Abstract: The core of aesthetic education for college students lies in fostering their sensitivity to beauty, cultivating their aesthetic judgment, and enhancing their overall quality to nurture well-rounded individuals. However, the current lack of aesthetic education courses in colleges mostly focuses on theoretical explanations, with a dearth of practical experience-based courses. Therefore, there is an urgent need to find suitable methods and approaches for implementing aesthetic education. Traditional theatrical performances encompass a wealth of artistic elements, and incorporating these elements into aesthetic education for college students can effectively enhance campus cultural activities and elevate their intellectual qualities. This paper aims to explore the aesthetic connotations of Chaozhou Opera culture and discover effective ways to integrate traditional theatrical artistic elements into the construction of campus spiritual civilization, thus harnessing the guiding power of aesthetic education.

Keywords: Artistic Elements; Chaozhou Opera; Aesthetic Education; Campus Culture

1. Introduction

Chinese theatrical culture embodies the wisdom and common values of the Chinese nation, containing numerous elements of beauty, such as the aesthetic form of performances, the decorative beauty of costumes, the colorful beauty of makeup, and the touching beauty of the plot, all of which encompass the spiritual essence of the Chinese nation. Drawing on the essence of excellent traditional Chinese culture and nurturing and practicing the core values of college students is an imperative step in the construction of their spiritual civilization. However, due to the significant differences between traditional theatrical culture and the lifestyle and mindset of modern society, when applying it to campus cultural activities, it often becomes a mere imitation without proper adjustment and transformation, focusing solely on theoretical indoctrination. While considerable progress has been made in promoting core values education in colleges, there is still a lack of sufficient research on the theoretical achievements of enhancing the overall quality of college students from the perspective of aesthetic education. Therefore, this paper takes a perspective of aesthetic education from the standpoint of cultivating individuals, using the artistic elements of traditional theatrical culture as an entry point to explore the path of cultivating campus spiritual civilization.

2. The Problems Commonly Existing in Aesthetic Education in Colleges

2.1 Insufficient Depth in the Implementation of Aesthetic Education Courses

Firstly, most colleges currently offer aesthetic education courses, but the content is narrow and lacks practical teaching. Colleges tend to overlook the importance of aesthetic education courses. Particularly in higher vocational schools, the focus is on professional courses, and competitions revolve around professional skills, resulting in an atmosphere on campus that prioritizes “intellectual education” over “aesthetic education”. Secondly, implementing aesthetic education courses in colleges requires a significant amount of educational resources, including textbooks, faculty, teaching facilities, online resources, and social resources. Insufficient allocation of these resources can hinder the in-depth implementation of aesthetic education courses.
Currently, aesthetic education resources mainly come from teachers and the institutional level, with limited integration of social resources. As a result, opportunities for aesthetic experience and practice are insufficient, leaving students with limited exposure to diverse channels for understanding and appreciating beauty.

2.2 Detachment from Real-Life and Lack of Practical Experience

Currently, the majority of aesthetic education courses are primarily taught through theoretical classroom lectures, or the concept of aesthetic education is integrated into student activities. These courses tend to be overly “high-end”, disconnecting from students’ actual lives and detached from education and campus culture. As a result, college students lack strong interest and vitality in their studies. Aesthetic education should strive to explore a broader range of artistic forms, and can collaborate with art groups, museums, and art galleries, integrating drama, film, and theater, which are forms that students are eager to engage with, into aesthetic education. By incorporating teaching practice experiences in classroom or extracurricular activities, students can engage in field trips, explore historical relics, and experience the captivating blend of modern society and cultural charm.

2.3 Weak Discernment of Beauty Due to the Impact of the Internet

There is a prevalent problem among college students where their aesthetic judgment is distorted, highlighting the urgent need for colleges to vigorously promote the organic integration of aesthetic education with campus spirit and cultural development [1]. In the era of artificial intelligence and big data, with the increasing number of channels for information and knowledge dissemination, information turnover speed has also accelerated. College students’ aesthetic perception is influenced by various distractions, such as being immersed in watching short videos and possessing a relatively restless mindset. Consequently, they struggle to dedicate themselves to reading and learning, let alone taking the time to appreciate traditional dramas, consequently overlooking the aesthetic beauty and profound meaning of traditional culture. Moreover, the market is flooded with superficial television dramas designed to generate popularity by appealing to various audiences, resulting in the erosion of college students’ correct aesthetic judgment. They struggle to recognize the elements of beauty within traditional culture, which hampers their intellectual and holistic development.

3. The Significant Importance of Incorporating Artistic Elements of Chaozhou Opera into College Students’ Aesthetic Education

Aesthetic education focuses on the aesthetic literacy of individuals in the domains of nature, society, and spirituality. It encompasses not only the field of art but also various aspects of daily life and humanities and social sciences. Aesthetic education has become an essential knowledge system in higher education and the cultivation of humanistic qualities. In current society dominated by artificial intelligence and big data, human abilities such as innovation, aesthetic perception, emotional experiences, and artistic creation cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence. Throughout history, opera has always been connected with fine arts. Chaozhou Opera, one of the ten major drama cultures in China, boasts a long history and represents an outstanding traditional art form with unique local characteristics. The artistic values embedded within Chaozhou Opera culture can provide college students with appropriate supplements in their aesthetic education[2]. Among the 800 samples we surveyed, 77.6% of the respondents considered the significance of Chaozhou Opera as important. This demonstrates that Chaozhou Opera holds a special and beloved position in cultural heritage and artistic performance. The artistic elements in Chaozhou Opera are diverse and encompass stage design, costumes, props, vocal tones, makeup, art design, and the beauty of the plot, among others. Several artistic elements can be integrated into college students’ aesthetic education:

3.1 The Dynamic Beauty of Chaozhou Opera Performances

Chaozhou Opera is a traditional local opera performed in the Chaoshan dialect, and its performance style is characterized by its dynamic beauty. The roles in Chaozhou Opera are divided into five categories: sheng (male role), dan (female role), jing (painted face role), and zhi (vocal role). Chaozhou Opera performances are known for their vibrant and lively movements, expressive facial expressions, and intricate makeup techniques. The dynamic beauty of Chaozhou Opera performances lies in the harmonious blend of music, dance, and vocal performance, creating an immersive and captivating experience for audiences.
role), mo (supporting role), and chou (clown role), each with its own distinct characteristics. On stage, actors present the characters’ personalities and emotions through body movements, facial expressions, coordinated and fluid gestures, as well as graceful postures and steps. This creates a unique artistic effect.

On October 8, 2016, the Guangdong Provincial Department of Education issued the Guidelines for Local Integrated Courses in Primary and Secondary Schools (Trial), which included “Guangdong Arts” as part of the local integrated curriculum system, with Guangdong Opera being included. Several schools in the Chaoshan region have already introduced Chaozhou Opera-related courses, sparking a trend of “Chaozhou Opera in Schools”. For example, in 2021, the “Chaozhou Opera in Schools” event was held at Tuobin Vocational and Technical School in Shantou City, where students had the opportunity to have close contact with professional performers, allowing them to experience the charm of traditional opera on the campus stage. Over the past five years, the Guangdong Chaozhou Opera Theater has organized over 200 “Chaozhou Opera in Schools” activities, involving nearly 70,000 students. Through a combination of performance, storytelling, learning, and practical activities, students create various unique dance movements and emotional expressions, immersing themselves in the plot and experiencing a strong visual and emotional impact, thus enjoying a profound artistic experience.

3.2 The Splendor of Chaozhou Opera’s Color Palette

The art of makeup in fine arts is closely connected to the facial makeup in theatrical performances. Without a meticulous understanding of makeup in the realm of fine arts, it would be impossible to stage a captivating theatrical performance. On stage, the characters in opera are categorized into four basic types: Sheng (male), Dan (female), Jing (painted face), and Chou (clown), each representing distinct behavioral characteristics. The creation of Chaozhou Opera’s facial makeup involves a combination of realistic and symbolic exaggeration techniques, utilizing distortion, vividness, and symbolism to highlight the individual’s unique spiritual temperament and personality traits. In terms of artistic color, facial makeup art can portray the characters’ distinctive features by expressing their personalities through color. The choice of colors in opera facial makeup is deeply intertwined with our cultural heritage and daily customs. Currently, most research focuses on the historical origins of Chaozhou Opera, while the aesthetically pleasing aspects of its makeup, costumes, and headdresses are rarely utilized in college education. The visual impact created through the use of colors allows college students to experience the emotions of joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness conveyed by the characters, playing an essential role in cultivating the rich emotional world of college students [3].

3.3 The Aesthetic Beauty of Chaozhou Opera’s Stage Design

“Three-tenths focusing on the stage scenery, seven-tenths enjoying the performance”. The quality of a play relies not only on the actors but also on the resonance between the performers and the audience. Exquisite stage design sets the mood, reveals the theme, and leaves a deep impression on the audience, allowing the characters to express their inner selves and enabling the audience to truly immerse themselves in the story. During the Qing Dynasty, there were already over 200 Chaozhou Opera troupes, and from makeshift stages to professional theaters, the artistry of stage design in Chaozhou Opera gradually took shape. The stage design, tailored to the development of the plot and the emotions of the characters, provides a poetic atmosphere for the actors. Through appreciating Chaozhou Opera, college students can perceive the existence and power of beauty, thus cultivating their aesthetic taste and appreciation skills, which positively impact their daily life and work. The appreciation of stage aesthetics also helps students have a better understanding of themselves, their inner world, and enhances their ability to handle emotions and feelings [4]. Furthermore, stage aesthetics can stimulate the imagination and creativity of college students, promoting their development and innovation in the field of art. Therefore, integrating stage aesthetic education into campuses is a necessary step to assist students in better understanding themselves, broadening their horizons, enhancing their
aesthetic abilities, and fostering a positive attitude towards life and their worldview.

4. The Implementation Paths for Integrating Artistic Elements into Aesthetic Education

4.1 Establishing Aesthetic Education Bases on Campus to Provide College Students with a Platform for Autonomous Innovation

Due to the limited availability of classrooms, most college student clubs currently lack a fixed location for their activities, resulting in decreased enthusiasm among students to participate in extracurricular events. Without a sense of belonging, many clubs struggle to develop and ultimately dissolve. Therefore, it is crucial to construct learning cultural rooms or aesthetic education bases that cater to the needs of students and facilitate the output of aesthetic courses. The importance and urgency of integrating aesthetic resources and establishing aesthetic practice bases in aesthetic education are emphasized in the Guidelines for Public Art Courses in Higher Education issued by the Ministry of Education in 2022. Aesthetic education bases themselves serve as effective means of cultivating artistic talent. Various forms of art, such as painting and calligraphy exhibitions, mixed media installations, sculptures, and theatrical performances, require students to experience the charm of art “on-site”. Through “seeing”, “listening”, “touching”, and “creating” in aesthetic education bases, students can fully engage in the artistic process, immerse themselves in a beautiful environment, develop superior aesthetic discernment, and invigorate their imagination and creativity [5]. In addition to on-campus aesthetic resources, it is also beneficial to establish external aesthetic practice bases in collaboration with various institutions. By integrating local historical and cultural villages, art museums, intangible cultural heritage sites, calligraphy and painting associations, and other art-related institutions, a rich and diverse range of practical resources and platforms can be provided for aesthetic education in colleges, addressing the issues of limited and monotonous teaching and practice bases.

4.2 Enhancing the Abundance and Artistry of Cultural Activities on College Campuses

Aesthetic education possesses a unique and profound ability to inspire and permeate, offering educational functions that purify the soul, refine one’s sentiments, and perfect one’s character[6]. The goal of aesthetic education in colleges is to continuously strive towards cultivating individuals who are free and well-rounded. Aesthetic education serves as an indispensable tonic for personal development during the college years. There are various forms in which aesthetic education can be conducted, namely through the acts of seeing, listening, and performing. Currently, colleges organize numerous art-related activities or courses, but many are primarily theoretical in nature. While these activities may appear colorful, they often lack diversity in practice and experiential learning. To enhance the richness and artistry of campus culture, the following approaches can be considered: First, organize cultural activities in different forms and contents, covering multiple fields such as literature, art, sports, technology, and academia. These activities could include calligraphy and painting exhibitions, technological competitions, concerts, and theatrical performances. By integrating entertainment and education into education in colleges, a unified approach can be achieved. Second, explore and promote traditional culture by organizing lectures and performances that allow students to delve deeper into understanding traditional culture, thus enhancing cultural self-confidence and patriotic sentiment [7]. Third, normalize artistic activities by regularly hosting art-centered events, making art an integral part of campus life. Fourth, invite artists to campus, allowing students to closely experience the creative charm of artists through their interactions and artistic works.

4.3 Incorporating Exquisite Traditional Artistic Elements into the Campus Environment

The popularization and dissemination of traditional culture rely on relevant aesthetic and art courses offered by colleges. The aesthetic elements of traditional culture should be reflected in all aspects of campus life, silently and subtly influencing students’ daily routines. By fully utilizing the educational function of beauty found in every tree, brick, and stone on campus, students can acquire a
profound experience of beauty and enhance their ability to appreciate and create beauty. It is essential in daily education for college students, decorating the teaching environment comprehensively and in various forms. This can be achieved through the establishment of art corridors, cultural walls, sculptures, official WeChat accounts, and video platforms on campus. Through these channels, the artistic elements of traditional culture can be widely disseminated. For example, an exhibition showcasing the facial makeup of characters from regional operas, such as Chaoshan Opera, can be created. Additionally, the redesign of these characters can be incorporated into cultural and creative products such as stationery, backpacks, and mugs. By integrating the beauty of outstanding traditional culture into daily life, a vibrant campus culture and educational atmosphere can be fostered [8]. Furthermore, taking advantage of traditional Chinese festivals, activities related to traditional culture can be organized, using these festivals and significant commemorative dates as platforms. Through knowledge competitions and experiences of folk customs, education elements can be actively unearthed, guiding students to consciously inherit traditional culture and ignite their love for their hometown and motherland.

4.4 Integration of Art and Technology: Broadening Channels for Traditional Culture Dissemination

Due to the ever-advancing developments in technology, our lives have been profoundly impacted. The vast amount of information available on the internet and our digitized way of living have transformed our lifestyles. The progress of technology has presented both new opportunities and challenges for traditional culture. On one hand, the excessive inundation of people with information on the internet has resulted in decreased attention towards traditional culture. On the other hand, multimedia information transmission undeniably expands the channels for the dissemination of traditional culture [9]. However, the dissemination of traditional culture has been constrained by the limitations imposed by time and region. Nevertheless, the fusion of art and technology can break through these limitations. Through techniques such as digitization and virtualization, traditional culture can be presented within a broader expanse of time and space. For example, in the digital realm, traditional cultural images, audios, videos, and other materials can be digitized and disseminated through new media channels such as the Internet and mobile devices, allowing more people to have access to and understand traditional culture anytime, anywhere. Furthermore, in the realm of virtualization, techniques such as virtual reality and augmented reality can be employed to recreate traditional cultural scenes, allowing viewers to immerse themselves and experience the charm of traditional culture firsthand[10]. This enables them to appreciate the freedom, diversity, and creativity of artistic creation, succinctly and powerfully presenting the beauty of the fusion and collision between tradition and contemporary in an art form that meets the aesthetic demands of young people. Therefore, exploring the artistic elements within Chaoshan Opera and applying these elements in aesthetic education is of great significance.

5. Conclusions

Chinese excellent traditional culture, as the spiritual wealth of a nation, encompasses rich aesthetic values. Its educational impact is enduring, as it can deeply resonate with people and influence their entire lives. The integration of the beauty of excellent traditional culture with the cultivation of the spiritual civilization of university students is a long-term endeavor. It requires collective efforts from schools, students, and social resources, as well as multidimensional exploration. Providing students with an education centered around the essence of Chinese excellent traditional culture is an urgent task for every educator. Deepening students’ understanding of the beauty of traditional dramas serves two purposes. On one hand, it can perpetuate the vitality of “beauty”, revitalizing the splendor of tradition. On the other hand, it allows students to become truly well-rounded individuals, developing their intellectual, physical, and aesthetic capacities.

References

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