-oriented skills (e.g., cross-border e-commerce, international event planning) or language acquisition needs.

Furthermore, cyberspace misinformation exacerbates the erosion of cultural identity depth. Some students express confusion over online parodies of traditional culture (e.g., irreverent memes distorting Confucian rituals), which amplifies ideological ambivalence toward cultural values. This aligns with findings from Guangxi's ethnic education reforms, where fragmented digital content has undermined systematic cultural pedagogy.

3. Innovative Integration Pathways of "Dual-Track" Faculty Systems and "Three-Stage Four-Dimensional" Curriculum Restructuring

3.1 Establishing a "Dual-Track" Faculty System: Integrating ICH Inheritance with Professional Pedagogy

The "dual-track" faculty system represents a collaborative model that bridges intangible cultural heritage (ICH) transmission and modern language education. Specifically, this system combines ICH inheritors (e.g., bronze drum artisans, Zhuang brocade masters) with professional educators through coordinated teaching mechanisms, leveraging their complementary strengths[8]. Supported by government funding, cities like Nanning and Guilin have established "Chinese Cultural Talent Teacher Training Centers" that integrate centralized training with regional outreach. In this framework, ICH inheritors not only demonstrate and preserve traditional crafts but also collaborate with university art faculty to co-develop standardized training curricula spanning foundational to advanced levels. For instance, bronze drum casting techniques are recontextualized using modern pedagogical tools such as 3D modeling and digital documentation, aligning with the "digital ICH preservation" mandates outlined in China's 2024 cultural digitization strategies. This synergy enriches teaching content while infusing traditional practices with contemporary educational methodologies, fostering multicultural innovation and sustainable heritage revitalization.

For regions with relative resource scarcity, traditional face-to-face instruction faces coverage limitations, necessitating the establishment of instructional video repositories and online training platforms to effectively mitigate spatial resource disparities[9]. By leveraging digital tools, local educators gain timely access to high-quality pedagogical resources, enhancing instructional competence while simultaneously creating expansive platforms and dissemination channels for ICH transmission. Consequently, institutionalizing a "dual-track" faculty system emerges as both a strategic resource optimization measure and a critical pathway to deepen the integration of cross-cultural pedagogical frameworks with skill-based education.

3.2 Implementing a Tiered Faculty Capacity Enhancement Program: Dual Enhancement of Technical Literacy and Cross-Cultural Competency

Elevating faculty capabilities constitutes a critical prerequisite for ensuring educational quality. Contextualized across diverse instructional scenarios and learner needs, the tiered enhancement framework prioritizes two focal areas:

3.2.1 Enhancement of Technical Proficiency

Language instructors serving dual roles in intangible cultural heritage (ICH) skill transmission must expand their competencies beyond linguistic expertise to encompass traditional artistry appreciation. To address this, a "40-hour ICH Skills Certification Training" has been designed, focusing on disciplines like calligraphy and tea ceremony[10]. The curriculum systematically integrates theoretical instruction (e.g., decoding the rhythmic principles of calligraphy) with hands-on practice (e.g., contextualizing tea ritual procedures within Confucian etiquette frameworks). Rigorous certification protocols ensure only qualified instructors may teach these courses, thereby standardizing pedagogical practices while incentivizing continuous knowledge renewal. This initiative strengthens interdisciplinary teaching capabilities, providing robust technical scaffolding for cross-cultural education.

3.2.2 Advancement of Cross-Cultural Competence

Globalization has amplified ASEAN students' fascination with Chinese traditional arts, yet cultural divergences in linguistic norms and aesthetic paradigms persist as pedagogical barriers. Establishing a "Cross-Cultural Divergence Case Repository" offers targeted solutions. For instance, comparative analyses of Sino-Vietnamese yin-yang philosophies and aesthetic correlations between calligraphy and Vietnamese Chữ Nôm scripts enable educators to design context-sensitive, interactive learning scenarios. Concurrently, mandatory semesterly scenario-based simulations (minimum 3 per term) immerse teachers in real-world challenges—such as resolving Vietnamese students' misunderstandings of qi dynamics in martial arts—to iteratively refine their intercultural pedagogical strategies. These measures collectively elevate the sophistication of globalized teaching practices[11].

3.3 Restructuring the "Three-Tier, Four-Dimensional" Curriculum System: Integrating Tiered Design and Technological Empowerment

3.3.1 Foundational Tier (Below HSK3)

Centered on "cultural symbol literacy", this tier prioritizes introductory exposure to Chinese characters, traditional arts, and folk customs. Curriculum modules like "Chinese Character Strokes and Paper-Cutting Composition" or "Tea Utensil Terminology and ASEAN Drinking Customs"

integrate linguistic elements with cultural symbol decoding, offering immersive learning experiences. Leveraging AR-enabled real-time translation and contextual annotations for cultural artifacts, students deepen their understanding through interactive engagement, achieving synergy between knowledge acquisition and cultural immersion.

3.3.2. Intermediate Tier (HSK4–5)

Focused on "skills + vocational integration", this tier emphasizes practical application through scenario simulations and case studies in cross-border e-commerce, international exhibitions, and related fields. For instance:

"Tea Art Presentation in Cross-Border E-Commerce Livestreams" merges traditional tea ceremonies with digital marketing strategies.

"Integrating ICH Elements into International Exhibition Planning" collaborates with ASEAN e-commerce enterprises for real-world curriculum co-design. Such approaches bridge theory and practice, equipping students with industry-aligned competencies for global market readiness.

3.3.3 Advanced Tier (HSK6)

Aimed at cultivating innovative leaders, this tier employs "Cultural IP Innovation Labs" to guide students in developing digital cultural products rooted in regional heritage (e.g., Sino-Vietnamese border bronze drum culture, Zhuang ethnic song festivals). Partnerships with platforms like the China-ASEAN Expo enable commercialization of student innovations, fostering entrepreneurial mindsets while invigorating regional cultural industries. This tier transitions curricula from traditional knowledge transmission to applied innovation, simultaneously fueling talent pipelines and technological advancement for regional economic growth.

4. Trinity Reform of "Curriculum-Resources-Practice": Layered Reconstruction of ICH Education and ASEAN Collaborative Empowerment

4.1 Modular Curriculum System Restructuring

The reform of Chinese cultural arts courses in Guangxi universities prioritizes layered and modular curriculum restructuring to address the limitations of traditional forms like calligraphy and dance. The proposed system divides courses into three progressive stages:

Foundational Cognition: Focuses on cultural literacy in Guangxi's ethnic heritage, such as Zhuang bronze drum culture and Dong grand song traditions, aligning with China's competency-based curriculum goals for cultural awareness. **Skill Development:** Offers specialized training in ethnic instruments, traditional opera, and ICH craftsmanship, reflecting the "integration of industry and education" principles outlined in ASEAN-China TVET cooperation frameworks. **Innovative Practice:** Integrates AI and VR technologies (e.g., digital heritage preservation tools) to drive smart transformation of traditional arts, mirroring global trends in digital education highlighted in China's 2024 digital curriculum standards.

4.2 Synergy of Localized and Internationalized Educational Resources

The reform emphasizes fusion of localized content and cross-border adaptability:

Localization: Customized textbooks like Guangxi-Specific Chinese Cultural Arts Tutorials embed regional symbols (e.g., bronze drum motifs) while aligning with ASEAN learners' linguistic needs, addressing gaps in bilingual material development critiqued in ASEAN-China education policy reviews. **Internationalization:** Establishes collaborative teaching teams combining university

faculty, ICH inheritors, and industry experts. Digital platforms (e.g., ASEAN-China Smart Ocean Center) enable cross-border resource sharing, supporting the "Big Banyan Tree" language connectivity initiative under ASEAN-China Vision 2030.

4.3 Practice Linkages, Evaluation Innovation, and Policy Safeguards

Key mechanisms to ensure reform implementation include:

Cross-Border Practice Platforms: Launches the China-ASEAN University Cultural Arts Alliance to host joint competitions and exhibitions, operationalizing the "ASEAN-China 100+100 Institutional Cooperation Flagship Programme". Educational policymakers should align assessments with real-world cultural events (e.g., border folk festivals), reflecting dynamic evaluation principles from China's competency-based curriculum reforms.

Three-Dimensional Dynamic Evaluation System: Assesses skill proficiency, cultural comprehension, and innovative application, drawing from China's core competencies framework (autonomous development, civic participation, cultural foundation). Progressive educators incorporate portfolio-based and performance assessments (e.g., digital ICH project portfolios), inspired by dynamic assessment models emphasizing learner-teacher collaboration.

Policy and Funding Safeguards: The ASEAN-China Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Alliance utilizes Consortium funds and certification mechanisms to support innovation, echoing Guangxi's vocational education reforms under the Belt and Road Initiative, while aligning with China's 2025 education goals for decentralized curriculum governance and digital resource sharing.

5. Conclusion

This study underscores the critical need for systemic reform in Chinese traditional arts education for international students in Guangxi higher education institutions, particularly in response to the challenges posed by globalization and the international dissemination of Chinese culture. The research identifies key issues, including fragmented curriculum structures, insufficient faculty specialization, imbalanced resource allocation, and superficial cultural identity cultivation, which hinder the effective transmission of traditional arts. To address these gaps, the study proposes a comprehensive reform framework centered on a "dual-track" faculty system and a "three-phase, four-dimensional" curriculum model. The dual-track system bridges the expertise of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) inheritors and professional educators, ensuring both technical proficiency and cross-cultural pedagogical competence. Meanwhile, the redesigned curriculum integrates tiered pedagogical designs with technology-enhanced learning (e.g., AR/VR applications), aligning with ASEAN regional industrial demands and fostering deeper cultural understanding.

The reforms emphasize the synergy of localized teaching resources and international practice platforms, creating a "curriculum-resource-practice" trinity model that elevates traditional arts education from mere cultural exposure to value-based identity formation. By modularizing the curriculum into foundational, intermediate, and advanced tiers, the framework caters to diverse learner needs, from cultural literacy to vocational integration and innovative application. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of policy safeguards, dynamic evaluation systems, and cross-border collaborations to ensure sustainable implementation.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader goal of advancing the China-ASEAN cultural community by nurturing cross-cultural ambassadors equipped with both technical mastery and profound cultural appreciation. The proposed reforms not address current systemic shortcomings but also pave the way for future innovations in globalized education, ensuring that Chinese traditional arts remain vibrant and relevant in an increasingly interconnected world. The findings

advocate for continued investment in faculty development, technological integration, and international partnerships to sustain the legacy of China's intangible cultural heritage while meeting the demands of 21st-century education.

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