

Survey on the Integration of Local Culture in Labor Education Courses: A Case Study of Guangxi Arts University in Nanning, China

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Abstract

Labor education refers to equip students with essential life skills, practical abilities, craftsmanship, labor concepts, and personal qualities needed for social development. Local culture encompasses the unique lifestyle of a community, including aspects such as religion, food, clothing, language, rituals, and music. This study investigates the integration of local culture into labor education courses at Guangxi Arts University in Nanning City, highlighting the benefits and challenges of such an approach. The research focuses on the attitudes of Guangxi Arts University students towards incorporating Nanning City's local culture into their labor education curriculum. A survey of 331 students was conducted to gather data on their familiarity with, interest in, and perceptions of the integration of local culture into labor education. The results indicate a strong student preference for integrating local culture into these courses. A significant majority of students reported being familiar with and interested in Nanning City's local culture, with 88.3% feeling familiar and 93.4% expressing interest. However, the data also reveal varied student attitudes regarding the actual integration of local culture by teachers in labor education courses. Only 42.3% of students believed that teachers effectively incorporate local culture into the curriculum, suggesting that current integration efforts may be insufficient. Despite these challenges, 91.6% of students agreed that integrating local culture into labor education is beneficial, and 84.6% looked forward to encountering more local cultural elements in their courses. The study underscores the transformative impact of integrating local culture into labor education, advocating for its widespread adoption in educational policies and curriculum frameworks. Embracing and celebrating local cultural diversity enriches educational experiences, strengthens community ties, and ensures the continuity of cultural heritage for future generations. Key implications include: (i) Educational Practice Insights: Curriculum designers and educators should incorporate local cultural elements to boost student interest and engagement while

promoting local cultural heritage. (ii) Policy Implications: Policymakers should advance the integration of labor education with local culture by promoting related policies and encouraging their adoption in educational institutions. (iii) Curriculum Development Insights: Developers should prioritize local cultural aspects to create dynamic and enriching learning experiences. Recommendations for enhancing the integration of local culture into labor education include: (i) Enhanced Teacher Training: Comprehensive training for teachers to integrate local culture into labor education effectively. (ii) Enriched Curriculum Content: Inclusion of more content and practical activities related to local culture. (iii) Promotion of Home-School Collaboration: Encouraging collaborative efforts between families and schools to foster local cultural practices. (iv) Policy Support: Developing policies to guide and support schools in integrating local culture. (v) Regular Evaluation and Feedback: Establishing a systematic framework for ongoing evaluation and feedback. Implementing these strategies will enhance labor education's quality and effectiveness while contributing significantly to preserving and promoting local cultural heritage.

Keywords: Local Culture, Labor Education, Student attitudes, Survey study

Introduction

Labor education refers to equip students with life skills, practical abilities, craftsmanship, labor concepts, and personal qualities that meet the demands of social development (Zhu, 2021). Local culture encompasses the lifestyle of a community in a particular region, including aspects such as religion, food, clothing, language, rituals, and music (Shih, 2022).

In China, policy initiatives have spurred a growing body of research on labor education courses. Educators recognize labor education as a vital component of the educational system, significantly contributing to students' development. Scholars have extensively studied the integration of local culture into education, primarily focusing on subjects like language, physical education, science, and ethics. However, there is a notable lack of research on incorporating local culture into labor education courses.

Combining labor education with local culture introduces an innovative model for labor education curricula. This approach aligns with the Ministry of Education's policy guidelines on labor education and fosters the ongoing development of labor education courses. Additionally, it positively impacts the preservation and protection of local culture.

This study was conducted at Guangxi Arts University in Nanning City. Nanning City was chosen because it boasts a rich array of local cultural resources, which are central to the city's charm (Wang, 2012). For universities, exploring and utilizing the cultural resources of their surrounding areas is a crucial means of developing distinctive educational programs, enhancing campus culture, and deepening institutional growth (Huang & Wu, 2023). As the capital of Guangxi Province, Nanning City is home to 15 universities. Guangxi Arts University was selected as a case study because it is a public university in Nanning City with mid-level scale and infrastructure among the 15 universities, making it a suitable research subject. Guangxi Arts University is one of the institutions actively responding to the Ministry of Education's guidelines on labor education.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to collect attitudes of Guangxi Arts University students towards incorporating Nanning City's local culture into labor education courses, which is a crucial aspect of the practical needs of university labor education courses concerning local culture.

Methods

This study employs quantitative methods. A survey was carried out to assess university students' attitudes towards the integration of Nanning City's local culture into labor education courses. Guangxi Arts University has approximately 9,500 undergraduate students, with around 2,400 first-year students participating in labor education courses. Following Krejcie and Morgan's (1970), guidelines, a sample size of 331 students was chosen for the survey to gather data. Participants were randomly selected from various majors, and their willingness to engage in the study was taken into account during the selection process.

Results

The results of this study include five items related to students' attitudes towards the utilization of Nanning city's local culture.

Table 1

Students' attitudes towards the use of local culture in the labor education course

No	Items	Frequency (N=331)					Mean	Std. Deviation
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1	Familiar with the local culture of Nanning City.	123 (37.2%)	169 (51.1%)	21 (6.3%)	13 (3.9%)	5 (1.5%)	4.18	0.83
2	Very interested in the local culture of Nanning city.	138 (41.7%)	171 (51.7%)	17 (5.1%)	4 (1.2%)	1 (0.3%)	4.33	0.66
3	Teachers incorporate the local culture of Nanning city into the labor education courses.	9 (2.7%)	131 (39.6%)	69 (20.8%)	119 (36%)	3 (0.9%)	3.07	0.95
4	Integrating the local culture of Nanning city	92 (27.8%)	211 (63.8%)	17 (5.1%)	9 (2.7%)	2 (0.6%)	4.15	0.69

	into the labor education course is beneficial for the course.							
5	Looking forward to encountering more local culture from Nanning city in the labor education courses.	102 (30.8%)	178 (53.8%)	38 (11.5%)	11 (3.3%)	2 (0.6%)	4.11	0.78

Based on students' responses to item 1, 123 student participants (37.2%) selected "Strongly Agree," 169 student participants (51.1%) selected "Agree," 21 student participants (6.3%) chose "Uncertain," 13 student participants (3.9%) selected "Disagree," and 5 student participants (1.5%) chose "Strongly Disagree." The average score of 4.18, which is close to "Agree" and slightly above 4, indicates that overall, student participants feel familiar with the local culture of Nanning City. The majority of student participants expressed agreement or strong agreement with this statement. A standard deviation of 0.83 reflects the dispersion of data points around the average of 4.18. With a standard deviation of 0.83 relative to the mean, the data distribution shows some degree of dispersion while being relatively concentrated. This suggests that while most students indicate familiarity with the local culture, there are also varying opinions among students. In total, 292 students (88.3% of the total) indicated they feel familiar with the local culture of Nanning City.

Based on the responses to item 2, 138 student participants (41.7%) strongly agreed, 171 student participants (51.7%) agreed, 17 student participants (5.1%) were uncertain, 4 student participants (1.2%) disagreed, and 1 student participant (0.3%) strongly disagreed. The average score of 4.33 falls between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree," indicating that overall, student participants are highly interested in the local culture of Nanning City. A standard deviation of 0.66 suggests a relatively concentrated distribution of responses. The data reveals that a significant majority of student participants (309 individuals, accounting for 93.4% of the total) exhibit a strong interest in the local culture of Nanning City. It is evident that most students are genuinely interested in and have some understanding of the local culture of Nanning City.

Based on the responses to item 3, 9 student participants (2.7%) strongly agreed, 131 student participants (39.6%) agreed, 69 student participants (20.8%) were uncertain, 119 student participants (36%) disagreed, and 3 student participants (0.9%) strongly disagreed. The data reveals varied student attitudes toward whether teachers incorporate the local culture of Nanning City into the labor education course. Supporters (140 individuals, combining Strongly Agree and Agree), constitute 42.3% of the total, while uncertain participants number 69 individuals, comprising 20.8% of the total. Opponents (122

individuals, combining Disagree and Strongly Disagree), make up 36.9% of the total. Although most students show a preference for the local culture of Nanning City, its actual integration by teachers in the course appears limited. Further insights can be gained from the analysis of the following two items.

Based on the responses to item 4, 92 student participants (27.8%) strongly agreed, 211 student participants (63.8%) agreed, 17 student participants (5.1%) were uncertain, 9 student participants (2.7%) disagreed, and 2 student participants (0.6%) strongly disagreed. The average score of 4.15, which is close to "Agree," indicates that the majority of student participants believe integrating the local culture of Nanning City into the labor education course is beneficial. A standard deviation of 0.69 suggests that data points are relatively clustered around the mean. The data indicates that a significant majority of student participants (303 individuals, comprising 91.6% of the total) perceive integrating the local culture of Nanning City into the labor education course as advantageous.

Based on the responses to item 5, 102 student participants (30.8%) strongly agreed, 178 student participants (53.8%) agreed, 38 student participants (11.5%) were uncertain, 11 student participants (3.3%) disagreed, and 2 student participants (0.6%) strongly disagreed. The average score of 4.11, which closely aligns with "Agree," indicates that a significant majority of student participants anticipate encountering more local culture from Nanning City in the labor education course. A standard deviation of 0.78 suggests that data points are clustered around the mean. The data reveals that 280 students (84.6% of the total) are looking forward to experiencing more local culture from Nanning City in the labor education course.

Discussion

This study indicates that students generally hold a positive attitude towards integrating the local culture of Nanning City into the labor education curriculum. Firstly, the majority of students report being familiar with the local culture of Nanning City and express a strong interest in it. Specifically, 88.3% of student participants believe they are familiar with Nanning City's local culture, and 93.4% show interest in it. This suggests that there is already a significant level of awareness of Nanning City's local culture among the student population, and students have a strong sense of identification and interest in these cultural elements.

However, attitudes vary regarding whether teachers integrate Nanning City's local culture into the labor education curriculum. Only 42.3% of students support this idea, while 36.9% disagree. This may reflect that the integration of local culture in current labor education courses is not comprehensive enough, or students' perception of this integration is not yet clear.

Nevertheless, the majority of students still believe that integrating Nanning City's local culture into the labor education curriculum would be beneficial. 91.6% of student participants agree with this viewpoint. This indicates that despite existing implementation challenges, students recognize the potential value of such integration and look forward to encountering more local cultural elements in their courses. 84.6% of students express anticipation for encountering more local culture from Nanning City in the labor education curriculum.

Overall, the study results demonstrate that students hold a positive attitude towards integrating local culture into the labor education curriculum. The survey results are consistent with the views of other scholars, including Raymond and Choon (2017), Dazrullisa (2018) and Baltes et al. (2015), which indicate that culture and local wisdom are integral to social life and should serve as both sources and complements to learning. This approach helps students more easily and enthusiastically address issues relevant to their daily lives. Culturally-based learning is expected to positively influence students' social attitudes towards others post-graduation and in their professional lives. The cultural factors that influence students relate to behaviors, social interactions, or similar themes, underscoring the importance of considering and valuing cultural impacts on learning styles.

Contribution

This research contributes significantly to both the theoretical and practical understanding of integrating local culture into labor education. Theoretically, it bridges a critical gap in existing literature by focusing on the relatively underexplored area of labor education, expanding the discourse beyond traditional subjects like language and science. It highlights the potential of local culture as a transformative element in educational curricula, fostering a more holistic development of students that includes practical skills and cultural awareness. This study aligns with and supports existing theories on culturally-based learning, which posit that cultural elements are crucial in enhancing students' engagement and social attitudes. By providing empirical data on student attitudes and perceptions, it strengthens the argument for integrating cultural components into education as a means to enrich learning experiences and preserve cultural heritage.

Contextually, this research is significant in the Chinese educational landscape, where policy initiatives are increasingly emphasizing the importance of labor education. By focusing on Guangxi Arts University in Nanning, a region rich in cultural resources, the study underscores the importance of leveraging local culture to develop distinctive and engaging educational programs. It provides practical insights and actionable recommendations for curriculum designers, educators, and policymakers, promoting a more integrated approach to education that respects and celebrates cultural diversity. The findings advocate for a model of labor education that not only equips students with essential life skills but also instills a deep appreciation for their cultural heritage, thereby contributing to the sustainability and continuity of local traditions in a rapidly globalizing world.

Implication

The study underscores the transformative impact of integrating local culture into labor education, the following points outline the key implications of the study's findings: (i) Educational Practice Insights, (ii) Policy Implications, (iii) Curriculum Development Insights.

(i) Educational Practice Insights: The findings underscore a strong student preference for integrating local culture into labor education courses, offering crucial guidance for curriculum designers and educators. Incorporating local cultural elements into these courses not only boosts student interest and engagement but also plays a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting local cultural heritage.

(ii) Policy Implications: The study's outcomes lend support to the Ministry of Education's initiatives aimed at enhancing the integration of labor education with local culture. Policymakers can leverage these findings to advance policy implementation and advocacy, encouraging wider adoption of integrating local cultural components into labor education across diverse educational institutions.

(iii) Curriculum Development Insights: The survey results prompt curriculum developers to prioritize the incorporation of local cultural aspects. By infusing local culture into the curriculum, educators can create more dynamic and enriching learning experiences that nurture students' appreciation and affinity for their local heritage and traditions.

Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance the utilization of local culture in labor education, including: (i) Enhanced Teacher Training, (ii) Enriched Curriculum Content, (iii) Promotion of Home-School Collaboration, (iv) Policy Support, (v) Regular Evaluation and Feedback.

(i) Enhanced Teacher Training: It is crucial to provide comprehensive training for teachers on integrating local culture into labor education. Such training equips educators with the knowledge and skills to effectively incorporate these cultural elements into their teaching practices. Practical case studies and sharing of experiences can significantly enhance teachers' understanding and instructional approaches towards local culture.

(ii) Enriched Curriculum Content: To enrich labor education courses, there should be a deliberate inclusion of more content and practical activities related to local culture. For instance, organizing student visits to historical and cultural sites, and engaging them in traditional crafts, provides hands-on experiences that deepen their appreciation and engagement with local cultural heritage.

(iii) Promotion of Home-School Collaboration: Collaborative efforts between families and schools play a pivotal role in fostering the continuity of local cultural practices. Families can contribute by integrating cultural practices into daily routines, complementing school-based efforts to impart comprehensive knowledge and skills related to local culture through structured curriculum activities.

(iv) Policy Support: Effective policies should be developed to guide and support schools in integrating local culture into labor education. These policies should include provisions for resources and funding aimed at facilitating cultural activities and projects within educational settings, thereby enhancing the practical implementation of cultural integration initiatives.

(v) Regular Evaluation and Feedback: Establishing a systematic framework for ongoing evaluation and feedback ensures continuous improvement in labor education courses' integration of local culture. This process involves soliciting and analyzing feedback from both students and teachers to refine curriculum strategies and better meet educational objectives.

Implementing these strategies will not only enhance the quality and effectiveness of labor education but also contribute significantly to the preservation and promotion of local cultural heritage.

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