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Student Group's Perception of Cultural Symbols in Lacquerware Enhances Cultural Identity

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Abstract

This article delves into the complex relationship between lacquerware and cultural symbols, comprehensively exploring the historical evolution of lacquerware and the rich connotations contained in its artistic expressions. This article meticulously traces the historical development of lacquerware, highlighting its significance in different dynasties and its role in reflecting social values, religious beliefs, and aesthetic trends. Strategic methods were also proposed to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of the inherent cultural symbols of lacquerware. It emphasizes the importance of integrating lacquerware education into school curricula and suggests practical methods such as practical workshops, interactive exhibitions, and interdisciplinary projects that combine art, history, and cultural studies. This study advocates for broader social and cultural communication initiatives, such as public exhibitions, digital media events, and community projects, to increase public participation in lacquerware culture. These efforts aim to create a more inclusive environment where people from different backgrounds can appreciate and engage with the cultural heritage represented by lacquerware. This article also delves into the mechanism by which perceiving cultural symbols in lacquerware can enhance cultural identity. It explores how cultural cognition, driven by educational experiences, resonates emotionally with the historical and symbolic background of art. By elucidating these mechanisms, this article aims to provide theoretical insights and practical guidance for educators and cultural institutions.

Keywords

Lacquerware; Cultural icon; Student group; Perception strategy

Introduction

Under the impact of globalization, diverse cultures collide and blend with each other, and the inheritance and development of local culture face many challenges. As the main force of future society, the students' understanding and identification with local culture are directly related to the continuation and promotion of traditional culture. As a treasure of traditional Chinese culture, lacquerware carries rich historical information and profound cultural connotations, and the cultural symbols on it are the crystallization of the wisdom of the Chinese nation. It is of great practical significance to conduct in-depth research on how to enhance students' perception of cultural symbols in lacquerware, thereby strengthening their cultural identity.

1. Overview of Lacquerware and Cultural Symbols

1.1 The History and Development of Lacquerware

Lacquerware, an artistic treasure that carries the wisdom and aesthetics of Chinese civilization for thousands of years,

has its history slowly unfolding in the long river of time. As early as ancient times, when humans were still in a stage of confusion and barbarism, the natural sap of lacquer trees attracted the attention of our ancestors with its unique viscosity and luster. They attempted to apply this juice onto the surface of the object, inadvertently embarking on the long journey of lacquerware production. As time passed by the Shang and Zhou dynasties, the craft of lacquerware production had already taken shape. At that time, lacquerware had a simple and solemn appearance, often appearing in the form of ritual vessels, playing an indispensable role in major occasions such as sacrificial ceremonies and court appointments. The lacquer decorations on it, although slightly immature, contain the reverence and piety of early humans towards the gods of heaven and earth. During the Warring States, Qin, and Han dynasties, lacquerware ushered in its first glorious era. With the prosperity of society and the advancement of craftsmanship, the production scale of lacquerware continues to expand, and the craftsmanship becomes increasingly exquisite. Craftsmen skillfully use various techniques such as painting, inlaying, and needle carving to vividly present mythological legends, historical stories, and other themes on lacquerware. These lacquerware not only have practical value, but also become artistic treasures, showcasing the superb cultural and artistic level at that time.

During the Tang and Song dynasties, lacquerware continuously innovated on the basis of inheriting from previous generations. The craftsmanship of gold and silver inlay and mother of pearl inlay has reached a state of perfection, and the colors of lacquerware are more brilliant and the shapes are more diverse. They are not only exclusive luxury goods of the aristocratic class, but also spread overseas through trade and other means, becoming an important witness to cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, lacquerware production presented a diverse and flourishing scene. Official lacquerware workshops and folk lacquerware artists complement each other, and various styles and schools compete for brilliance. Whether it is the grandeur and solemnity of palace lacquerware or the simplicity and agility of folk lacquerware, they all demonstrate the unique charm of lacquerware art in different social classes and cultural backgrounds.

1.2 Cultural Symbols in Lacquerware

Lacquerware is not just a delicate artifact, but also a culmination of cultural symbols. The patterns and decorations engraved on lacquerware carry the profound cultural connotations and spiritual pursuits of the Chinese nation. Dragon pattern, as one of the most representative cultural symbols in lacquerware, symbolizes power, majesty, and auspiciousness. Its winding and twisting posture seems to contain infinite power between heaven and earth, reflecting the Chinese nation's reverence for strength and majesty. The phoenix pattern symbolizes beauty, happiness, and harmony, and its elegant form showcases the Chinese nation's yearning and pursuit for a better life. The cloud and thunder patterns, with their simple and rhythmic lines, create a mysterious and profound atmosphere, reflecting the ancient ancestors' reverence and exploration of natural phenomena (Wu, Fan, & Cai, 2019). Ruyi pattern, with its dynamic and varied shapes, symbolizes that everything goes smoothly and one's wishes come true, expressing people's expectations for a happy life. There are also lacquerware decorations based on historical stories and mythological legends, which perfectly integrate literature, art, and lacquerware production, making lacquerware an important carrier for inheriting historical and cultural heritage. These cultural symbols are not only the soul of lacquerware art, but also a vivid embodiment of the cultural genes of the Chinese nation, spanning time and space, telling ancient and eternal stories.

2. Strategies to Enhance Students' Perception of Cultural Symbols in Lacquerware

2.1 At the Level of School Education

School education, as the main battlefield for students to acquire knowledge and shape values, shoulders an inescapable responsibility in enhancing students' perception of cultural symbols in lacquerware. In terms of curriculum design, traditional disciplinary boundaries should be broken and an interdisciplinary integrated lacquerware culture curriculum system should be constructed. For example, in history class, in-depth analysis of the evolution of lacquerware in different historical periods is conducted, placing it in a grand historical context, so that students understand that lacquerware is a witness to social development and carries political, economic, and cultural information of a specific era; Guide students in art class to appreciate the unique shapes, vibrant colors, and exquisite craftsmanship of lacquerware, encourage them to try using brushes to depict cultural symbols on lacquerware, and feel its artistic charm; In Chinese class, select poems and essays related to lacquerware for appreciation, appreciate the admiration of literati and scholars for lacquerware, and explore the cultural connotations contained therein.

The construction of campus culture is equally crucial. Schools can regularly hold exhibitions on lacquerware culture, showcasing lacquerware objects or replicas of different styles and eras, equipped with detailed textual explanations and professional guides, allowing students to intuitively experience the charm of lacquerware through close observation. Organize lacquerware culture lectures, invite lacquerware masters or experts and scholars to share the production process, cultural value, and stories behind lacquerware, and broaden students' horizons. In addition, organizing handmade lacquerware making activities allows students to personally experience the process of lacquerware production, from material selection, painting to decoration, each step can enable them to have a deeper understanding of the significance of lacquerware cultural symbols.

2.2 Social and Cultural Communication Level

Social and cultural dissemination is a broad platform for enhancing students' perception of cultural symbols in lacquerware. Museums and exhibitions should fully utilize their educational functions. Museums can use innovative display methods, such as utilizing virtual reality, augmented reality, and other technologies, to allow visitors to experience the charm of lacquerware firsthand (Tang & Zhong, 2022). Media promotion has a powerful influence. High quality lacquerware culture programs and documentaries should be produced by media such as television and the internet, attracting students' attention through exciting visuals and in-depth interpretations. Social media platforms can also conduct discussions on lacquerware culture topics, encouraging students to share their understanding and feelings about lacquerware, and creating a good cultural atmosphere. The development of the cultural industry has injected new vitality into the dissemination of lacquerware culture. Develop lacquerware cultural and creative products with creativity and cultural connotations, such as lacquerware stationery, accessories, etc., integrate lacquerware cultural symbols into modern life, and enable students to come into contact with and understand lacquerware culture in their daily lives, thereby enhancing their perception of cultural symbols in lacquerware.

3. The Mechanism of Enhancing Cultural Identity Through Perceiving Cultural Symbols in Lacquerware

3.1 Cultural Cognition and Emotional Resonance

When students begin to perceive the cultural symbols in lacquerware, a journey of cultural cognition that spans time and space quietly begins. The exquisite patterns and unique shapes on lacquerware are not just visual pleasures, they are vivid imprints of history and culture, carrying the wisdom and emotions of our predecessors. For example, the dragon and phoenix patterns commonly seen on lacquerware symbolize authority and power, while the phoenix represents auspiciousness and beauty. These symbols have been deeply integrated into the cultural heritage of the Chinese nation over time. Through observing and understanding these symbols, students will gradually develop a comprehensive understanding of traditional culture, realizing that lacquerware is not just a tool, but also an important carrier of cultural inheritance.

As the understanding of lacquerware cultural symbols deepens, emotional resonance will also arise spontaneously. When students learn about the complexity and exquisite craftsmanship of lacquerware production, and experience the hard work and sweat that craftsmen put in to pursue perfection, they will be moved by this craftsman spirit (Wang, 2023). This emotional touch will create a deeper emotional connection between them and traditional culture. Just like seeing a lacquerware that has been shining for thousands of years, students will feel the resilience and charm of traditional culture, and thus surge with love and pride for national culture in their hearts. This emotional resonance will further inspire them to actively explore and understand more traditional culture, forming a virtuous cycle and continuously deepening their identification with traditional culture.

3.2 Value Shaping and Identity Recognition

The cultural symbols in lacquerware contain rich values, which subtly shape the spiritual world of students. The craftsmanship spirit of striving for excellence and pursuing excellence reflected in the lacquerware production process teaches students to be responsible, pay attention to details, and constantly pursue higher goals in their studies and daily lives. Some patterns on lacquerware that symbolize unity and harmony, such as the Double Fish pattern and the Ruyi pattern, convey the value concept of the Chinese nation's emphasis on interpersonal relationships and pursuit of social harmony, guiding students to establish correct values and outlook on life.

When students identify with and accept these values, they will have a clearer understanding of their identity as members of the Chinese nation. The symbols of lacquerware culture have become an important element in building their identity, making them understand their mission of inheriting and promoting traditional culture. This identity recognition will encourage students to actively participate in cultural heritage activities, demonstrate their love and responsibility for national culture through practical actions, and further enhance their cultural identity.

4. Summary

This article comprehensively explores the related issues between lacquerware and cultural symbols. In the overview section of lacquerware and cultural symbols, the long development process of lacquerware from ancient times to modern times is summarized, as well as the profound connotations of rich cultural symbols such as dragon patterns, phoenix patterns, cloud and thunder patterns contained in lacquerware. These cultural symbols are important manifestations of the artistic charm and cultural value of lacquerware.

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