

Exploration and Practice Research of Manchu Art Education in Manchu Primary School from the Multicultural point of view in China

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Abstract

Manchu as China's third largest ethnic group, the population is over 10 million. The history of Manchu culture can be traced back as much as 7,000 years ago, and with a long history and splendid culture. In the modern times, there are not more than 100 people who can speak the Manchu language, the Manchu culture is in jeopardy.

This article focused on exploring the current situation of Manchu culture, inheritance and development at the Yongling Manchu Primary School observing how the school fulfills the required functions. The Manchu art is seen as a breakthrough which is the easiest way for pupils to accept, it shows in three aspects such as campus culture, the curriculum and teaching, extracurricular activities, exploring the effective paths of Manchu art education.

Keywords: Manchu art, inheritance and development, Manchu primary school, multicultural point of view.

Bádání a praktický výzkum mandžuského uměleckého vzdělávání na mandžuské základní škole z multikulturního pohledu v Číně

Abstrakt

Mandžuskové jsou třetí nejpočetnější menšinou v Číně, jejich populace je tvořena více než 10 miliony obyvatel. Historii mandžuské kultury lze vysledovat před více než 7000 lety, jedná se o nádhernou kulturu s dlouhou tradicí. V současné době nežije ani 100 lidí, kteří dokážou mluvit v jazyce Mandžusků, tato kultura je tedy v ohrožení.

Tento text se zaměřuje na zkoumání současné situace mandžuské kultury, kulturního dědictví a jeho rozvoje v základní škole Yongling, sleduje, jak tato škola plní požadované funkce. Mandžuské umění je vnímáno jako „průlom“, přijmout jej je pro žáky nejjednodušší. Realizováno je ve třech kontextech, kterými jsou: kultura kampusu, kurikulum a výuka a mimoškolní aktivity. Zkoumány jsou efektivní metody výchovy a vzdělávání mandžuského umění.

Klíčová slova: mandžuské umění, kulturní dědictví a jeho rozvoj, mandžuská základní škola, multikulturní pohled.

Introduction

Culture is the soul of an ethnic group, and is also the psychic stanchion to support the existence, development and multiply of an ethnic group. Therefore, inheriting and developing an ethnic's own culture is the most crucial foundation and premise.

China is a country with pluralistic cultural background of 56 ethnic groups, and each ethnic group has its own cultural characteristics. The *Han* is the largest ethnic group in China, the population accounting for more than 91% of the whole population in China. The Manchu, as a typical representative of the 56 ethnic groups, is China's third largest ethnic group, the population is 0.77% of the Chinese overall population. It is a member with a long history and splendid culture among the big Chinese ethnic family.

In the modern time, there are not more than 100 people who can speak the Manchu language, there are not more than 20 people whom can write Manchu words. In China, the mainstream culture is "Han culture"; if we do not take emergent measures, Manchu culture may disappear in a short period of time, and the inheritance and development of this splendid culture are in jeopardy.

The school as a social institution fulfills many functions that express what is useful for the society. As a mediating tool, the school is serving to certain goals that are dependent on diverse expectations and demand from the state and society, parents,

pupils, and other actors. Considering the relationship between resources and goals, we talk about school functions. Analysis of school functions is important for finding more effective forms of school education and creating ideal models for the school of the future. The functioning of the school is dependent on factors that work both within the school and in the external environment.

The classification of school functions, as presented by Průcha (2009), is well usable for our article. We will characterize them just shortly.

- Personally developing function – the aim is to develop the human's individuality (instruments to fulfill the function: health care, cultivation of individual abilities and emotional development)
- Culturally transmissive function – the aim is mediation of historically created culture, continuity in time, development of national identity and protection of cultural heritage (instruments to fulfill the function: knowledge of science, technology, art, work skills, spiritual and moral values),
- Ecological function – the aim is to protect the environment and to ensure sustainable development of society (instruments to fulfill the function: knowledge about the environment, creation of an emotional relationship to the nature and the ability to create a healthy environment),
- Social integration function – the aim is to strengthen the cohesion of society (instruments to fulfill the function: ensuring the fair access to education for everybody, balancing inequalities and disadvantages, education for human rights),
- Intercultural and globally integrative function – the aim is the education for partnership, cooperation and globalizing society (instruments to fulfill the function: the education for tolerance, cultivation of attitudes to differences and otherness, knowledge of contexts in European and global dimensions),
- Economic function – the aim is to increase the competitiveness of the economy and the prosperity of the society (instruments to fulfill the function: developing human resources, promoting flexibility and adaptability in the workplace, use of new technologies and developing of managerial skills),
- Qualifying function – the aim is to improve the employability (instruments to fulfill the function: developing creativity, autonomy and accountability, enhancing the share of general education, a broad foundation of vocational education, developing key competencies, working with information and ICT, critical thinking).

As a form of existence, at the same time as an important culture cell of society, school education should play its role in the function of Manchu culture preservation, inheritance and innovation. Especially at primary schools, the pupils' way of living at primary school will influence their attitudes and values in social life in the future.

This research selected the Yongling Manchu Primary School as a sample; it is the oldest school in China, its development is of great significance to the inheritance and development of Manchu culture. Therefore we focus primarily on the functions

that a minority school must fulfill, and we try to describe what activities the Yongling Manchu primary school does to meet these requirements.

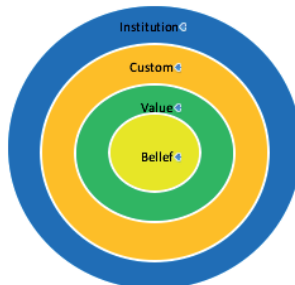
By analyzing the current inheritance and development of Manchu art at the Yongling Manchu Primary School we found that there are aspects such as campus culture, the curriculum and teaching, extracurricular activities, in order to search the reasons and deep culture origins of this situation, and explore effective paths to educate pupils in Manchu art, expect to make the Manchu primary schools an independent carrier of Manchu culture, make the value and belief of Manchu culture deeper rooted inside the pupils' heart, and enhance the pupils' sense of national identity and national confident.

1 The multicultural pattern of China

The term "culture" is derived from the Latin verb "Colere", which means farming land, and later on it extends to cultivating a personal interest, spirit and intelligence. The concept of culture was proposed by the British anthropologist Edward Taylor (Taylor, 1871), he defined culture as a whole complexity including knowledge, belief, art, law, ethics, customs, ability and habits leaned by a member of the society. In Chinese culture, the word can be traced back up to Zhouyi (Li, 1978), and it illustrated that culture is human culture, in which the people are in the central position.

In this research, culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God, reality, ultimate meaning), values (what is true, good, beautiful, normative), customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat), institutions expressing these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples, churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs etc.), which binds society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security and continuity (see Lausanne Convention, 1974) (Graf 1).

Figure 1
Levels of Culture



In China, a multicultural pattern has been formed; each ethnic group has its own cultural characteristics. The Han population is the largest, and in addition to the Han people, other 55 ethnic groups, are called “minorities” due to their smaller population. With Chinese society increasingly complicated and information circulation developing, culture revival transformation has been accelerating, and all types of cultural development are confronted with different opportunities and challenges. The Han culture is the mainstream culture of Chinese society, other minority cultures are faced with the crisis of assimilation. In this complex social structure of China, each kind of ethnic culture has its long history and splendid civilization, they are still destined to be in a great demand of a variety of different ethnic cultures serving social development, thus creating pluralistic culture in a complex social multi-cultural background of China.

The contemporary China presents a pattern of multiculturalism; a prestigious Chinese sociologist, anthropologist, ethnologist and social activist, Fei Xiaotong (Fei, 2005) stated that every ethnic group was displayed in its own unique features meanwhile it respects to others. Be compatible, and human unity and harmony will be achieved, which is considered as the shortest but most appropriate expression of multiculturalism in the Chinese academic circles. It means that people should firstly respect, cultivate and develop their own ethnic culture since each ethnic culture has its own essence. Secondly, it is required to respect other cultures and recognize the diversity of world culture, since respect for cultural diversity is an intrinsic requirement for developing their own ethnic culture. Finally, respect for cultural diversity is the inevitable requirement to achieve the prosperity of world culture. All ethnic cultures enrich world culture with its distinct national characteristics, and promote the development and prosperity of human civilization.

2 Manchu culture in the multicultural background of the contemporary China

The Manchu people mainly live in the northeast of China (Agui, 1988); they can be found in 31 Chinese provincial regions; there are a number of Manchu autonomous counties in China, such as Xiuyan, Xinbin, Qingyuan, Benxi, Beizhen and over 300 Manchu towns and townships.

The Later Jin (1616–1626) and Qing dynasties (1636–1912) are established by the Manchu, the Manchu was the only ethnic group in Chinese history which established the Central Plains Dynasty twice, and also ruled the last Chinese feudal dynasty – the Qing Dynasty for centuries, leaving huge amounts of material and cultural wealth to China (Zhang, 1999).

After the 19th century, most Manchu had perfected Standard Chinese, and the number of Manchu speakers was dwindling. After the Qing dynasty collapsed, the

Manchu language lost its status as the national language and its official use in education ended. The Manchu generally speak Standard Chinese today. The remaining skilled native Manchu speakers number less than 100; more than 10 million Manchu have lost their native language; only a handful of old people in remote areas continue to use the Manchu language and Manchu words. The Chinese Museum of the Imperial Palace and the national library still have a large collection of historical materials written in Manchu characters, and their translation and editing is in a difficult situation. Not to mention the Manchu folk custom and traditional festivals – these are still on the edge of extinction.

A large proportion of Manchu traditional culture and customs were affected and replaced by the mainstream “Han culture”, and therefore on the verge of disappearing. Even more, in the contemporary times, with the social globalization and progress of science and technology, common application of electronics and mechanization have been making people’s life more convenient and of higher quality, this causes Manchu people, especially teenagers, to increasingly neglect Manchu culture. Therefore, if we do not take emergent measures, the oral and written Manchu language, which was once authorized as “official language” in the Qing dynasty, may disappear in a short period of time, and the inheritance and development of this splendid culture are in jeopardy.

3 Exploration and practice of Manchu art education at the Yongling Manchu Primary School

3.1 The cultural heritage and development mission of school education

The cultural world is created by human beings; every ethnic group has its own culture, and education is the best glue that connects all the different periods of cultures. The changing ethnic cultures are kept, transmitted and innovated through dozens of generations’ education. Not only does education inherit symbols and behaviors that represent culture but it also internalizes its values and beliefs. As a form of existence, at the same time as an important culture cell of society, school education should play its roles of ethnic culture preservation, inheritance and innovation function (see more Antlová et al., 2015; Chudý et al., 2012).

Especially at primary schools, pupils’ way of living will influence their attitudes and values in social life in the future. At the same time, from the view of psychological developmental characteristics of primary school pupils, Robert S. Feldman (Feldman, 2013) stated that pupils are in a special period to get rid of the limitations of perception to get the concept of stability and conservation. Therefore, during the key period of primary school, pupils’ consciousness of ethnic culture should be strengthened, elements of ethnic culture should be integrated into the process of education, and the formation period of pupils’ national character and morals should be intervened comprehensively.

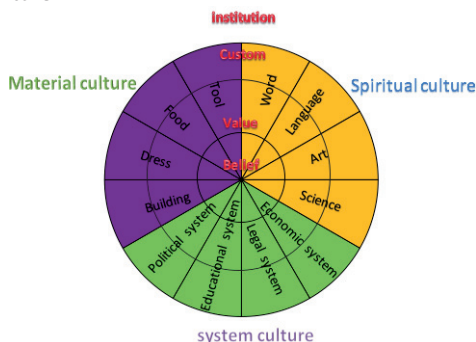
3.2 The profile of the Yongling Manchu Primary School

This research selects the Yongling Manchu primary school as the sample founded in the Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County in the Liaoning Province, to explore the current situation of Manchu culture inheritance and development at a Manchu primary school. The Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County is the first autonomous county established in China; the population of the Manchu is over 70%, and it is the birthplace of the holy land of the Qing Dynasty. Because it is the hometown of Manchu people, the Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County occupies an important position in the history of the development of the Manchu.

The Yongling Manchu Primary School was founded in 1952, there are 31 classes, 108 in-service teachers and 1,311 pupils, 94% of them are Manchu pupils. About half the Manchu people live in the Liaoning Province; it has the largest Manchu population. The Yongling Manchu Primary School is the only Manchu primary school in the Liaoning Province. In August 2009, the Yongling Manchu Primary School creatively carried out practical teaching with Manchu characteristics, under the guidance of experts a Manchu language textbook (Daily Language 100) and Manchu history textbook (Manchu Folkways and Customs) were compiled. Therefore, the Yongling Primary School shoulders the important task of inheriting and developing Manchu culture, founding the special modern significance and remote historical significance.

Manchu culture is an integrated system of belief, value, custom, institutions. Manchu culture can be divided into material culture, spiritual culture and system culture, including food, tools, words, art, legal system, etc. This research selected the Manchu art education at the Yongling Manchu Primary School as a breakthrough which is easiest for pupils to accept, it can bring pupils into the Manchu art palace where they can enjoy Manchu art history, exquisite artwork, graceful Manchu songs, where they can appreciate truth, goodness, and beauty to gradually form a splendid moral quality (Graf 2).

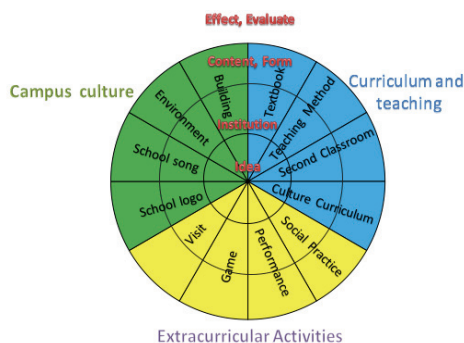
Figure 2
Composition of Culture



Furthermore, this research focuses on three aspects to analyze the situation of Manchu art education at the Yongling Manchu Primary School; these are campus culture, the curriculum and teaching, extracurricular activities such as the school song, school logo, building decoration, a Manchu art course and textbooks, traditional games, festival Performance, etc. These three aspects make Manchu art education a complete system, to enable pupils to feel the charm of Manchu art from what they see, hear, learn, and do (Graf 3).

Figure 3

Manchu Art at primary school



3.3 Campus culture of the Yongling Manchu Primary School

Campus culture is specific cultural atmosphere and spiritual environment of the school; it not only includes the material contents such as campus landscape, campus publicity column, campus wall graffiti, campus building design, campus building decoration, cultural exhibition hall, etc. It also includes the spiritual contents such as the school song, school badge, campus etiquette, school tradition, school spirit, style of study, interpersonal relationship, psychological atmosphere, school rules and regulations and school members in the common activities of the formation of the non-normative code of conduct. The Yongling Manchu Primary School is full of elements of Manchu art from the school culture environment to spiritual atmosphere.

Firstly, on the aspect of the campus landscaping. The characters which written on the school gate and publicity column are both in the Manchu and Chinese languages; the school publicity column shows photos of Manchu traditional culture and Manchu pupils taking part in Manchu festivals and activities; the walls around the school were covered with a total of hundreds of graffiti, displaying Manchu historical allusions and traditional customs with colorful graffiti. The pupils are influenced by what they con-

stantly see and hear at the primary school what makes them immersed in Manchu culture.

Secondly, on the aspect of the building design and building decoration. The style of the Yongling Manchu Primary School buildings was built in accordance with the architectural style of the Qing Dynasty, with exquisite carving and overhanging eaves, red walls and white columns, full of Manchu characteristics. Inside the building, each floor of the building exhibited pictures and works which are beautiful rural sceneries, Manchu customs, Manchu characters, Manchu paper-cuts, showing gratifying achievements of the Manchu culture into the campus. There is also a Manchu cultural exhibition hall in the school, showing the historical development of the Manchu and various types of Manchu art works.

Thirdly, on the aspect of the spiritual environment. The school holds exhibitions and competitions of Manchu art works regularly; it exhibits the pupils' Manchu cultural works of art, such as excellent photography, painting, calligraphy, paper cutting works. The works not only beautify campus environment, making it full of the atmosphere of Manchu culture, and stimulate the Manchu pupils to discover and create Manchu cultural beauty. This Manchu primary school gives them a great deal of affirmation and encouragement through selected and exhibited of the Manchu art form of the primary school pupils.

Fourth, on the aspect of the school spirit and campus etiquette. The Yongling Manchu Primary School created its own school song in the Manchu language and a school badge with an eagle, the Manchu traditional totem symbolizing the free, unrestrained and courageous character of the Manchu people. Every Manchu pupil has a leaflet about Manchu etiquette, such as the Manchu tradition greeting, appellation, the collocation of clothes and the etiquette of eating; Manchu pupils have become accustomed to get along with others in the form of the Manchu traditional etiquette in daily life.

3.4 The art curriculum and teaching at the Yongling Manchu Primary School

The Manchu School-based Curriculum is like a tree grown from the traditional soil of Manchu culture, deeply rooted in Manchu culture but also fully absorbing the nutrition from modern society; it is intertwined with the traditional and modern, followed by school education and the Manchu cultural tradition. The Manchu School-based Curriculum is not only an important position to inherit Manchu culture, but also a symbol to promote the spirit and value of Manchu culture. The Yongling Manchu Primary School compiled a series of Manchu school-based teaching materials and reading books under the headmaster's supervision, and it has been carrying out the Manchu school-based curriculum for 8 years.

First of all, on the Manchu art textbooks. In order to strengthen the popularization and promotion of Manchu culture and to arouse pupils interest in learning Manchu art, the Yongling Manchu Primary School compiled a series of popular and interesting teaching materials which are easy to understand, such as 100 Manchu sentences, Manchu language textbooks, Manchu culture textbooks, Manchu paper-cut textbook, etc.

In order to inherit Manchu art at the same time, it deals with the knowledge structure and learning characteristics of children. In terms of use of the Manchu language, it continues to use the standardized teaching system of Manchu in the Qing Dynasty, taking into account the knowledge structure of modern pupils, trying to use the daily life words of pupils, adopt a step-by-step approach, enhance pupils' confidence in learning. In terms of the picture usage and content structure, it uses exquisite Manchu art pictures and Manchu folk pictures to improve students' interest, and a small Manchu tradition game is designed at the end of each chapter. In terms of Manchu stories and poems, it selects the most classic content of Manchu culture which can be deeply rooted in the pupils' hearts, making the contents of the textbooks informative, interesting and instructive, full of local color.

Secondly, on the set up of the Manchu art curriculums. The Yongling Manchu Primary School has set up 5 Manchu art curriculums; these are the Manchu language curriculum, Manchu culture curriculum, Manchu paper-cut curriculum, Manchu embroidery curriculum and Manchu Yangko curriculum (a popular rural folk dance). In the Manchu art curriculum design, the curriculum content selection, teaching activities, all the involved Manchu features, maximize the use of the Manchu language, culture, history and other elements in the curriculum; at the same time, it uses the results of the evaluation as a basis for revising the curriculum.

The Manchu language and Manchu culture curriculums are set up from grade one to grade six, once a week; pupils learn from simple living expressions to complex articles, from Manchu stories to Manchu poetry. The pupils in the third, fourth and fifth grades generally attend the Manchu paper-cut curriculum, Manchu embroidery curriculum and Manchu Yangko curriculum, these three art curriculums are held once a week. In addition, the school opened a second class for pupils who loved Manchu paper cutting and Manchu embroidery; the school had also set up a Manchu songs choir and a Yangko team. The colorful and varied Manchu art curriculum makes pupils wander in the palace of Manchu art while having fun, gradually getting familiar with Manchu culture.

At last, on the training of the Manchu art curriculum teachers. At the Yongling Manchu Primary School, the teachers should not only teach the National Curriculum but also the Manchu culture knowledge. Therefore, it is important for teachers to understand Manchu culture, use the Manchu language well and accept the regular teacher training.

Due to the support from the government and schools, the Manchu art curriculum teachers attend training under the guidance of Manchu art inheritors. The Yongling

Manchu Primary School invited 8 Manchu art inheritors to come to the school for training such as the Manchu paper-cut inheritors Guan Shumei, the Manchu song successor Song Xidong, and so on. Through training, teachers not only learned the Manchu artistic skills but also understood the true meaning of Manchu art. In addition, the teachers, as the main body of the developing of Manchu art curriculum, set up a Manchu art teaching and research group; they discuss issues such as how to select the teaching materials from Manchu art, how to use the Manchu language, how to create teaching climate with Manchu features, diversified evaluation method, etc.

3.5 Extracurricular activities of the Yongling Manchu Primary School

The Yongling Manchu Primary School integrated Manchu culture into the school extra-curricular activities, and carries out a variety of Manchu traditional games and visiting activities. For example, the class-break setting-up exercise consists of two parts: the first part is the National Children's Radio Gymnastics, the second part is a Manchu dance with Manchu characteristics; the school also integrated the Manchu traditional game of Manchu Pearl Ball into physical education. The school often organizes trips to visit Manchu history museums, Manchu cultural museums, Manchu museums of arts and crafts. In the traditional Manchu festivals, primary school pupils participate in Manchu song and dance performances.

Through a variety of activities and extra-curricular visits, it strengthens the pupils' physique, cultivates the pupils' interest in and hobbies of Manchu art activities, and at the same time, cultivates pupils' good psychological and moral qualities.

Conclusion

Through the exploration and practice of Manchu art education at the Yongling Manchu Primary School, Manchu culture is respected, understood and inherited from the bud of pupils' personalities. It is obvious that the minority school very intensively fulfills – besides others – the culturally transmissive, social integration and intercultural functions. These are really important to preserve and develop every culture in jeopardy.

Through developing school culture, a local-adaptive curriculum and extra-curricular Manchu activities, it lets pupils enjoy and understand culture, inherit Manchu culture and realize its educational function, to form their national character and morals and prepares them to be national persons. In the end, strengthening cultural confidence and consciousness, and cultivating them means to be living inheritance subjects through enhancing the cognitive ability of Manchu culture inheritance subjects. It makes various Manchu culture root, grow and bloom in the soil of schools.

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