

A Study on the Path of Integrating Dongguan Traditional Red-Lacquered and Flower-Painted Wooden Clogs into Ideological and Political Education for College Students from the Perspective of Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Case Study of Guangdong University of Science and Technology

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Abstract: Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) serves as a living carrier of China's excellent traditional culture and constitutes a vital ideological and political (I&P) resource for universities in fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talent in the new era. As a representative ICH item in the Lingnan region, Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs embody rich folk culture, craftsmanship spirit, and aesthetic value, demonstrating distinct potential for I&P education. Taking Guangdong University of Science and Technology (shortened as GDUST) as the research field and these wooden clogs as the research object, this paper draws on the mature experience of integrating ICH into I&P education in domestic universities. Combined with the applied talent cultivation orientation of private universities, it systematically analyzes the historical background, value connotations, and practical dilemmas of integrating ICH wooden clogs into college students' I&P education. From five dimensions, curriculum integration, practical education, cultural infiltration, digital communication, and university-local collaboration, it constructs an implementation path tailored to GDUST's student profile. Furthermore, it proposes a guarantee mechanism and an effect evaluation plan. The study aims to provide a replicable and scalable practical reference for integrating local ICH resources into I&P education in private universities, help college students enhance cultural confidence, cultivate patriotism, and promote bidirectional empowerment between I&P education and cultural heritage.

Keywords: Intangible cultural heritage; Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs; Ideological and political education; Guangdong University of Science and Technology

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research background and significance

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly calls for "carrying forward China's

excellent traditional culture and strengthening the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, “while also emphasizing “using core socialist values to enlighten the mind and cultivate virtue, and improving the ideological and political work system.” The Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage points out the need to “promote the integration of ICH into campuses, classrooms, and textbooks, and give full play to the role of ICH in fostering virtue and nurturing talent”^[1]. Against the dual strategic backdrop of promoting cultural confidence and self-improvement and building a “grand I&P curriculum,” deepening the integration of ICH resources into university I&P education has become a key direction for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talent.

As a private applied university rooted in Dongguan and serving the local community, Guangdong University of Science and Technology (GDUST) has always adhered to fostering virtue and nurturing talent as its foundation, striving to cultivate high-quality professionals with both disciplinary competence and humanistic sensibility. Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, a municipal-level ICH item in Dongguan, are a living testimony to the folk culture of the Lingnan water towns. The craftsmanship spirit, folk culture, and aesthetic value they carry align highly with the goals of I&P education for college students. However, currently, GDUST students have insufficient awareness of local ICH culture, and ICH resources have not been systematically integrated into the I&P education system. Therefore, exploring the path of integrating Dongguan red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs into college students’ I&P education is not only an inevitable requirement in response to the national cultural inheritance strategy but also a practical necessity for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of I&P education at GDUST.

In terms of theoretical significance, this study takes Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs as a carrier, focusing on the concrete practice of integrating ICH and I&P education in private universities. It enriches research findings on the integration of local ICH resources into university I&P education, provides theoretical references for similar private universities exploring an “ICH + I&P” education model, and expands research perspectives on the integration of Lingnan ICH inheritance and youth education. In terms of practical significance, it helps promote the living inheritance of Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs among young people, brings ICH culture onto campus and into classrooms, and provides concrete paths for GDUST to construct a distinctive I&P education system. Through multiple means such as curricula, practice, and cultural infiltration, it enhances college students’ identification with Lingnan local culture, cultivates craftsmanship spirit and cultural confidence, and improves the appeal and effectiveness of I&P education, thereby supporting the realization of applied talent cultivation goals.

1.2. Research status and methods

Currently, domestic research on the integration of ICH into university I&P education has yielded certain achievements. Guo Jinli and Zhu Weili (2023) pointed out that as an integral part of China’s excellent traditional culture, ICH possesses rich educational resources and powerful value-shaping functions. They argued that integrating ICH into curriculum-based I&P education is both a requirement of the times for building a culturally strong nation and an inherent demand for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talent, and further proposed a tripartite theoretical focus encompassing cultural identity and confidence, patriotic sentiment and national spirit, and humanistic sensibility and cultural literacy^[2]. Zhang Yuan (2021), from the perspective of Lingnan ICH protection and inheritance, argued that the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area shares common cultural roots, and enhancing college students’ participation in ICH protection and inheritance through talent cultivation and curriculum construction can both strengthen their cultural confidence and promote national unity and ethnic solidarity^[3]. Dong Cuiting (2024), considering the orientation and student profile of private universities, discussed the model construction and implementation paths of “ICH + I&P” education^[4]. Some universities have carried out practical explorations such as ICH in classrooms, ICH practice workshops, and internships on campus. For example, some universities have integrated ICH items such as paper-cutting, embroidery, and traditional opera into I&P courses, creating exemplary curriculum-based I&P cases, or have fostered campus cultural atmospheres through ICH clubs and cultural festivals.

However, existing research still has certain deficiencies: First, there are few studies on the integration of Lingnan

ICH, especially Dongguan local ICH, into university I&P education, and specialized research focusing on red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs is almost nonexistent. Second, most studies take public universities as research objects, lacking discussion on adaptability to the student profiles and applied talent cultivation positioning of private universities. Third, there is a lack of actionable and replicable practical path research targeting local private universities like GDUST, which fails to provide direct guidance for GDUST's I&P education practice.

This study mainly adopts the following three research methods: (1) Literature research method: Systematically review policy documents such as the Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage ^[5] and the Guiding Opinions on Comprehensively Promoting Curriculum-Based I&P Construction ^[6], as well as academic achievements related to university I&P education and cultural inheritance, to analyze typical models and experiences of integrating ICH into I&P education in domestic universities, providing theoretical support and reference for this study. (2) Field research method: Conduct field visits to the Dongguan Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center and the inheritance studio of red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, interview ICH inheritors and cultural workers to understand the production techniques, inheritance status, and cultural connotations of the wooden clogs. Meanwhile, conduct a questionnaire survey among GDUST teachers and students to analyze their current awareness of Dongguan ICH culture and their needs for I&P education. (3) Case analysis method: Select typical cases of ICH integration into I&P education in domestic universities, such as ICH curriculum construction, practical education projects, and university-local collaboration models, summarize successful experiences and referable practices, and construct an implementation path suitable for GDUST's educational characteristics and student profile.

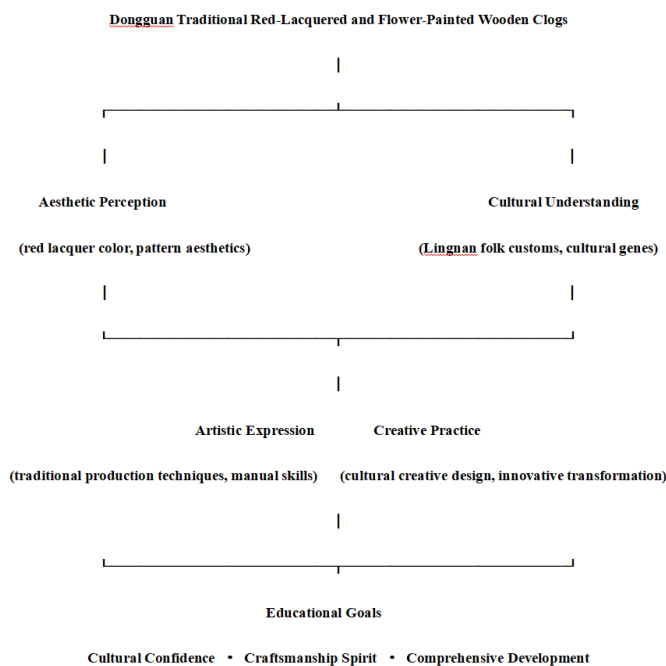
2. Cultural connotations and I&P value of Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs

2.1. Cultural characteristics of Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs

The history of Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs can be traced back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. As a unique traditional daily necessity in the Lingnan water towns, they have a history of several hundred years. Their production process is complex, involving multiple steps such as material selection, cutting, shaping, sanding, lacquering, flower painting, and nailing. Each step embodies the wisdom and perseverance of artisans. In terms of material selection, hard, wear-resistant, and corrosion-resistant woods such as camphor and lychee wood are preferred to ensure durability. The lacquering process mainly uses natural red lacquer, which is bright, long-lasting, and resistant to moisture and decay. The flower-painting step features mainly floral and bird motifs, dragons and phoenixes, and auspicious patterns, painted with traditional techniques characterized by smooth lines and auspicious meanings, reflecting the unique aesthetic style of the Lingnan region. These wooden clogs are not only practical items for daily wear but also play an important role in folk activities such as weddings, housewarming ceremonies, and festivals. They embody the aspirations of Lingnan water town residents for a better life and serve as an important carrier of Dongguan regional culture. At the same time, Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs contain rich cultural symbols and spiritual connotations. They are important witnesses to Lingnan folk culture, embody the essence of "craftsmanship spirit," and serve as a living expression of Lingnan regional culture. These cultural symbols and spiritual cores provide abundant material for integrating them into college students' I&P education.

2.2. Value dimensions of integrating ICH wooden clogs into I&P education

Cultural confidence is an essential core competency for college students in the new era, and local ICH culture is an important foundation for strengthening cultural confidence. As a local ICH item of Dongguan, the red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs carry the unique historical memory and cultural genes of the Lingnan region and are an important part of China's excellent traditional culture. Integrating them into I&P education allows GDUST students to deeply understand the charm of local culture, recognize the important position of Lingnan culture in traditional Chinese



3. Practical dilemmas in integrating Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs into college students' I&P education

3.1. Poor connection between ICH inheritance and educational subjects, difficulty forming educational synergy

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not yet established a communication and exchange platform between ICH inheritors and on-campus teachers. The two sides lack channels for teaching seminars and content co-creation, resulting in a disconnect between the ICH inheritance subjects and educational subjects, preventing ICH resources from truly integrating into the entire I&P education process. Furthermore, the traditional expression of ICH culture is poorly adapted to the discourse system of college students' I&P education. The dissemination of Dongguan red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs mainly relies on physical displays and process explanations, which are monotonous. In contrast, GDUST students, born after 2000 and 2005, are accustomed to fragmented, interesting, and interactive ways of receiving information. Traditional ICH dissemination methods fail to resonate with students. For example, the university previously organized sporadic static ICH exhibitions, which attracted very few student visitors, and most were passive participants, failing to achieve the goal of I&P education ^[4].

3.2. Shortcomings in practice paths and resource guarantees, difficulty achieving educational outcomes

In terms of practice carriers, I&P education at GDUST has long been centered on classroom theoretical teaching. The integration of ICH into I&P education lacks diversified, immersive, and experiential practice carriers. Students can only access ICH wooden clogs through occasional offline lectures and simple picture displays, with no opportunity to participate in hands-on production, field research, cultural creative development, or other in-depth practical activities. As a result, they cannot achieve the ideological transformation from “knowing ICH” to “identifying with ICH” to “actively inheriting ICH,” and I&P education remains superficial ^[2]. For example, the university currently offers no practice courses related to local Dongguan ICH, nor does it have a fixed ICH practice space. Even if students are interested in red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, they have no channels for practical learning, leaving ICH-based I&P education at the theoretical level and failing to achieve the unity of knowledge and action. In terms of resource guarantees, the university-local collaboration mechanism is severely lacking. GDUST lacks deep cooperation with the Dongguan ICH Protection Center and the inheritance studio of red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs; no long-term cooperation agreements have been signed, and no practice education bases have been jointly established. Internal university departments are also poorly coordinated, with the I&P Department, Academic Affairs Office, Youth League Committee, and secondary colleges each acting independently. There is no special ICH I&P education working group to coordinate the overall work, and guarantees such as funding, teaching staff, and venues are inadequate ^[4]. For example, the university's Youth League Committee once planned to hold an ICH-themed campus activity, but due to the lack of course credit support from the Academic Affairs Office, content guidance from the I&P Department, and resource support from local ICH institutions, the activity had to be simplified in form, making it impossible to carry out systematic and large-scale ICH-based I&P practice activities, severely restricting the advancement of educational work.

3.3. Insufficient student awareness and campus cultural infiltration, educational atmosphere not yet formed

As an applied private university, GDUST's teaching focus leans toward professional skill cultivation, with insufficient publicity and education on local ICH culture. As a result, students' awareness of Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs is extremely low. According to a preliminary questionnaire survey, over 80% of the university's students have never heard of these wooden clogs. The remaining students know that they are a Dongguan ICH item, but have no understanding of their cultural value, craftsmanship spirit, or folk significance. They generally believe that ICH is unrelated to their studies, lives, and future career development, and their willingness to actively participate in inheritance is extremely low. At the same time, the campus ICH cultural atmosphere is weak. The university has not integrated local ICH items, such as the red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, into campus culture construction. There are no cultural positions such as ICH cultural corridors, themed bulletin boards, or online science popularization columns, nor have normalized ICH campus cultural activities been established. As a result, a subtle cultural infiltration atmosphere cannot be formed, and ICH-based I&P education lacks a supportive campus environment, making it difficult to truly resonate with students.

4. Path construction for integrating Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs into college students' I&P education

4.1. Deeply integrating curriculum-based I&P and teaching content

Strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Guiding Opinions on Comprehensively Promoting Curriculum-Based I&P Construction^[6], deeply explore the I&P elements of Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, and construct a three-in-one curriculum education system consisting of “general education courses + I&P courses + featured elective courses,” tailored to GDUST’s applied talent cultivation goals, achieving full coverage of ICH culture and I&P teaching. In the course Ideological Morality and Rule of Law, we incorporate cases of the inheritors of red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs who demonstrate dedication and the pursuit of excellence, explaining craftsmanship spirit, professional dedication, and other moral norms. In the course Introduction to Traditional Chinese Culture, a special topic on “Dongguan Red-Lacquered and Flower-Painted Wooden Clogs and Lingnan Folk Culture” explains their historical origins, cultural symbols, and regional cultural value. In the course Situation and Policy, combine the national cultural inheritance strategy to analyze the current status of local ICH inheritance and the responsibilities of youth, guiding students to establish cultural confidence. At the same time, offer a featured general education elective course titled Craft and Culture of Dongguan Red-Lacquered and Flower-Painted Wooden Clogs for all students, incorporating it into the university’s general education credit system. Adopt a teaching model combining “theoretical explanation + practical operation.” For example, include practical sessions such as pattern tracing and simple lacquering of wooden clogs in the course, allowing students to experience the charm of traditional crafts through hands-on activities, achieving the unity of cultural inheritance and I&P education^[2]. For different majors such as the School of Foreign Languages, School of Art, and School of Management, promote the integration of professional courses with ICH-based I&P. For example, in translation courses, foreign language teachers can add teaching content such as translation of cultural terms related to red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs and English introductions to ICH, guiding students to tell Dongguan ICH stories in foreign languages. In cultural creative design courses, art and design students can use the patterns and shapes of wooden clogs as inspiration for design creation, achieving deep integration of professional teaching with cultural inheritance and I&P education.

4.2. Innovating practice activities and cultural carrier construction

Focusing on the characteristics of GDUST students and campus activity arrangements, create multi-level, normalized ICH practice education activities to truly bring ICH culture onto campus and into students’ lives. For example, the university regularly holds a “Dongguan Traditional Red-Lacquered and Flower-Painted Wooden Clogs ICH Culture Festival” each semester, featuring three core activities:

First, invite ICH inheritors to campus to hold wooden clog production technique demonstrations and on-site teaching workshops, organizing students by class and club to participate in experiential activities, covering over 2,000 students per event.

Second, hold a “Dongguan Red-Lacquered and Flower-Painted Wooden Clogs Cultural Creative Design Competition,” encouraging all students to use their professional strengths to design derivative cultural creative products, posters, short videos, copywriting, etc., with university-level awards. Winning works will be included in the university’s ICH cultural creative achievement library, and outstanding works can be recommended for participation in Dongguan’s cultural creative competition, promoting the innovative transformation and development of ICH culture^[3].

Third, organize students to conduct ICH field research activities, led by I&P teachers and subject teachers, visit the Dongguan ICH Protection Center and the inheritance studio of red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, interview ICH inheritors, research the current status of wooden clog inheritance, write research reports, and incorporate practice outcomes into course assessments^[7].

At the same time, leverage digital technology to build a campus ICH digital communication matrix. Operated by the university’s Youth League Committee and New Media Center, open columns on WeChat public accounts, Douyin

(TikTok), and video platforms to regularly publish content such as stories of wooden clog inheritors, craft science popularization, student practice highlights, and ICH knowledge quizzes. Encourage foreign language students to form bilingual ICH communication teams, produce Chinese-English short videos and graphic science content about red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, and publish them on overseas social media platforms, promoting Dongguan ICH to the world while enhancing students' cultural expression skills and international perspective. In addition, create ICH cultural display areas in the university library, campus cultural corridor, and teaching building lobbies, displaying physical wooden clogs, production tools, and pattern collections, creating an immersive ICH cultural atmosphere and achieving subtle cultural infiltration.

4.3. Improving collaboration and long-term guarantee mechanisms

GDUST proactively connects with the Dongguan Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism and Sports, the Dongguan ICH Protection Center, and the inheritance base of red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, signing long-term university-local cooperation agreements and jointly building a practice base for I&P education centered on Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, providing a stable platform for integrating ICH into I&P education ^[4]. Form a hybrid teaching team of "I&P teachers + subject teachers + ICH inheritors." The university regularly organizes on-campus teachers to participate in ICH culture training, inviting inheritors and ICH research experts to explain the cultural connotations, inheritance history, and educational value of red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, enhancing teachers' ICH teaching capabilities. Hire the inheritors of these wooden clogs as off-campus I&P mentors, who will regularly conduct 4–6 classroom teaching and practice guidance sessions per semester, participate in course design and teaching seminars, address the shortage of on-campus teaching staff, and achieve complementarity of educational resources ^[2]. At the same time, establish an ICH I&P education leading group at the university, led by university administrators, coordinating departments such as the I&P Department, Academic Affairs Office, Youth League Committee, secondary colleges, and Finance Office, clarifying the responsibilities of each department, and setting up special funds for teacher training, practice activities, ICH material procurement, cultural creative development, etc. Establish an internal university department coordination mechanism, incorporating ICH-based I&P education into the university's I&P work assessment and curriculum-based I&P construction assessment, promoting collaborative efforts among departments, forming educational synergy, and ensuring that the integration of ICH into I&P education is normalized, institutionalized, and sustainable.

4.4. Strengthening student awareness and cultural identity

Targeting the problem of weak student awareness at GDUST, carry out comprehensive ICH science publicity through channels such as freshman orientation, themed class meetings, campus radio, and class group chats, popularizing knowledge about Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs. Rely on student clubs to establish an ICH cultural inheritance club, attracting students interested in ICH to regularly carry out ICH learning, exchange, and publicity activities, leveraging the leading role of student leaders to encourage their peers to learn about and love ICH. Establish an ICH-based I&P education effect feedback mechanism through questionnaires, classroom questioning, practice outcome assessments, and symposiums to regularly understand students' awareness, participation, and ideological changes regarding ICH culture. Timely optimize course content and practice activity formats to improve educational relevance, making ICH-based I&P education truly meet student needs and achieve bidirectional empowerment between cultural inheritance and I&P education.

5. Conclusion

Dongguan traditional red-lacquered and flower-painted wooden clogs, as a municipal-level ICH item of Dongguan, carry Lingnan folk culture, craftsmanship spirit, and aesthetic connotations. They are a valuable local cultural resource for

I&P education in universities. Integrating them into I&P education for GDUST students can both enrich I&P education content and innovate educational forms, while promoting the living inheritance of ICH among young people, achieving bidirectional empowerment between cultural inheritance and the cultivation of virtue and talent. Based on an analysis of their cultural connotations and I&P value, this paper identifies practical dilemmas such as cognitive gaps, single carriers, insufficient teaching staff, and a lack of collaboration. It proposes specific implementation paths from four aspects: curriculum integration, practical education, digital communication, and university-local collaboration, providing an actionable plan for GDUST to carry out distinctive I&P education and offering a reference for similar local universities in integrating ICH into I&P education.

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Disclosure statement

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