

Problems and Strategies of School Education in Yao Culture in Northern Guangdong Province

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Abstract: On the basis of investigation and research, descriptive data are used to illustrate that traditional ethnic festivals are the main platform for inheriting Yao culture; Teaching activities are the main way to impart knowledge and skills of Yao nationality. In addition, not only the curriculum system of teaching Yao knowledge and skills in ethnic school needs to be improved, but also the Yao cultural knowledge and skills of teachers need to be enhanced urgently. The finding shows that the core strategy of inheriting Yao culture in school education is to set up the concept of paying attention to Yao culture inheritance, focus on improving the quality of Yao culture education teachers, and adopt colorful Yao culture education forms.

1. Introduction

School education is a crucial platform for training outstanding successor of ethnic culture, and should shoulder the historical mission of preserving, inheriting and innovating ethnic culture[1]. We have conducted surveys in schools in northern Guangdong minority areas in recent years, which includes middle schools, elementary schools, and kindergartens in Ruyuan, Liannan Yao ethnic autonomous county, and Lianshan Zhuang ethnic autonomous county with more than 4000 questionnaires and hundred person interviews. The survey objects included teachers, students, parents, school managers and education administrators.

2. Status Quo and Problems of School Education Inherited by Yao Culture

2.1. Ethnic Traditional Festivals Are the Main Platform for Inheriting Yao Culture

Ethnic traditional festivals are the product of long-term accumulation of ethnic history and culture, are an important part and expression of ethnic culture [2]. Ethnic schools in Yao ethnic area of northern Guangdong province hold ethnic traditional activities during major ethnic traditional festivals, creating an educational environment rich in ethnic characteristics and providing a variety of educational activities with ethnic cultural connotations [3]. For instance, in recent years, the government of Ruyuan Yao ethnic autonomous country organized a long table banquet for Panwang Festival, which took place in the venues of Ruyuan Ethnic School, as a result, teachers and students can deeply understand the ethnic traditional festivals and customs, and get familiar with the history and customs of the Yao ethnic group, thereby promoting the formation and development of ethnic identity and pride [4]. The survey results revealed that 95.5% of educators implement Yao culture and education through traditional ethnic festivals. 70.5% of students are familiar with the history and customs of local ethnic group, and the main way for students to learn about the history and customs of local minorities is school propaganda activities and other activities organized by the school.

Students' acceptance of ethnic costumes can reflect the inheritance of its own ethnic culture [5]. Ethnic school students usually wear the totem logo of the Yao ethnic in their school uniforms. The school even requires students to wear ethnic costumes during major festivals. Since elementary school students are more easily to be affected by education, they are more likely to accept Yao costumes than middle school students. Among them, girls prefer Yao costumes more than boys. Compared with Han ethnic students Yao students are more satisfied with ethnic costumes, which

accounts for 40.5% of the total number of Yao students think “very good looking“ and “like“, while about 12% of the Yao students think "not good-looking" and "dislike" on wearing the Yao customs.

2.2. Teaching Activities Are the Main Path to Impart Knowledge and Skills of Yao Ethnic

School teaching activities are an important way for students to receive ethnic culture education [6]. The school-based curriculum combined with the traditional Yao culture is the main basis for the school’s heritage of Yao culture education, and it is the carrier that embodies and reflects the thought and educational concept of ethnic cultural education. According to the survey, 72.8% of teachers agree with introduction of the Yao specific curriculum, and ethnic teachers have a significantly higher degree of recognition on school-based courses than Han teachers. Field work investigation found that the county ethnic schools have more ethnic culture education school-based curriculum, while the township ethnic schools are less or even no. For instance, the Ruyuan Ethnic Experimental School has a series of school-based courses: "Yaoshan Life and Physics", "Yaoshan Life Mathematics", "Yao Ethnic Culture", "Yao Embroidery", "Traditional Sports", "Yao Language", and Liannan Ethnic primary school has school-based courses such as “Pai Yao Embroidery“, “Pai Yao Long Drum Dance“, “Yao Ballads“, “Yao Charm“, and “Ethnic Traditional Sports“. Teachers impart Yao cultural knowledge and skills to students through teaching activities. 61.8% of them selected the teaching content from the materials, 38.2% of them selected textbooks by themselves, and 30.4% of teaching content are from specialized materials such as brochures and TV programs.

The survey results show that nearly 80% of early childhood educators consider it is necessary to implement ethnic cultural education and teaching. They have created a teaching mode, organized and designed on game activities based on the ethnic cultural characteristics of the region and the age characteristics of children. The lively and vivid Yao game activity allows children to learn Yao language easily and unconsciously in school. The training of Yao children in Chinese and Yao language has enhanced their interest in bilingual listening and speaking and promoted the coordinated development of children's cognitive ability such as cognition, memory and imagination. Ethnic kindergartens adopt self-compiled textbooks for bilingual teaching, such as learn Yao language in language activities, learn to sing Yao songs and ballads, and cultivate children's habit of learning Yao language. However, bilingual teaching has not yet established a complete management mechanism which is usually implemented in the language field of kindergarten-based curriculum activities in ethnic kindergartens, mainly some daily expressions, nursery rhymes and ballads, and slightly penetrated in other fields, accounting for about 5% of kindergarten curriculum.

Through interviews and field work investigation, we learned that ethnic minority schools basically conduct cultural education of the Yao ethnic in the form of second class, extra-curricular activities, campus culture and art festivals, and athletic competitions. Some ethnic schools have their own unique rhythmic gymnastics or class exercises, which combine traditional ethnic art with music, physical, and aesthetic courses [7]. Some ethnic schools offer traditional art courses on a regular basis, regardless of grade level, with teachers controlling the pace and difficulty of the courses. For example, Liannan Ethnic Primary School requires all students to learn embroidery, and Ruyuan Ethnic Experimental Primary School requires all girls to learn embroidery. These schools have special exhibition halls to display students' works.

The overwhelming majority of students have a certain understanding of Yao culture (history, customs)[2]. The results of the questionnaire statistics show that 64.4% of the students generally understand the local minority culture, history, customs, while 28.1% have a "general understanding", which is obviously higher than the proportion of 7.5% who have a "very understanding". Elementary students learn more about the history and customs of local minorities through "introduction of teachers in the classroom".

Furthermore, teachers all use Mandarin in teaching. The daily language of them is mainly Cantonese and Mandarin, and the usage rate of Yao language is low. From the results of the questionnaire survey, most of the elementary school students are not very interested in the Yao language. 56.71% generally like Yao language, 29.57% don't like it, and only 13.72% said they

prefer Yao language. The ethnic language plays an important role in the development of the ethnic and the inheritance of the ethnic traditional culture. It is a bridge and bond to maintain ethnic emotion and cohesion. With the development of social modernization and changes in lifestyles, cultural exchanges become increasingly frequent, so that the lifestyles and cultural habits that used to be quite different among different ethnic groups tend to be more and more the same or similar. Ethnic languages have become the most convincing and obvious ethnic logo, so it should be given attention and inheritance.

2.3. The Curriculum System for Imparting Knowledge and Skills of Yao Ethnic Group Still Needs to Be Improved

Ethnic schools shoulder the ambidextrous missions of basic education and inheritance of ethnic culture. The survey results reveal that most of teachers believe that the best form of Yao education is extra-curricular activities or special courses. Most of teachers thought it is necessary to set up Yao courses with special characteristics. In fact, ethnic schools offer school-based courses with Yao characteristics, and some schools have developed a series of school-based courses.

The mainstream culture strongly impacts the inheritance of ethnic culture in school education. At present, ethnic schools still adopt standard curriculum system that is unified by all schools. The assessment of school administrators and teachers is mainly based on student performance and enrollment. Thus, to establish and improve the curriculum standards and evaluation system of Yao cultural knowledge and skills is the premise and foundation for ethnic schools to inherit Yao culture.

2.4. Teachers' Knowledge and Skills of Yao Ethnic Are Not Rich Enough

The survey data showed that teachers did not know enough about the local Yao culture, history, customs. 78.4% of teachers were "general understanding", 13.6% of them were "very knowledgeable" and 8% of them were "rarely understand". Moreover, ethnic teachers have a higher level of understanding than Han teachers on Yao culture, and their understanding increases with teaching age. Ethnic schools generally lack Yao teachers who understand bilingual teaching. Their lack of knowledge and skills in Yao culture, history, and customs, which directly affects the effectiveness and quality of ethnic education, especially the impact on children and elementary school students. In practical work, the school's propaganda of ethnic cultural education activities cannot be separated from teachers. Teachers who learn about the local minority culture, history, customs and other relevant knowledge and master relevant skills can make teaching and their activities more ethnic characteristics and improve the effectiveness of ethnic education.

3. The Strategy of Inheriting Yao Culture in School Education

3.1. Establish the Concept of Attaching Importance to Yao Cultural Heritage

Educational administrations in ethnic regions should establish the concept of paying attention to the inheritance of Yao's traditional culture and the concept of equal emphasis on mainstream culture and Yao culture. It is necessary to attach importance to the education of Yao ethnic groups to students, so as to cultivate the students' understanding or acceptance of their ethnic, cultural, language, and religious backgrounds, to form a sense of ethnic identity and belonging, improve self-confidence and self-esteem, and develop their sense of loving and serving their hometown.

The government should use the influence of the society to carry out relevant propaganda of Yao cultural heritage, so that people can feel the strong atmosphere of Yao culture, enrich the environment of Yao language, and use media power to spread Yao culture. For example, radio, TV programs, news programs and Yao language exchange activities should be set up to create a cultural environment of Yao ethnic nationalism, so that people can listen to Yao culture and attract more people to pay attention to, as well as understand and accept Yao culture. Additionally, the government should attach importance to the study of Yao's cultural heritage, set up special funds, organize experts to conduct in-depth investigations, and record and preserve relevant materials.

Furthermore, the government should formulate relevant regulations and policies to incorporate Yao culture into the national curriculum, set up special funds for Yao culture inheritance education in schools, increase input and provide policy support for the training of ethnic teachers, and develop and introduce Yao culture curriculum resources and the construction of ethnic schools. In addition, ethnic schools should be encouraged to develop school-based courses that are closely integrated with local customs and traditions to strive to integrate Yao songs, Yao dance, Yao sports, and Yao costumes into the curriculum. The proportion of Yao culture courses should be increased according to local conditions so that students can have a comprehensive understanding of Yao culture through education and teaching activities of various disciplines.

3.2. Efforts to Improve the Qualities of the Teachers of Yao's Culture and Education

The administrative departments of education at all levels and their institutions should attach importance to and strengthen teacher training in ethnic minority areas so as to improve teachers' ethnic literacy and educational ability. Through special training and learning, understand and grasp the rich connotation and spiritual essence of Yao culture, and consciously bear the responsibility of inheritance of it.

It is necessary to attach importance to and strengthen the training of bilingual teachers and improve the bilingual teaching level of ethnic teachers. The survey results show that most of the students first came into contact with the Yao language at school, including a small number of Yao students, but the teachers at the school did not teach them in the Yao language. 5% of the Yao students reported that they have never used Yao language in their lives. 60% of students often speak Yao language, the rest only speak Yao language occasionally. The school is an important platform for students to understand the language of the Yao ethnic nationalism. The school should provide an environment in which the Yao language is spoken, place the students in the environment of the Yao language, promote students to master the Yao language, and at the same time realize the inheritance of the Yao culture.

The Education Bureau and ethnic schools should formulate relevant systems and policies, encourage teachers to actively carry out research on Yao culture, study and experience in ethnic villages, collect materials of ethnic culture, and hire Yao cultural heritage to train teachers.

Teacher training can take the form of learning and exchange activities[6]. "School appearance and teaching" is an effective way to improve teachers' professional ability. Frontline teachers are ideal trainers. The appearance and teaching of the school are highly operable. Teachers communicate with each other through close communication, closely follow the actual teaching, inspire each other and promote each other. Observational learning between schools is new and dynamic than observational learning within schools. In addition, education managers can collect and organize cultural resources of Yao ethnic groups in various places for exchange and sharing, such as teaching observation of Yao language courses, exhibition of Yao's technical works, and performances of Yao sports events.

3.3. Use a Variety of Yao Culture and Education

Ethnic schools should provide special courses for teaching, infiltrate Yao cultural knowledge and skills into curriculum teaching, and actively develop Yao cultural resources that are characteristic of the Yao nationalism, but also close to the lives of children's students and easily understood and accepted by them. The school-based curriculum system has formed the Yao's early childhood education and Yao's basic education with cultural vitality. Teachers should actively create the atmosphere and scene of the Yao education, try to mobilize the enthusiasm of the students, and stimulate their affection for the Yao culture.

Extracurricular education activities or the second classroom content is rich and colorful, flexible and diverse forms, as a necessary complement to classroom teaching, which can avoid the shortage of classroom teaching. Ethnic schools can conduct ethnic cultural education through thematic activities and publicity, and radiate the activities of various fields around the central theme. These activities can also form small themes. In this way, a chain of theme activities is constructed. The activities need to randomly add topics to expand the network and help students to understand the

Yao culture. Ethnic schools should also carry out special education activities of Yao cultural heritage, such as Yao embroidery and long drum dance[5].

Modern educational technology can be used to pass on the Yao culture in schools. The combination of modern multimedia methods and curriculum teaching can make up for the lack of national cultural and educational resources and weak teachers. For example, through video, audio, and animation technologies, it can not only enhance the ability to express information, the diversification of convenient data record and preservation, but also to realize the long-distance education and resources sharing, and then expand the Yao culture infiltration in basic education.

The family is another important place for Yao culture education. Ethnic schools should actively communicate with the parents of Yao students, cooperate with home and school, and strengthen the parents' awareness and quality of inheriting Yao culture. Through the construction of the family's ethnic atmosphere, the students of the Yao nationalism have a more natural and appropriate appreciation of their unique ethnic customs, languages, costumes and other cultural forms.

4. Conclusion

Ethnic traditional festivals are the main platform for inheriting Yao culture. Teaching activities are the main way to impart Yao's knowledge and skills. Shouldering the dual mission of basic education, the ethnic schools that inherit the national culture should further improve the curriculum system for imparting the knowledge and skills of the Yao people in order to improve the teachers' knowledge and skills of the Yao people culture.

School education plays an important role in the inheritance of Yao culture. Educational administrations in ethnic regions should establish the concept of inheriting Yao traditional culture. The government not only should formulate corresponding laws and policies to incorporate Yao culture into the national curriculum, but also set up special funds which used to strengthen the training of ethnic teachers, develop resources for the Yao culture, and adopt a variety of educational forms to help students learn and understand the Yao culture.

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