



# A Study on the Practical Logic and Path Optimization of Traditional Lingnan Cultural Immersion in University Aesthetic Education

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## Abstract

In recent years, aesthetic education has been elevated to a strategic priority, promoting the immersion of China's excellent traditional culture into all aspects of education. As a vital branch of this heritage, traditional Lingnan culture possesses abundant aesthetic resources yet faces challenges in university aesthetic education, including utilitarian perceptions, fragmented curricula, and isolated practices. This study, grounded in national aesthetic education strategy and cultural heritage missions, systematically analyzes the practical logic of integrating traditional Lingnan culture into university aesthetic education through a "value-logic-pathway" framework: deepening embodied cognition via material carriers, strengthening cultural identity through emotional resonance, and invigorating heritage transmission through creative transformation. It proposes targeted pathway optimization strategies: reinforcing top-level design to reshape cognitive systems, reconstructing curricula to facilitate cultural transformation, and innovating practice pathways to expand transmission domains. This research aims to enrich the theoretical dimensions of integrating regional culture into university aesthetic education, providing practical guidance for institutions to implement the "Aesthetic Education Immersion Initiative" and cultivate culturally confident new generations.

## Keywords

University aesthetic education; Traditional Lingnan culture; Cultural immersion; Practical logic; Path optimization

## 1. Introduction

In accordance with China's national strategy, Guangdong Province's 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development outlines the strategic deployment of "coordinating the inheritance of traditional Lingnan culture with aesthetic education" (Guangdong Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2021). The Ministry of Education's Notice on the Comprehensive Implementation of the School Aesthetic Education Immersion Initiative explicitly advocates for an immersive approach to utilizing the educational function of aesthetic education, offering concrete action guidelines for integrating traditional Lingnan culture into university aesthetic education (Ministry of Education, 2023).

The advent of the digital and intelligent era provides technological support for cultural education innovation. As the

driving force behind cultural confidence, China's excellent traditional culture serves as the cultural matrix for it (Bai et al., 2024). However, university aesthetic education practices still exhibit significant shortcomings. Aesthetic education remains the weakest link among the "Five Education," often offered as electives with particularly scarce traditional cultural content, primarily delivered through online courses. More critically, higher education aesthetic education generally exhibits a tendency to "prioritize universal over regional," neglecting the unique value of local cultures. Traditional Lingnan culture, as a vital branch of China's excellent traditional culture, forms a treasure trove of aesthetic education resources through diverse expressions like Cantonese opera and the Lingnan Dance. Yet, this heritage remains underutilized and untranslated, resulting in regionally devoid aesthetic education programs that struggle to foster deep cultural identification among students—a pressing issue demanding resolution.

Therefore, integrating traditional Lingnan culture into university aesthetic education is not only an essential response to national cultural strategies and the implementation of the "Aesthetic Education Immersion Initiative," but also a crucial pathway to overcome current aesthetic education challenges and enhance students' cultural confidence.

## **2. The Practical Logic of Traditional Lingnan Cultural Integration in University Aesthetic Education**

In the new era, the immersion of university aesthetic education with traditional Lingnan culture centers on optimizing and upgrading the former by exploring and applying the aesthetic education essence and core concepts of Lingnan traditions.

### **2.1 Deepening Students' Embodied Cognition of Traditional Lingnan Culture Through the Function of Material Carriers of Aesthetic Education**

The core of the materializing function of aesthetic education lies in the creative transformation of cultural resources. Universities can present the diverse content of traditional Lingnan culture—such as traditional crafts, distinctive architecture, and local dances—in an aestheticized manner, overcoming the limitations of didactic indoctrination in traditional aesthetic education. When students are immersed in real-life scenarios and material carriers, they can intuitively perceive the inherent ethnic sentiments and spiritual values. Through forms like course design and thematic exhibitions, abstract cultural concepts can be transformed into participatory aesthetic objects. By constructing experiential scenarios based on Lingnan Dance works, Cantonese opera performances, and Guangzhou embroidery displays, this approach not only strengthens students' intuitive cognition of traditional Lingnan culture but also stimulates their desire for exploration through aesthetic appeal, transforming cultural inheritance from dry lectures into vibrant practices and naturally fostering a sense of identification with the culture.

### **2.2 Strengthening Students' Internal Identification with Traditional Lingnan Culture Through Aesthetic Education's Emotional Resonance Mechanism**

Within the current educational landscape, effectively guiding university students to embrace and identify with traditional Lingnan culture on an emotional level presents a significant challenge for aesthetic education. The emotional resonance mechanism of aesthetic education can remedy the abstraction and vagueness of traditional cultural education. Within the environment of autonomous participation and free contemplation fostered by aesthetic education, students can personally appreciate the artistic charm and contemporary vitality of traditional Lingnan culture. This immersive education can cultivate students' habit of active acceptance, enabling cultural identity and confidence to be strengthened through subtle and pervasive influence. Creating an emotional atmosphere through Lingnan music, poetry recitation, and traditional festival activities can prompt students to resonate emotionally, which not only enhances their affinity for traditional Lingnan culture but also facilitates the internalization of cultural values, achieving the transformation of cultural education from external indoctrination to internal self-awareness.

### **2.3 Stimulating Students' Vitality in Inheriting Traditional Lingnan Culture Through the Creative Transformation of Aesthetic Education**

Culture is not merely a static historical legacy but a dynamic spiritual force that propels development. Aesthetic education in higher education particularly emphasizes that the creation of "beauty" should not be confined to the past. Instead, it seeks innovative development oriented toward modernity while respecting the essence of tradition. The process from appreciating "traditional beauty" to creating "modern beauty" can enhance students' aesthetic and creative abilities, endowing traditional aesthetic elements of traditional Lingnan culture with new contemporary forms and connotations. Encouraging students to integrate Lingnan craftsmanship with modern design to develop cultural and creative products, or use digital technology to recreate historical Lingnan scenes, not only preserves the core cultural values but also enhances students' participation and creativity. This infuses traditional Lingnan culture with sustained vitality and promotes its

sustainable development in contemporary contexts.

In summary, the practical logic of integrating traditional Lingnan culture into university aesthetic education constructs a complete chain from cognition to acceptance to development through the organic combination of materialization functions, emotional experiences, and innovative roles.

### **3. Existing Challenges of Traditional Lingnan Cultural Immersion in University Aesthetic Education**

Against the backdrop of the nation's principle of "Five Education", aesthetic education in higher education institutions has increasingly demonstrated its value as a vital pathway for enhancing students' aesthetic and humanistic literacy. However, when focusing on the distinct regional characteristics of traditional Lingnan culture, it is observed that aesthetic education still faces profound challenges in the practice of inheritance and immersion of outstanding traditional Chinese culture.

#### **3.1 Utilitarianism and Superficiality of Cognition Lead to the Decline of Value of Aesthetic Education**

The essence of aesthetic education lies in value guidance and spiritual cultivation. Yet within current university practices, perceptions of aesthetic education and its cultural significance are significantly skewed. Instrumental rationality has overtaken value rationality, rendering the immersion in traditional Lingnan culture superficial.

Some university administrators misunderstand the essence of aesthetic education, simplistically equating it with teaching artistic skills or embellishing campus cultural activities, rather than recognizing it as a strategic endeavor for students' holistic development. Driven by rigid metrics like "Double First-Class" initiatives, disciplinary evaluations, and employment rates, resource allocation clearly favors dominant disciplines and specialized courses, leaving aesthetic education in an awkward position where it is "deemed important in theory but secondary in practice." This utilitarian orientation suspends the aesthetic educational value of traditional Lingnan culture, preventing its deep immersion into the university educational ecosystem. This marginalization is particularly pronounced in science and engineering institutions with weaker humanities atmospheres.

#### **3.2 The Fragmentation and Technological Focus of the Curriculum System Weaken the Depth and Effectiveness of Cultural Immersion**

As the primary channel for cultural immersion, the curriculum within the current higher education aesthetic education system suffers from structural looseness, superficial content, and technological alienation, severely limiting the effectiveness of immersing students in traditional Lingnan culture.

In terms of curriculum structure, aesthetic education courses occupy an ambiguous position within university curricula, often existing as general elective courses lacking the mandatory rigidity of required courses. Courses are often designed based on faculty availability rather than systematic educational objectives, resulting in logical disconnection between courses and fragmented knowledge modules. This hinders students' ability to develop a holistic, deep-seated understanding of traditional Lingnan culture.

Simultaneously, existing Lingnan cultural aesthetics courses are widely trapped in a "knowledge-centered" paradigm. They excessively focus on imparting factual knowledge—such as historical origins and formal characteristics—while inadequately exploring and superficially interpreting core aesthetic elements like the ethical concepts and life wisdom embedded within. This teaching approach, which "sees the form but not the spirit" and "has technique but no essence," reduces rich cultural practices to tedious knowledge points. It fails to resonate with students' hearts and minds, even reinforcing their stereotypical perceptions of traditional culture.

In the digital age, emerging technologies like AR, VR, and AIGC offer new possibilities for aesthetic education. Yet some universities have fallen into the trap of technological determinism, prioritizing visual spectacles and interactive experiences over substance. They reduce traditional Lingnan culture to visual symbols that can be encapsulated by technology. Technology, meant to bridge cultural meaning, instead becomes a barrier, obscuring cultural depth, leaving students at the surface level of sensory stimulation and preventing a profound dialogue with the spiritual core of traditional culture.

#### **3.3 Closed and Fragmented Practice Paths Hinder the Creative Transformation of Culture into Daily Life**

The essence of aesthetic education lies in the practical pursuit of "unity of knowledge and action." Current university practices in Lingnan cultural aesthetic education lag behind, plagued by closed and fragmented approaches that severely hinder the creative transformation of culture, from knowledge to literacy, and from the classroom to daily life.

The closed nature of practical pathways manifests as spatial limitations and a disconnect from real-world contexts.

Current practices are largely confined to classroom settings, dominated by theoretical lectures paired with simple observations. They lack immersive experiences where students actively participate and engage in hands-on activities, making it difficult for them to internalize the technical essence and aesthetic spirit of traditional Lingnan culture through “learning by doing.” More critically, these practices remain severely disconnected from community life and cultural industries. Students rarely visit intangible cultural heritage workshops, cultural sites, or historic districts, depriving them of opportunities to observe the contemporary survival and evolutionary logic of traditional Lingnan culture. This “closed-off” approach severs the natural link between culture and daily life, rendering learning outcomes ineffective in developing students’ ability to understand reality and engage with society.

Insufficient innovation in practice further limits transformative outcomes. Student creations often mechanically mimic traditional forms, failing to integrate Lingnan cultural elements like Canton porcelain or Chaozhou embroidery techniques with modern design concepts and lifestyles. This exposes shortcomings in aesthetic education’s cultivation of cross-cultural understanding, critical thinking, and creative expression. Consequently, traditional Lingnan culture exhibits a tendency toward “museumification” within university settings, struggling to revitalize itself in contemporary contexts.

#### **4. Strategies for Path Optimization of Traditional Lingnan Cultural Immersion in University Aesthetic Education**

Against the backdrop of the nation’s advocacy for “Five Education”, the value of university aesthetic education in enhancing college students’ aesthetic and humanistic literacy has increasingly become prominent. However, when focusing on traditional Lingnan culture as a regional characteristic resource, it still faces profound challenges in the practices of inheriting and immersing in China’s excellent traditional culture.

##### **4.1 Strengthening Top-Level Design to Reshape the Aesthetic Education Value System**

Addressing the issues of utilitarianism and superficiality in perception, universities must undertake fundamental restructuring at the conceptual and strategic levels. This involves repositioning the aesthetic education value of traditional Lingnan culture from the periphery to the core of education, thereby solidifying the foundation of value recognition.

Universities should enhance strategic planning by integrating cultural immersion into their overarching institutional development frameworks. They must transcend the narrow perception of aesthetic education as a secondary supplement and establish its status as a strategic initiative for fulfilling the fundamental mission of “cultivating virtue and nurturing talent.” First, universities should adhere to an “integrated planning” strategy. From the perspective of the institution’s overall strategy, actively formulate aesthetic education policies, using the inheritance of outstanding traditional Lingnan culture as the cornerstone. Closely integrate this with the institution’s unique educational philosophy to explore distinctive pathways for aesthetic education. Institutions should establish scientific, reasonable, and effective systems for Lingnan cultural aesthetic education, covering teaching management, faculty allocation, curriculum design, and student evaluation, gradually advancing aesthetic education toward institutionalization and standardization. Second, refine the evaluation metrics system. Incorporate aesthetic education efforts and outcomes as key indicators in university performance assessments, integrating them into undergraduate teaching evaluation frameworks (Implementation Plan on Strengthening Sports and Aesthetic Education, 2022). Clearly mandate that every student earns the required credits in aesthetic education courses. Include students’ understanding, experience, and innovative practice achievements related to traditional Lingnan culture in their comprehensive quality evaluations. This incentivizes active participation in aesthetic education, ensuring its orderly, robust, and effective implementation while institutionally reversing its marginalization and neglect.

##### **4.2 Reconstructing the Curriculum System to Promote Deep Cultural Transformation**

Curriculum serves as the primary channel for cultural immersion. Existing curricula must be restructured systematically, profoundly, and intelligently to transform fragmented knowledge points into an organic “knowledge body” and “spiritual core” of traditional Lingnan culture.

Higher education institutions should systematically integrate curriculum modules, comprehensively embedding traditional Lingnan culture into aesthetic education course development. First, establish a complete curriculum objective framework (Chen & Song, 2025). Develop an integration mechanism for traditional Lingnan culture across three dimensions: knowledge, competency, and affect. Second, systematic curriculum modules should be designed. Centering on the “comprehensive aesthetic education” framework, leverage the “extensibility” advantage of aesthetic education to weave traditional Lingnan culture throughout the entire curriculum system. At the general education level, courses like “Aesthetic Appreciation of Traditional Lingnan Culture” can be introduced to disseminate aesthetic knowledge from a broad perspective. At the specialized course level, design integrated curricula based on disciplinary characteristics, extracting relevant elements from traditional Lingnan culture and transforming them into teaching content. This ensures that “all specialized courses subtly cultivate character and deepen appeal, aligning with aesthetic education courses.”

In this era of digital intelligence, digital empowerment should be leveraged to drive innovative educational development, but “technology as an enabler” rather than “technology as a substitute” must be adhered to. On one hand, technological supply needs to be ensured, and an in-depth interpretation needs to be built. Higher education aesthetic cultivation should align with contemporary trends by optimizing digital infrastructure and encouraging active, lifelong learning through digital resources. On the other hand, emphasis must be placed on integrating technological application with cultural substance. By fully leveraging digital and intelligent resource platforms, traditional Lingnan culture can be effectively fused with digital technologies to deeply interpret its historical origins, cultural significance, artistic value, and social functions. Through course resource development, instructional explanations, and practical activities, cultural needs can be precisely addressed to satisfy individual student experiences, preventing the overemphasis on “visualization” and “dynamism” that risks reducing cultural substance to mere form (Peng & Peng, 2025).

### 4.3 Innovating Practical Pathways to Expand Living Cultural Transmission Spaces

The essence of aesthetic education lies in practical activities. It is imperative to break down classroom barriers and establish an open, sustainable, and innovative practical ecosystem (Yang, 2024), enabling the living transmission of traditional Lingnan culture through “learning by doing” and “keeping it alive through use.”

Higher education aesthetic education should establish diverse experiential platforms accessible to all students, extending experiential learning into internalized practice and reinforcing the principle of “cultivating through beauty” (Liu, Kong, & Zhu, 2025). First, open teaching experiences and practices. Lower learning barriers and broaden access to traditional craft teaching experiences, transforming them from “specialized students’ activities” into accessible aesthetic education where ordinary students have the desire to participate, the opportunity to practice, and the capacity to engage, guiding them to receive education and training in the “traditional beauty” of classic arts through specific art forms like Cantonese opera, Guangzhou embroidery, and Lingnan Dance. Second, extend classroom experiences and practices. Through diverse experiential activities and vibrant extracurricular programs—leveraging student clubs, cultural festivals, and community engagement—the guidance and accessibility of innovative practices can be enhanced. This brings traditional Lingnan culture beyond the classroom into daily life and society, enabling students to learn by doing, gain insights through practice, master skills, appreciate cultural depth, and grasp authentic wisdom through hands-on participation and reflection.

As a vital branch of China’s excellent traditional culture, traditional Lingnan culture’s unique aesthetic qualities and spiritual essence provide rich nourishment for aesthetic education in higher education institutions during the new era. Grounded in the national aesthetic education strategy and the mission of cultural inheritance, this paper systematically analyzes the practical mechanisms of integrating traditional Lingnan culture into aesthetic education in higher education institutions within a “value-logic-pathway” framework. It explores how material carriers deepen embodied cognition, emotional resonance strengthens cultural identity, and creative transformation stimulates the vitality of inheritance. It also identifies practical challenges such as utilitarian cognition, fragmented curricula, and isolated practices, proposing targeted optimization strategies: strengthening top-level design, reconstructing curriculum systems, and innovating practical pathways.

## 5. Conclusions

As a vital branch of China’s excellent traditional culture, traditional Lingnan culture, with its unique aesthetic qualities and profound spiritual connotations, provides valuable resources and inexhaustible momentum for university aesthetic education in the new era.

Only by creatively integrating traditional Lingnan culture into the entire process of university aesthetic education and constructing an immersive model that connects cognition, experience, and innovation can we effectively reverse the declining trend of the value rationality of aesthetic education and truly achieve the in-depth goal of “educating through beauty and cultivating through culture.”

Letting the cultural genes of traditional Lingnan culture take deep root in the hearts of young people and bringing youthful energy into advancing cultural confidence and self-strengthening.

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