



# A Study on Aesthetic Thought and Educational Practice Path in Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture

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**Abstract.** The core ideological concepts, the humanistic spirit, and traditional virtues inherent in the excellent traditional Chinese culture have a positive impact on student education. Meanwhile, aesthetic education permeates multiple dimensions such as morality, intelligence, and art, enabling college students to grow into comprehensive individuals. This study provides rich resources for ideological and political education by analyzing the beauty of the Doctrine of the Mean, life, nationality, and art in Chinese traditional culture. Additionally, through the analysis of the traditional cultural philosophical beauty, the beauty of knowledge and practice, spiritual beauty, ideological beauty, and contemporary beauty embodied in the five ideological and political courses, it offers a way to integrate Chinese excellent traditional culture into college ideological and political education from the perspective of aesthetic education.

**Keywords:** Aesthetic education; Excellent traditional Chinese culture; College ideological and political education; Taoist aesthetics; Contemporary values

## 1 Introduction

China's aesthetic appreciation of traditional Chinese aesthetics is gradually diminishing. This absence is mainly manifested in two aspects: in daily life, our way of living reflects more of the modern culture from foreign influences. For example, IKEA's simple and minimalist Nordic style is highly popular and world-renowned, while stores featuring traditional Chinese-style furnishings have yet to achieve the same level of recognition. Similarly, in theoretical research, many scholars have also noted the absence of traditional Chinese aesthetics [1]. The lack of the poetic dimension of Chinese aesthetic culture is an inevitable theoretical and practical concern. In late 20th century discussions on aesthetic education culture among the Chinese aesthetic community, aesthetic issues are still considered to be one of the fundamental issues in solving the problem of the traditional aesthetic culture [2]. Criticism of aesthetic culture, which originally belonged to the poetic dimension of cultural identity and aesthetic values, is often overlooked. Therefore, modern Chinese aesthetic should actively integrate the thoughts of traditional Chinese aesthetics.

The excellent traditional Chinese culture contains abundant moral education resources and can serve as a support for ideological and political education. For instance,

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the moral education in universities originates from the values, behavior patterns, and customs of traditional Chinese culture [3]. Individuals educated in moral education in universities inherit legacy of the "gentleman" advocated by traditional Chinese culture, possessing noble ideological realms, upright behaviors, and specific value pursuits. Some of the ways of moral education also stem from the concepts of "self-restraint" and "internalization" in traditional Chinese culture [4]. It is evident that the moral education in universities requires the support of traditional Chinese culture. Integrating traditional Chinese culture into moral education is beneficial, not only in terms of the inheritance and promotion of culture but also for the innovation of moral education content and methods. Educators should leverage traditional Chinese culture to cultivate modern Chinese individuals with a sense of patriotism and noble character [5]. The integration of traditional Chinese culture into moral education in universities is an important and current topic, attracting attention from the academic, educational, and social communities. However, exploration of this issue is just beginning, and there are many theoretical and practical challenges that require contemplation. For example, which aspects of traditional Chinese culture are suitable for integration into moral education? What practical approaches should be taken to incorporate traditional culture into moral education? These questions mark the direction for future research.

## **2 Aesthetic Thought in Traditional Chinese Culture**

### **2.1 Excellent Traditional Culture Contains Multiple Aesthetics**

The excellent traditional Chinese culture refers to the comprehensive heritage of national civilization, customs, and spirit passed down throughout a long history. It encompasses the spiritual connotations of "benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity," the ideological diversity of the Hundred Schools of Thought, traditional literature, drama, festivals, music, attire, handicrafts, and architecture, among others. These elements profoundly reflect the extensive connotations of Chinese traditional culture and encapsulate diverse aesthetic elements and rich educational resources [6].

**The Beauty of Moderation.** The excellent traditional Chinese culture emphasizes social ethics such as "benevolence" and "righteousness" and underscores the harmonious development of society. The Doctrine of the Mean requires individuals to seek moderation in all things and to achieve a balanced psychological state. Simultaneously, the Doctrine of the Mean embodies principles for navigating social interactions, stressing that harmonious relationships among individuals contribute to the formation of psychological harmony. This helps individuals actively resolve interpersonal conflicts, promoting integration and understanding among people, resulting in a sense of satisfaction deep within the soul [7].

**The Beauty of Life.** The excellent traditional Chinese culture is characterized by openness, tolerance, and a focus on inheritance, demonstrating remarkable vitality. The vitality of life signifies the integration and cohesion of excellent traditional culture, which also integrates and absorbs foreign cultures such as astronomy, architecture, medicine, dance, and cuisine. Furthermore, traditional culture is constantly reformed

and innovated, drawing on the essence while discarding the dross, thus keeping in tune with historical changes and the development of the times.

The Beauty of Art. Excellent traditional Chinese culture encompasses unique artistic beauty, including the literary beauty of poetry, the elegance of calligraphy, painting, music, and board games, the refinement of scholars from various schools of thought, the beauty of regional cultural diversity, culinary culture, traditional cultural festivals, the beauty of traditional Chinese characters as symbols, the elegance of traditional attire, the refined beauty of traditional music, the craftsmanship of traditional crafts, as well as a variety of artistic expressions such as drama, architecture, traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts, antiques, and mythology. These expressions embody wisdom and experiences derived from life, rooted in the people and the land.

## 2.2 The Beauty of Traditional Culture in Ideological and Political Courses

"Marxist Basic Principles" embodies philosophical beauty (Fig.1). Although its principles may seem abstract, in some ways, they resonate with the essence of traditional Chinese culture: the Doctrine of the Mean is rich in speculative rationalism; as mentioned in the "Record of Rites", "The way of the great learning consists in manifesting one's bright virtue, consisting in the love of the people." This concept reflects the notion of a grand unity. The essence of the great unity philosophy bears similarity to communism. By integrating the philosophical essence from traditional culture into the teaching of fundamental principles, deeply exploring the philosophical content within traditional culture not only showcases the charm of philosophy but also strengthens the connection between the students and Marxist principles.

"The Cultivation of Ideology, Ethics, and Fundamentals of Law" embodies the harmony of knowledge and action. Wang Yangming, a renowned thinker, writer, philosopher, and military strategist of the Ming Dynasty, emphasized the unity of knowledge and action. He proposed the concept of "unity of knowledge and action," highlighting that knowledge is a prerequisite for action. This curriculum is based on theory and practice, gradually helping college students to form noble ideals and beliefs, and promoting the spirit of patriotism.

"The Outline of Modern Chinese History" embodies spiritual beauty. The spiritual essence of traditional Chinese culture encompasses the entire process of the refinement of the national spirit in modern and contemporary China, rather than being limited to the feudal era [8]. Throughout the past century, the continuous efforts of the selfless and aspiring individuals demonstrate collectivism, humanism, patriotism, and pioneering spirit. These should be integral components of integrating the spiritual essence of traditional Chinese culture into college students' ideological and political education.

The Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and the Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics embodies the beauty of thought. It systematically narrates the historical process of the Communist Party of China integrating the basic principles of Marxism with the practical realities of China, fully embodying the two historic leaps and two major theoretical achievements of Marxism in China. It is a summary of the

experiences of several generations and represents the wisdom and solutions of contemporary China. This line of thought possesses a unique historical beauty. Only those who live in this land can appreciate the rich "Chinese characteristics" of its intellectual culture. This unique, self-confident thought, which is not influenced by universal Western values, has been hard-won. As more people come to recognize the beauty of socialist thought with Chinese characteristics, true cultural confidence is on the horizon.

The education on the Situation and Policy embodies the beauty of the times. Peace and harmony are not only reflected in promoting harmonious coexistence among individuals, but also in fostering harmonious coexistence among nations. China has the national genes of cherishing neighbors and common development. The country has always been a proponent of peace, practicing the diplomatic policies of "not bullying the weak" and "not oppressing the poor". Throughout the process of original capital accumulation and industrialization, China has never interfered with or encroached upon the sovereignty of other countries.



Fig. 1. The Beauty of Traditional Culture in Ideological and Political Courses.

### 3 Educational Practice in Traditional Culture

#### 3.1 Research Method

Interviewing is a research method based on the research purpose, involving the pre-determination of interview outlines and the selection of interviewees. Through conversations and exchanges with interviewees, valuable research data is obtained. For this study, five teachers of different genders, teaching experience, and educational levels were selected, each holding significant teaching positions, and their discourse is considered representative and persuasive, thereby providing authentic and effective interview materials for the research. The interview content primarily includes the attitude of teachers towards the integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into moral education, the teachers' knowledge base regarding traditional Chinese culture, practical measures for integrating traditional culture into moral education, difficulties encountered by schools during the integration process, and the suggestions proposed by teachers for the integration of traditional culture into moral education. Finally, the interview recordings, notes, and other materials are summarized to extract the main viewpoints of the interviewees. Table 1 provides the basic information of the interviewees.

The case study method requires the extensive collection of data during the educational practice process. It involves conducting teacher interviews, combining personal observations with participation in educational activities, and summarizing the practical pathways for integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into moral education. This mainly includes aspects such as campus construction concepts, school curriculum design, and extracurricular cultural activities. Through research and analysis of this typical case, it is essential to extract practical experiences that other primary schools can learn from and to identify common problems that may exist in practice. Finally, this will enable the exploration of feasible pathways for integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into moral education from a macroscopic perspective.

**Table 1.** Basic information of interviewees.

Teachers	Gender	Length of teaching	Is leader	Duties
A	Male	26	No	vice-chancellor
B	Female	22	Yes	class teacher
C	Female	30	No	Director of Moral Education
D	Female	7	No	Teaching Director
E	Female	20	Yes	class teacher

### 3.2 The Concept of Campus Construction Based on Traditional Culture

The profound cultural heritage and educational philosophy are deeply rooted in the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Teachers universally advocate for the full integration of the nourishment from the excellent traditional culture into daily educational activities, especially emphasizing the integration of traditional culture into moral education. "Harmony" is an important concept in traditional Chinese culture. In China, "harmony" is not only the highest value pursuit of the people, but also the fundamental principle governing human interactions – the essence of "harmony" lies in everyone finding satisfaction and sharing in the joy of harmony (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Campus construction concept.

Educational philosophy	Harmonious and promoting education
school-running thought	Building a harmonious school ecosystem with harmony between people, people and things, and people and the way To establish individuals through their own strengths and implement educational behaviors that recognize, appreciate, and nurture their strengths

Moral Education Concept	To nourish beauty with virtue and guide action with love
Education model	Harmony, strengths, interaction, and development
School motto	Intelligent progress, experimental innovation
school spirit	harmonious but different, long and shared
Teaching style	rich in virtue and harmony, and learning and mastering skills is essential
academic atmosphere	cultivates one's character, and a strong sense of practice promotes one's strengths

The so-called "cultivating virtue and nurturing people" is essentially admonishing young people with the principle of "in seeking learning, first become a person." It emphasizes that the educated should have a foundation in moral character before delving into practical knowledge and skills. This requires educators to use good moral character to nurture students' ethics, adhere to the priority of cultivating virtue and nurturing individuals, advocate for teachers to implement the concept of moral education through moral grooming and guiding with love, and emphasize the role of excellent traditional culture in shaping individual spirits. This includes promoting traditional cultural literacy among teachers throughout the entire school to enhance their ability to culturally nurture virtue.

Rooted in the ideology of harmony and empowerment, the university has established the motto "Wisdom and Progress, Experimentation and Innovation," resulting in a campus culture of "harmony in diversity, mutual growth," an educational ethos of "emphasis on integrity and harmony, and excellence in learning and specialization," as well as a learning culture of "accumulating virtues and enhancing character, solidifying the foundation and promoting individual strengths." The phrase "Wisdom and Progress" is inspired by Mozi's "Cultivation of the Person" and emphasizes that education should lead to resolute action once intelligence reaches a certain height. "Harmony in diversity" is derived from the *Analects of Confucius* and underscores the balance between universal teaching and personalized nurturing. "Emphasis on integrity and harmony, and excellence in learning and specialization" focuses on the teachers' possession of qualities combining virtue and talent, and their dedicated nurturing of students.

### 3.3 Education Courses That Nurture Excellent Traditional Culture

The excellent traditional Chinese culture is integrated into the national curriculum, forming a teaching model that combines educational immersion, thematic development, and expanded activities. In terms of the subject curriculum, the content of excellent traditional culture is primarily integrated into Chinese language, moral education, and legal studies courses, while other subjects play a supporting role in cultural and ethical education [9]. The Chinese language subject has the closest connection with excellent traditional culture, possessing profound educational value. Elementary school moral education and legal studies curriculum integrates the spirit of the times, core socialist

values, excellent traditional culture, and modern legal culture, and functions as a subject that combines character education with knowledge cultivation. Due to the different nature of the subjects, other subject courses have limitations in the expression of moral education function, and the teaching content of traditional culture in these subjects is limited, often presented in the form of subject knowledge, and largely related to the classics, stories of notable figures, and cultural knowledge of the subject.

### **3.4 Extracurricular Activities That Highlight the Connotation of Traditional Culture**

Moral education can be facilitated through ceremonial activities, which coexist due to the ethical educational function possessed by ceremonial activities. In contrast to ceremonial activities in social settings, school-based ceremonial activities are more organized, purposeful, and education-oriented, exerting a profound influence on students' moral education. By infusing excellent traditional culture into school-themed activities, students are guided to experience the allure of traditional Chinese culture and enhance their ethical qualities. In recent years, universities have mobilized teachers, classes, student organizations, interest groups, and the Young Pioneers to integrate excellent traditional culture into school-themed activities, hosting a diverse range of events.

## **4 Conclusion**

Art education refers to the cultivation of students' aesthetic perspectives, the development of their ability to appreciate and create beauty, and the nurturing of their noble sentiments and cultural qualities. Through the organization and analysis of research data, it is evident that universities have made remarkable achievements in advancing the integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into elementary school moral education. However, perfection is elusive. Through interviews, observations, and the review of literature, it has been discovered that there are still some issues that need to be addressed in the practice of integrating traditional culture into moral education. This not only reflects the current direction where universities are striving to make breakthroughs but also represents a common issue in the practices of many regions and universities.

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