Proceedings of ICILLP 2025 Symposium: Psychological Perspectives on Teacher-Student Relationships in Educational Contexts
DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.NS26211

The Role of Performance Games in the Enlightenment of Traditional Cultural Education in Preschool Education and Innovative Strategies

Yajuan Xu

School of Education, Fujian Polytechnic Normal University, Zhangzhou, China
ytvqowbl@krae.edu.kg

Abstract. The question of how traditional culture can promote early childhood education has received widespread attention, but there are still shortcomings in how to better integrate traditional culture into the daily life of kindergartens.As one of the common teaching methods in kindergartens, performance games have a good fit and innovative role with traditional cultural enlightenment education, but the design of excellent courses requires the coordinated development of teachers, content and resources. In view of the current shortcomings, teachers should enhance the deep understanding of traditional culture, grasp the elements and resource props that conform to the cognitive characteristics of children, and reasonably design them into performance game courses, so as to provide support for the construction of performance games that are loved by children and can promote their development.

Keywords: Traditional culture, performance games, teacher development, resource guarantee

1. Introduction

The "Outline" and "Opinions" issued by the Ministry of Education in recent years all propose that the excellent traditional Chinese culture will be all-round throughout "enlightenment education, basic education, and other fields" [1]. The significance of traditional cultural enlightenment to children is not only because of the policy proposal, but also from the developmental needs of children. Early childhood is a key enlightenment period for the initial formation of cultural identity, values, and aesthetic taste. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, preschoolers are in the pre-operational stage and have a strong interest in action and emotional things. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory also emphasizes the critical role of cultural tools such as language and symbols, and social interaction in children's psychological development.

Based on these theories, the enlightenment of traditional culture in early childhood education has special value. Relevant documents emphasize that games are the basic way for children to learn. The emotional rendering and intuitive experience of performance games can enable children to develop well in language ability, imagination, sociality, aesthetic performance, and creativity [1]. It is worth noting that the festival customs, art forms, and virtue education in traditional culture are all in line

© 2026 The Authors. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.NS26211

with the form of performance games, providing a vivid and operable carrier for children to better understand and experience these abstract symbols and spiritual cores.

At present, most teachers have begun to consciously integrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture into the curriculum teaching of children's daily life and have accumulated certain practical experience. However, there are still many problems in the teaching practice of integrating traditional cultural elements: first, the design of traditional culture courses is superficial; second, the experience of preschool teachers is insufficient, and the teaching method is relatively simple; third, Teachers generally lack high-quality and operable teaching design plans. Therefore, given the current problems, exploring the innovative strategy of performance games in traditional cultural enlightenment is the main direction of this study.

2. The enlightenment role and implementation status of traditional culture education in preschool education

2.1. The enlightening role of traditional culture education in preschool education

"Enlightenment" is the initial stage of education, and it is the core answer to "what to cultivate", "for whom to cultivate people," and "how to cultivate people" [2]. At present, many scholars in China have examined the value of enlightenment education of excellent traditional Chinese culture to the comprehensive development of children. Huo Liyan and other scholars accurately summarized it as the structural framework of "four beams and eight pillars", that is, the enlightenment education of traditional culture should do a good job in goal guidance, condition guarantee, process support, and effective results [2]. Based on the existing research, it is found that the enlightenment education of traditional culture for children can make children feel the unique power brought by traditional culture in the process of growth, and also lay an important foundation for their all-round development in the future.

Firstly, traditional culture education can shape young children's sense of cultural identity and belonging. The integration of traditional culture into the daily curriculum of kindergartens is not only aimed at enabling young children to acquire cultural knowledge, but more importantly, to allow them, through participation in various activities, to gain a deeper understanding of their own national identity. In the process of interaction with traditional culture, children and excellent culture establish a close emotional connection and cultivate a sense of cultural identity. For example, by taking children to learn all kinds of customs of traditional festivals and listen to classic folk myths, children can recognize their own ethnic groups and feel the cultural level and cultural thickness behind this group. Children 's cognition of traditional culture will extend from the surface to the deep heart, laying a confident, open and inclusive traditional cultural foundation for themselves.

Secondly, the enlightenment of traditional culture can promote the shaping of children 's morality and values. Moral education in traditional culture integrates concrete life experiences with everyday behavioral practices, using stories close to children's lives to evoke a resonance with their moral emotions. Traditional enlightenment textbooks such as "The Three Character Classic" and "Disciples' Rules" use vivid and interesting story courses or etiquette practices to present abstract words in a concrete and vivid way, so that children can experience positive emotional feedback of moral behavior and uneasiness caused by violation of morality, driving internal constraints and children 's behavior norms. Liu Xianghong scholars also put forward that children 's moral education can also promote the infiltration of ideological and political education by means of labor education, patriotism education, traditional festivals and solar terms, so as to promote the healthy development of children 's moral education [3].

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.NS26211

Thirdly, during the process of receiving cultural enlightenment, young children can stimulate their language development and aesthetic abilities. Policy documents such as the "Guidelines" propose to provide children 's literature works of different genres such as nursery rhymes, stories and poems, so that children can choose and read independently. To guide children to contact

excellent children 's literature, and through a variety of activities to help children to deepen the experience and understanding of the works. This shows that the education of children 's traditional culture should adopt rich forms of content to develop children 's language sense and language expression, cultivate children 's stimulation and application of color, the aesthetic perception of line outline and their interest in the unique art form of the nation.

Fourthly, enlightenment education can help children develop their own emotional and social development. Cultural enlightenment education provides young children with positive emotional experiences and healthy emotional values through traditional culture and unique artistic expressiveness. The healthy development of this emotion will promote the development of children 's sociality, help them better integrate into society, show higher learning enthusiasm, stronger social skills and broader thinking vision.

2.2. The implementation status of traditional culture education enlightenment in preschool stage

The support of policies and the country 's emphasis on traditional culture have made teachers pay more and more attention to the enlightenment and guidance of traditional culture for children. Although a certain amount of practical experience has currently been accumulated, it also reflects many shortcomings:

2.2.1. Course design floating on the surface

Reconstructing the enlightenment education that inherits China's outstanding traditional culture should be able to leverage culture's educational function of "shaping people through culture" and its role as a tool for the inheritance of educational context [2]. However, influenced by traditional teaching concepts, the curriculum design of traditional culture often manifests as one of the components of collective teaching, rather than as a means to promote early childhood education.

On one hand, the design of many activities fails to establish important connections with the current lives of young children, leading to a disconnection between actual learning and the development of the children, resulting in insufficient understanding and weak learning outcomes. On the other hand, teachers lack creative abilities in curriculum design. The design of traditional cultural courses by teachers often focuses on common forms of activities, failing to effectively explore and convey the life wisdom and etiquette inherent in the culture, which could guide children to understand, engage in dialogue, and recreate using their thinking.

2.2.2. Teachers' inexperience and methodological monotony

Chinese traditional culture possesses unique wisdom and cultural essence. However, currently, the cultural literacy and teaching abilities of preschool teachers are relatively weak, lacking a deep grasp of the core spirit of the culture and an understanding of its connotations. There is a general deficiency in the reserve of general knowledge related to traditional culture, and the understanding of traditional culture remains at a superficial level [4].

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.NS26211

Furthermore, for traditional cultural courses with local characteristics, teachers also face issues such as low course levels and a lack of diverse practical strategies [5]. For example, in the Min Nan cultural course, teachers continue to employ common instructional formats during implementation, which leads to a tendency for young children to misunderstand Min Nan culture or lack a comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural connotations behind it [6].

2.2.3. The shortage of quality implementable teaching plans among educators

Although the policy documents, such as the 'Opinions', 'Outline', and 'Guidelines', provide detailed objectives for the development of traditional culture, there is still a lack of practical implementation strategies on how to better integrate traditional culture into enlightenment education. The teaching remains at a level of "superficial gamification", which is insufficient to meet the needs of traditional cultural enlightenment education [7]. Although many kindergarten programs related to traditional culture have been developed, teachers still approach the deeper promotion of children's understanding and development of traditional culture at a rather superficial level, lacking high-quality and practical teaching strategies.

3. Performance games and their adaptability

3.1. Implications

Gamification refers to the incorporation of game elements into serious educational processes to enhance their educational effectiveness. As a part of gamification, the performance game emphasizes the game process itself as a kind of performance behavior, and pays more attention to the performance, immediacy and physicality of children in the game. In 1994, the United States formally incorporated drama education into the education system from kindergarten to high school. Ragibe Yesil1 and Ayşegul summarize it as a medium of social interaction. Sociodramatic play provides children with immense opportunities to "be" , to "do" , and to "produce" within a cultural setting, allowing for self-agency to be practiced and to develop [8]. Common performance games include elements such as drama, dance, improvisation, and physical movement. As performers, young children participate in these performances within environments full of symbolic meaning and potential drama, in order to promote the development of their multiple abilities.

3.2. Implementation effectiveness

Children will grow and develop in many aspects in the process of participating in performance games. This form makes up for the deficiency of traditional culture in the implementation of activities and the professional development of teachers.

3.2.1. Centered on children

The common performance games cover rich content such as folk stories and traditional etiquette. Children take the initiative to play roles and perform plots in activities. This requires children to transform abstract text content into their own understandable and interesting schema. Teachers can regard performance games as a very practical way of education to solve the problem that traditional culture courses are not easy to implement, and give performance games different cultural connotations. The game has become more than simply 'playing'; it is a means and vehicle for

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.NS26211

cultivating young children 's understanding of culture through performance games, enhancing the educational significance and cultural impact of the game.

3.2.2. Provide rich forms

Performative games provide multiple ways for young children to understand the connotations of traditional culture and to enhance their interest and exploration of traditional culture.In the case of the performance game of ' Grandma She Leads the Army ', based on the children 's interest in the historical figure of She Shetaijun, the teacher lets the children spontaneously create the script, communicate the scene and perform the actual complete and coherent opera performance.

The implementation of the curriculum makes up for the lack of teachers ' experience and teaching methods, and has a good development for children to develop language ability, emotional expression and enhance social interaction. Performance games can also encourage children to integrate their favorite characters and role language elements into performance games, independently create works and expand plots, so that children can better develop their language ability on familiar elements [9]. Marta Armesto Arias ' research indicates that the combination of shared picture book reading and drama strategies not only helps young children construct cultural knowledge but also stimulates the social-emotional skills in early childhood [10]. Sociodramatic play serves as a medium through which children actively create their culture by producing new knowledge from their prior knowledge [8].

3.2.3. The actual way of development

Currently, there are numerous courses that incorporate elements of traditional culture into dramatic play, providing teachers with concrete teaching references to better design and implement traditional culture. The curiosity of young children towards dramatic play drives them to actively explore the underlying stories, origins, and other cultural content; through dialogue with traditional culture, they internalize abstract cultural elements into their understanding. In this process, teaching transcends superficial engagement and develops into a positive cycle of 'learning through playing and playing through learning.'

3.3. Insufficiency

3.3.1. Mismatch between curriculum design and young children's cognition

Traditional culture is the overall performance of various ideological cultures and conceptual forms slowly formed by all ethnic groups in the long-term development. Therefore, teachers ' teaching design and theme selection of performance games integrated with traditional cultural elements should be more in line with the corresponding development characteristics of children of all ages. Some cultural elements containing complex historical background and abstract values are beyond children 's understanding in curriculum design. Children 's difficulty in understanding the connotation behind culture leads to confusion in their understanding of culture, even alienation from traditional culture, and the actual performance game is not smooth.

3.3.2. The professional preparation of teachers and the difficulty of implementation

Teachers' understanding of the diversity, historical origins, and practical applications of traditional culture remains relatively superficial. When designing the teaching of relevant performing games,

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.NS26211

there are misunderstandings and confusion regarding the concepts of performance games and gamification. Moreover, there is a lack of unique understanding and innovation concerning traditional culture, which makes it difficult to provide children with specific and practical experiences that present a comprehensive and rich performance game.

In the implementation of the game, the teacher's practical operation experience is relatively lacking, the use of teaching methods is not in place, and the timing and method of intervention are not well grasped, resulting in the presentation of performance games without particularly good results.

3.3.3. Performance games lack practical and operable teaching aids

As one of the common game courses in kindergartens, the design of the teaching content for performance games should be targeted, and the accompanying materials and specific

implementation props should be suitable for the characteristics of early childhood education. However, the teaching design related to traditional culture performance games is still in the exploratory and practical stage, with relatively few relevant studies.Excellent, reference material resources and interactive programs are also lacking. It is difficult to purchase traditional musical instruments, solar terms, folklore and other props needed in performance games. Self-made substitutes take a long time and have poor results.

When teachers prepare all kinds of materials needed for such courses, most of them will rely on their own understanding of traditional culture and existing teaching experience. In this way, there will be insufficient preparation of materials, which will directly limit the overall quality of the course.

4. Innovation strategies

4.1. Improving teachers ' ability

Teachers are the designers and developers of the curriculum, and their understanding of traditional culture and teaching abilities directly impact the final effectiveness of the course. Therefore, teachers should take improving the quality of traditional culture education as the key to enrich their own traditional culture and improve their teaching ability [11].

On the one hand, teachers should consolidate cultural literacy. Teachers can carry out normalized teaching training or organize offline professional seminars, build a complete traditional cultural knowledge system, and systematically learn the specific connotation of various cultural symbols and the spiritual core behind them. This process allows teachers to avoid cultural transmission bias caused by cognitive ambiguity in teaching design. At the same time, kindergartens and educational units should encourage teachers to actively explore local cultural resources such as local intangible cultural heritage and characteristic folk customs, so as to form children 's more specific and vivid cognition of local traditional culture and accumulate real materials for game design.

On the other hand, teachers should focus on developing professional competence. Teachers should focus on children 's perspective in the design of curriculum, and cultivate their ability to transform abstract cultural content into game elements that children can perceive and understand by means of collective lesson preparation and case analysis. Taking complex traditional stories as an example, teachers extract core themes such as ' helping others ' and ' trying bravely ' that are conducive to children 's understanding, and encourage children to understand the core meaning and innovate independently in performance games.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.NS26211

4.2. Optimize course design

On the premise of ensuring the accuracy of the core of traditional culture, the design of curriculum content should be based on children 's cognitive rules and experience characteristics. The design of performance games should also provide children with space for independent creation, so that cultural details can be naturally integrated into children 's creation, so that they can feel the cultural charm in expression and establish a personalized understanding of culture.

Different cultural elements have different requirements for children 's life experience and cognitive level, and the ways of performing games are also different. Teachers should do a good job of hierarchical processing in the design of courses. The curriculum of traditional festivals and solar terms should focus on the experience of customs, and children should experience and feel the excitement of festivals with exaggerated body movements ; for themes such as myths and fables, teachers can select concrete fragments and ignore complex and obscure story backgrounds, so that children can get close to various cultural images in the story in role interaction. However, teachers should also pay attention to the abstract concept of traditional culture. The selection of subjects and

forms of development should be flexible and interesting. For example, when explaining the zodiac, teachers can subtly replace the ' relationship between the heavenly stems and the earthly branches and the zodiac ' with interesting performance games, so that children can naturally remember the order of the zodiac and the time changes it represents in the performance.

4.3. Resource supply and assurance

Teaching aids containing cultural elements should not only convey cultural characteristics, but also ensure that they are safe and easy to operate.

In terms of cultural understanding, teachers can expand resources in many ways to extend games from classroom to life. Accurate information can be obtained through official platforms such as local intangible cultural heritage protection centers and museums, local traditional culture can be explored, and inheritors can be invited to enter the park to introduce knowledge to children or guide children to correctly understand traditional culture. The preparation of teaching aids can help children understand traditional musical instruments and folk customs by leasing or guiding participants to make them by hand. Teachers can take children to local museums or related performance venues to watch and experience on the spot, laying a foundation for children to better participate in the design of performance games.

5. Conclusion

This study explores the practical path and shortcomings of performance games in the enlightenment of children 's traditional culture, and proposes improvement strategies for current problems. Teachers should deeply understand the connotation of traditional culture, excavate local culture, and guide children to resonate with traditional culture. The design of the performance game course should select the cultural elements that conform to the children 's cognition, retain the core cultural value, and ensure that it is suitable for children to accept. Teachers should also innovate the design of the curriculum, integrate cultural elements into the game plot and interaction, integrate and develop diversified, easily accessible, high-quality supporting resources, and provide material support for the implementation of the curriculum, including costume props, music and opera, and cultural environment.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.NS26211

The theoretical framework constructed in this study points out the basic direction for the follow-up practice. In the actual promotion, in addition to trying a variety of teaching paths, teachers also need to pay attention to practice and deepen research, so that traditional cultural elements can be truly integrated into children 's performance game courses. This should not only adhere to the cultural heritage, but also fit the children 's cognitive characteristics and expression habits, so that children can naturally produce a sense of intimacy with traditional culture in the game experience.

References

[1] Chen, X.H. (2022) Problems and Strategies for the Implementation of Children 's Performance Game Activities. Theory and Practice ofEducation, 42(29), 62-64.
[2] Huo, L.Y., Du, B.J., & Lin, L. (2024) Reconstructing Enlightenment Education for the Transmission ofExcellent Chinese Traditional Culture: Framework, Foundation and Paths. Modern Education Review, (02), 37-44.
[3] Liu, X.H. (2022) Innovative Ways ofIdeological and Political Enlightenment Education in Kindergartens. Gansu Education Research, (09), 129-131.
[4] Huang, S., Wang, L., & Liu, L. (2019) Practice and Reflection on the Integration ofChinese Excellent Traditional Culture into Kindergarten Curriculum. Basic Education Curriculum, (24), 26-31.
[5] Zheng, W.J. (2024) Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures for Integrating Chinese Traditional Culture into Preschool Curriculum: Take Eight Kindergartens in H City, Hubei Province as an Example (Master's thesis). Hubei Normal University.
[6] Huang, X.J. (2024) Value, Dilemma, and Optimization Strategy ofIntegrating Minnan Culture into Kindergarten-Based Curriculum. Preschool Education Research, (05), 83-86.
[7] Huo, L.Y., Long, Z.Y., Gao, H.Y., et al. (2022) Basic Achievements, Practical Challenges and Countermeasures of Early Childhood Education in Inheriting Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture. Chinese Journal ofEducation, (5), 74-79.
[8] Yesil, R., Erdiller Yatmaz, Z., & Metindogan, A. (2025) Exploring Children 's Play Culture and Game Construction: Role of Sociodramatic Play in Supporting Agency. Early Childhood Education Journal, 53, 703- 716.
[9] Gao, C.R. (2018) Analysis of the Development of Children 's Subjectivity Stimulated by Animation Stories in Performance Game Activities. Curriculum Education Research, (32), 26-27.
[10] Armesto Arias, M., Neira-Piñeiro, M., Pasarín-Lavín, T., et al. (2025) A Drama-Based Intervention to Improve Emotional Intelligence in Early Childhood Education. European Journal ofPsychology ofEducation, 40, 13.
[11] Long, Z.Y., Su, J., & Li, Y.F. (2025) The Practical Path and Promotion Strategy ofIntegrating Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture into Kindergarten Education. Basic Education Curriculum, (05), 89-96.