

Research on Teaching Strategies for Inheriting Ethnic Dance Culture in University Cheerleading Courses

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Abstract: Under the context of deepening cultural connotations in university sports and arts courses, the cultural capacity of cheerleading courses needs further enhancement, while ethnic dance culture also requires innovative pathways for pedagogical transmission. This study aims to construct a system of teaching strategies for integrating ethnic dance culture into university cheerleading courses. By analyzing the intrinsic connections between their bodily vocabulary and cultural carriers, it establishes a theoretical foundation for integration. Subsequently, a systematic content framework is designed, ranging from the extraction and adaptation of movement elements to course structuring. Finally, an integrated teaching pathway is developed, incorporating immersive instruction, bodily cognition training, and cultural expression evaluation. This provides a strategic framework with both theoretical and practical applicability, supporting innovation in cheerleading courses and the living inheritance of ethnic dance culture.

Keywords: university cheerleading; ethnic dance culture; teaching strategies; bodily vocabulary; cultural inheritance; course design

Introduction

University cheerleading courses hold significant value in enhancing students' physical fitness, teamwork, and aesthetic expressiveness. However, there remains room for deepening the cultural depth and localized characteristics of their teaching content. On the other hand, ethnic dance culture, as an important intangible cultural resource, requires its transmission within contemporary higher education to extend beyond the scope of traditional dance majors. It seeks integration with more diverse curricular forms to achieve broader recognition and dissemination. Therefore, exploring the transmission of ethnic dance culture within cheerleading courses can not only imbue cheerleading with a distinct cultural identity and unique artistic style, thereby enhancing its expressiveness and educational depth, but also open up a modern pathway for the expression and transmission of ethnic dance culture that is close to young students and full of dynamic vitality. This exploration carries necessity and urgency in promoting the interdisciplinary integration of sports and arts, innovating models for cultural education, and enriching the cultural connotations of university curricula. This study is dedicated to constructing a systematic and operable set of teaching strategies to address this dual demand.

1. Analysis of the Intrinsic Connection Between Cheerleading and Ethnic Dance Culture

1.1 The Cultural Attributes and Expressive Dimensions of Cheerleading's Bodily Vocabulary

The bodily vocabulary of cheerleading is not merely functional physical movement; it inherently carries specific cultural attributes and expressive dimensions. Examining its cultural genesis, modern cheerleading originated from group encouragement rituals. Its core vocabulary is built upon a foundation of strong rhythmicity, high-energy physical explosiveness, and distinct patterns of collective coordination. This vocabulary system emphasizes the precision of movements, symmetry and contrast in spatial arrangements, as well as the directness and outward nature of emotional expression, forming the unique identifier of cheerleading as a form of sports culture. Its expressive dimensions surpass mere technical display. Through variations in movement strength, speed, amplitude, and the flow and composition of formations, it conveys cultural connotations of team spirit, positive initiative, and celebratory ritual. The physical practice of cheerleading can be viewed as a dynamic, ritualized system

of non-verbal communication. Its cultural attributes are rooted in the mobilization of collective emotions and visual representation achieved through highly structured and stylized bodily dynamics^[1].

1.2 The Movement System and Aesthetic Characteristics of Ethnic Dance Cultural Resources

Ethnic dance cultural resources encompass a profound and self-contained system of bodily movement language and aesthetic philosophy. Its movement system often originates from specific aspects of life and labor, ritual ceremonies, or emotional narratives, taking shape through historical sedimentation and artistic refinement. This system not only includes unique basic movement elements such as hand positions, foot positions, steps, and postures, but also embeds rhythm guided by breath, kinetic characteristics formed by shifts in body weight, as well as rich facial expressions and subtle bodily language. Its aesthetic characteristics manifest in the pursuit of a high degree of unity in "form, spirit, strength, and rhythm," emphasizing the lyrical quality, procedural nature of movements, and the coherence of internal vitality. The core of ethnic dance aesthetics lies in conveying specific cultural psychology, regional character, and philosophies of life through bodily movement. Its movements serve as carriers with symbolic meaning and cultural coding, exhibiting an aesthetic style that is implicit and rich in metaphor. Together with specific music, costumes, and props, they constitute a complete system of cultural expression.

1.3 Points of Convergence Between the Two at the Level of Bodily Expression and Cultural Carrier

Cheerleading and ethnic dance share profound structural convergences at the levels of bodily expression and cultural carrier, which provides a theoretical foundation for their integration. On the level of bodily expression, both utilize the human body as a medium, achieving expression through the organic organization of elements such as time (rhythm), space (direction, composition), and force (energy). The linear power and clear rhythm of cheerleading can engage in dialogue with and complement the circular motion patterns and elastic rhythm characteristic of ethnic dance; the collective uniformity emphasized in cheerleading can also resonate with the concept of group harmony often found in ethnic dance. On the level of cultural carrier, both possess dual characteristics of ritual and performativity. Each is capable of bearing collective emotions, fostering group identity, and performing specific cultural spirits. The team vitality and enterprising spirit demonstrated by cheerleading can inject new dynamic forms into the modern expression of ethnic dance culture. Conversely, the profound cultural connotations and rich bodily symbols of ethnic dance can imbue cheerleading's bodily vocabulary with interpretable cultural depth and narrative potential, thereby facilitating a transformation from mere bodily technique display to culturally informed bodily narrative.

2.1 Principles for Extracting Ethnic Dance Movement Elements and Adapting Them for Cheerleading

2.1.1 Identification and Selection of Core Movement Symbols

The integration of ethnic dance cultural resources begins with the systematic identification and scholarly selection of its core movement symbols. This process must transcend the mere imitation of superficial forms, focusing instead on the typical postures, fundamental steps, and core motion trajectories that embody the unique kinetic rhythm and stylistic essence of the dance culture. The criteria for selection must balance the visual distinctiveness and cultural representativeness of the movements with their kinetic connectivity to fundamental cheerleading techniques-such as bouncing, weight shifting, and posing-ensuring that the chosen elements possess both pedagogical operability and cultural typicality^[2].

2.1.2 Principles for Translating and Reconstructing Movement Vocabulary

Integrating selected ethnic dance movement elements into the cheerleading vocabulary requires adherence to specific principles of translation and reconstruction. Translation involves the functional deconstruction of original movements, extracting their methods of power generation, motion trajectories, and rhythmic patterns, then reinforcing or simplifying them within cheerleading's power generation framework and rhythmic structure. Reconstruction pertains to the spatial reorganization and connective innovation of movements. Examples include linearizing the planar circular pathways found in ethnic dance, or imbuing slow, flowing movement sequences with the distinct acceleration and abrupt stops characteristic of cheerleading. The aim is to maintain the original movements' cultural

essence while adapting them to align with cheerleading's overall style and competitive requirements.

2.1.3 Stylistic Embellishment and Safety Adaptation

Following the translation of movements, stylistic embellishment and safety adaptation must be undertaken. Stylistic embellishment aims to retain the aesthetic essence of the ethnic dance through defining details such as facial expressions, fingertip articulation, and subtle bodily postures. Safety adaptation involves the evaluation and adjustment of the adapted movements based on principles of sports biomechanics. This includes assessing and modifying aspects like landing cushioning, joint alignment, and force loading to ensure a foundation for safe execution within the high-impact context of cheerleading, thereby achieving an organic unity between cultural expression and scientific training^[3].

2.2 Ideas for Creating Cheerleading Combinations and Routines Based on Cultural Connotations

2.2.1 Theme-Guided Narrative Structure Design

The creation process should be guided by the internal logic of specific cultural connotations or emotional themes, rather than the simple accumulation of movements. Inspiration can be drawn from ritual sequences, labor scenes, or natural imagery commonly found in ethnic dance to serve as a narrative blueprint, which is then transformed into the structural logic of progression within a cheerleading routine. For example, through changes in formations, orientations, and movement intensity, one can metaphorically represent a certain cultural ritual process. This approach allows the routine to present a narrative structure with a beginning, development, climax, and conclusion, thereby enhancing the participants' sense of cultural immersion and expressive depth.

2.2.2 Application of Cultural Metaphors in Spatial Arrangement

Spatial arrangement serves as a crucial visual language for conveying cultural connotations. During the creative process, one should consciously move beyond conventional geometric transformations and intentionally employ spatial patterns imbued with cultural metaphors. For instance, by simulating spatial concepts commonly found in ethnic dance—such as circular formations, progressive advancement, or the triad of heaven, earth, and humanity—meaningful spatial imagery can be constructed through the positioning and relationships of the performers. This approach to arrangement not only enriches the visual layers of the performance but also transforms space itself into an active vehicle for communicating cultural information^[4].

2.2.3 Integration of Musical Rhythm and Movement Rhythmic Flow

Music serves as a crucial link connecting the two cultural forms. The creative approach must transcend the level of mere rhythmic synchronization, striving instead for a deep integration of the music's inherent emotion, the timbres of ethnic instruments, and the rhythmic flow of the movements. The initiation of force, the extension process, and the static poses within the movements should correspond to the downbeats, melodic lines, and special sound effects within the music. Through the nuanced interpretation of musical details by the movements, the distinctive flavor of ethnic music can be visually presented through the physical dynamics of cheerleading, achieving a resonance at the same cultural frequency between auditory and visual elements.

2.3 Structured Progression and Instructional Sequencing of Course Content

2.3.1 Modular Content Development from Foundational Elements to Integrated Combinations

The course content should be developed in a modular fashion to establish a clear progression pathway. The foundational module focuses on the deconstructed learning and cheerleading-adapted practice of individual core movement elements from ethnic dance. The intermediate module develops these elements into short movement phrases and begins incorporating simple spatial arrangements. The advanced module emphasizes the integration of complete routines and the expression of complex narrative structures. Each module incorporates dedicated segments for understanding the relevant cultural background, ensuring the synchronous advancement of technical skill acquisition and cultural comprehension.

2.3.2 Progressive Sequence of Cultural Cognition and Bodily Acquisition

The arrangement of instructional progression should adhere to a gradual principle where cultural cognition and bodily acquisition mutually reinforce each other. In the initial stage, students establish a

preliminary understanding and aesthetic impression of a specific dance culture through video observation and movement origin tracing. In the middle stage, students repeatedly experience and validate the movement characteristics and cultural sensibilities through physical practice. In the later stage, students are guided to actively comprehend and express the underlying cultural connotations on the basis of mastering movement techniques, thereby achieving a transition from "formal resemblance" to "spiritual resemblance."

2.3.3 Phased Objectives and Assessment Benchmarks for the Instructional Cycle

The entire instructional cycle should establish clear phased instructional objectives and assessment benchmarks. The technical assessment benchmarks focus on the accuracy, degree of integration, and execution quality of the movements. The cultural expression assessment benchmarks, on the other hand, focus on the students' demonstrated grasp of style, emotional engagement, and the effectiveness in presenting the routine's cultural theme during practice. Through this phased assessment, teaching effectiveness can be promptly evaluated, and instructional focus can be dynamically adjusted. This ensures the course ultimately achieves the dual objectives of inheriting ethnic dance culture and enhancing cheerleading expressiveness.

3. Construction of a Teaching Pathway for Cheerleading Oriented Towards Cultural Inheritance

3.1 Application of Immersive Teaching Methods Guided by Cultural Experience

3.1.1 Symbolic Construction of Cultural Context and Perceptual Introduction

The primary step in this method involves the systematic creation of a distinctive ethnic cultural context within the classroom setting through symbolic means. This entails the selective extraction and symbolic representation of visual symbols (such as typical costume elements, props), auditory symbols (such as original music, rhythmic patterns), and even spatial arrangements associated with a specific ethnic dance. The objective is not to fully replicate the original environment, but to construct a "suggestive environment" capable of triggering cultural associations and emotional resonance. This ensures that before learners engage in physical practice, their multi-sensory channels receive directed cultural information input, thereby laying a cognitive and emotional foundation for subsequent embodied experience.

3.1.2 Guiding Kinesthetic Empathy Through Multisensory Channel Synergy

The core of immersive teaching lies in guiding learners to achieve "empathy" with cultural connotations through bodily kinesthetics. Teachers must move beyond verbal explanation, utilizing imagery guidance, metaphorical cues, and situational narration to transform technical instructions into bodily tasks rich with cultural meaning. For example, connecting cheerleading's aerial maneuvers to the imagery of "offering to heaven" or "exultation" found in ethnic dance, or linking explosive power to the shared joy of a bountiful harvest. This process emphasizes the learner's simultaneous mobilization of internal emotions and imagination while executing movements, allowing muscle memory to intertwine with situational and emotional memory, thereby achieving a deep integration of physical practice and cultural-psychological experience.

3.1.3 Phased Task-Driven Progression from Experience to Expression

Immersive experience must lead to effective cultural expression. Instruction should design progressive tasks that drive learners to transform content perceived from the context and experienced through empathy into explicit individual or collective expression. Initial tasks may involve simple bodily responses to a given cultural scenario, while advanced tasks require learners to utilize the acquired integrated vocabulary to create and perform a small-scale choreographic interpretation of a piece of music or a theme. Through this task-driven approach, learners gradually transition from passive cultural receivers to active cultural interpreters and expressers, thereby completing the cycle of immersive learning^[5].

3.2 Training Process of Imitation, Deconstruction, and Reconstruction Based on Bodily Cognition

3.2.1 Imitation Stage: Initial Incription of Bodily Schema and Style Perception

Imitation serves as the starting point of bodily cognition, focusing on establishing an accurate initial bodily schema. This stage requires learners to precisely replicate the external form, movement

trajectory, and coherent rhythm of ethnic dance movements through repeated observation and synchronized practice. The emphasis lies in cultivating the learner's acute perceptual sensitivity to distinctive stylistic features, such as meticulously imitating the undulation guided by specific breathing patterns, unique angles of joint rotation, and the lyrical coordination of gaze and hand gestures. This process aims to preliminarily internalize the stylistic imprint of the movements through external bodily discipline, thereby laying a material foundation for in-depth analysis.

3.2.2 Deconstruction Stage: Analytical Breakdown of Movement Elements and Comparative Principle Analysis

The deconstruction stage aims to elevate perceptual understanding to rational analysis. It guides learners in breaking down a complete movement sequence into its fundamental components: points of force initiation, axes of motion, trajectories of the center of gravity, rhythmic segmentation, and others. Through slow-motion replay, segmented practice, and theoretical explanation, the dynamic relationships among these elements are analyzed. Furthermore, their similarities and differences with cheerleading technical norms—such as the force application and spatial usage in a "Sharp Hit" stop or "Jazz" isolation—are compared. The objective of this stage is to enable learners to understand the "why" behind the movements, to discern the internal logic of different bodily cultural encodings, thereby achieving a leap from "knowing the form" to "understanding the principle."

3.2.3 Reconstruction Stage: Creative Integration of Cultural Elements and Personalized Expression

Reconstruction is the productive phase of the cognitive process, emphasizing creative transformation. It requires learners, based on the knowledge gained from deconstruction, to actively utilize ethnic dance elements as a "resource library." According to the requirements of the cheerleading routine regarding rhythm, dynamics, and spatial composition, they must then select, modify, and reorganize these elements. This process may involve altering an element's temporal sequence, embedding it into a new kinetic chain, or splicing it with other cheerleading techniques. Its advanced form encourages learners to attempt personalized expression while adhering to the core of the cultural style, thereby achieving an organic integration of cultural elements with individual physical characteristics and modern aesthetic demands.

3.3 Cultural Expression Assessment and Guidance Mechanisms in the Teaching Feedback Loop

3.3.1 Construction of Multi-dimensional Evaluation Indicators for Cultural Expression

Effective feedback relies on an evaluation system that transcends a purely technical focus. This system must encompass four core dimensions: integration, stylistic authenticity, expressiveness, and cultural transmission effectiveness. Integration assesses the logic and innovation in the connection of movements. Stylistic authenticity evaluates the grasp of the typical rhythm and essence of the ethnic dance. Expressiveness appraises the emotional engagement and dynamism of physical expression. Cultural transmission effectiveness evaluates whether the complete performance can accurately evoke associations with and emotional resonance towards the specific cultural characteristics in the audience. These multi-dimensional indicators collectively guide a comprehensive assessment of the "cultural inheritance" outcome.

3.3.2 Evidence-Based Formative Feedback and Dialogue Mechanism

Feedback should emphasize being process-oriented and constructive. Utilizing tools such as video recordings and movement trajectory analysis provides both teachers and students with objective evidence for repeated review. Feedback dialogues should revolve around specific evidence, for instance: "The power generation method for this turning movement more closely resembles the upright spinal rotation of cheerleading, rather than the waist-axis coiling characteristic of the original dance, resulting in a diminished sense of stylistic authenticity." This type of evidence-based, descriptive feedback concretizes issues and visualizes directions for improvement, transforming the feedback process itself into a deep learning experience involving collaborative analysis and equal dialogue^[6].

3.3.3 Tiered Guidance Strategies Targeting Precise Improvement

In response to problems identified through evaluation, tiered guidance strategies must be provided. For superficial cultural understanding, supplementary background narratives or imagery-deepening exercises can be introduced. For awkward technical integration, one can revert to the deconstruction stage to experiment with replacing single elements or reorganizing connection methods. For insufficient expressiveness, methods such as role-playing or the activation of emotional memory can be

employed. Guidance strategies must precisely target the root cause of the problem, providing a concrete pathway from cognitive adjustment to physical practice. This ensures students can gradually enhance the quality and depth of their cultural expression under clear guidance.

Conclusion

This study systematically demonstrates the feasibility of inheriting ethnic dance culture within university cheerleading courses through a progressive investigation across three levels: theoretical analysis, content system design, and teaching pathway construction. It also proposes a corresponding framework of teaching strategies. The research indicates that cheerleading and ethnic dance share profound structural compatibilities at the levels of bodily expression and cultural carrier, which forms the theoretical foundation for their integration. Building on this, the effective integration of content into the curriculum requires rigorous selection of movement symbols, scientific "cheerleading-adapted" translation, and meticulous design for integrating cultural connotations. At the level of teaching implementation, the key to success lies in constructing an instructional ecosystem that begins with deep cultural experience, proceeds through the imitation-deconstruction-reconstruction process of bodily cognition, and utilizes a closed-loop feedback system of multi-dimensional cultural expression evaluation. This strategic framework not only facilitates the creative transformation and innovative development of ethnic dance cultural elements within the cheerleading context but also provides a clear direction for enhancing the quality and expanding the substance of university cheerleading courses. Future research could further explore differentiated integration plans for ethnic dance resources from various regions, the mechanisms through which long-term instruction affects students' cultural identity, and the development of more refined assessment tools for evaluating cultural expression effectiveness.

Fund Projects

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