

Review

Research on the Symbiotic Development of University Dance Education and Intangible Cultural Heritage: Focusing on Regional Dances of Shandong

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Abstract: This review explores the symbiotic development of university dance education and intangible cultural heritage (ICH), with a particular focus on the regional dances of Shandong, China. It examines how integrating traditional dance forms—such as Yangko, Folk Lantern Dance, Drum Dance, and Plum Blossom Dance—into higher education curricula can simultaneously enhance students' technical skills, creativity, aesthetic literacy, and cultural identity. The paper synthesizes theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and practical models to highlight mutually reinforcing relationships between pedagogical practices and heritage preservation. Key strategies, including curricular integration, workshops, community collaboration, and research-based approaches, are discussed alongside challenges related to authenticity, resource constraints, and evaluative measures. Findings indicate that symbiotic programs foster not only artistic competence but also cultural awareness, social engagement, and sustainable transmission of regional dance traditions. The review also identifies gaps in current research, emphasizing the need for longitudinal studies, standardized assessment frameworks, and interdisciplinary approaches to maximize educational and heritage outcomes. Overall, this study underscores the potential of university dance programs to serve as active agents in the preservation, innovation, and dissemination of ICH.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage; University Dance Education; Shandong Folk Dances; Cultural Identity; Creativity; Curriculum Integration

1. Introduction

Dance education in Chinese universities has undergone significant development over the past few decades, evolving from a focus primarily on technical skill acquisition to a more holistic model that integrates cultural literacy, creativity, and social engagement. Traditionally, university dance curricula have emphasized classical forms such as ballet and contemporary dance, often influenced by Western pedagogical frameworks. However, the increasing recognition of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has prompted educators to explore ways to incorporate local folk traditions into higher education. This integration not only enriches students' artistic experiences but also plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting regional cultural identities [1].

Intangible cultural heritage, as defined by UNESCO, encompasses practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage. In the Chinese context, this includes a rich array of folk dances, rituals, music, and craftsmanship that have been passed down through generations. Dance, in particular, serves as a dynamic medium through which communities express historical narratives, social values, and aesthetic principles. Embedding ICH within university dance programs offers a pathway for students to develop a deeper

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understanding of their cultural roots while fostering innovation through creative reinterpretation of traditional forms.

Shandong province, located on China's eastern coast, boasts a diverse and vibrant dance culture. Regional dances such as Yangko, Folk Lantern Dance, Drum Dance, and Plum Blossom Dance reflect both historical influences and local customs, embodying unique aesthetic, rhythmic, and performative characteristics. Focusing on Shandong dances provides a concrete framework for examining the symbiotic relationship between higher education and cultural heritage. By analyzing how these dances can be incorporated into university curricula, educators can identify strategies to cultivate students' cultural awareness, enhance performance skills, and contribute to the preservation of these living traditions.

Table 1 presents a summary of the major regional dances of Shandong, highlighting their origin areas, key features, and typical performance occasions. This table serves as a reference for understanding the diversity of Shandong's dance heritage and its potential applications in educational settings. As shown, each dance exhibits distinct stylistic elements and cultural significance, providing multiple entry points for curriculum integration.

Table 1. Summary of Major Shandong Regional Dances and Their Characteristics

Dance Name	Origin Area	Main Features	Performance Occasions
Yangko	Northern Shandong	Vibrant movements, colorful costumes, rhythmic steps	Spring Festival, local fairs
Folk Lantern Dance	Jinan, Shandong	Circular formations, lantern props, coordinated group patterns	Lantern Festival, temple fairs
Drum Dance	Eastern Shandong	Strong rhythmic drumming, energetic footwork, drum accompaniment	Harvest celebrations, weddings
Plum Blossom Dance	Central Shandong	Graceful gestures, symbolic hand movements, narrative style	Cultural exhibitions, festivals

The primary research questions guiding this review are: (1) How can university dance programs effectively incorporate Shandong's regional dances into their curricula? (2) In what ways can the integration of ICH enhance students' cultural identity, creativity, and overall artistic development? (3) How can the symbiotic development between higher education and ICH contribute to the sustainable preservation of regional dance traditions? Addressing these questions requires a synthesis of literature on dance pedagogy, ICH preservation, and case studies of successful curricular integration.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Definitions and Concepts

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to the practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities recognize as part of their cultural identity. According to UNESCO (2003), ICH encompasses oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge about nature, and craftsmanship. In the context of dance, ICH embodies traditional movement patterns, symbolic gestures, and performance practices that carry social, historical, and aesthetic significance. Unlike tangible heritage, ICH is dynamic and transmitted through social interaction, making its preservation dependent on active practice and education [2].

Dance education in universities has traditionally emphasized technique, performance, and choreography, often guided by Western pedagogical models. However, the integration of ICH introduces a culturally contextual dimension, requiring students to understand not only movement mechanics but also the symbolic meanings and community values embedded in traditional dances. The concept of symbiotic development in this context refers to the mutually beneficial relationship between higher education and ICH: universities provide structured pedagogical frameworks, while ICH enriches educational content and cultivates cultural awareness. This framework supports a two-way interaction where students' skills and creativity enhance heritage transmission, and heritage practices inform curriculum development [3].

2.2. Previous Studies on ICH Integration in Higher Education

Several studies have explored the integration of ICH into university curricula, focusing on diverse cultural forms, pedagogical strategies, and student outcomes. Research indicates that incorporating folk dances and traditional performing arts enhances students' cultural identity, improves creative thinking, and fosters appreciation for local heritage. Carr highlighted how practical engagement with ICH fosters a tangible connection to cultural roots [4].

Table 2 summarizes key research on ICH integration in university dance programs, including their focus areas, methodological approaches, findings, and limitations. As shown, while many studies demonstrate positive educational outcomes, several limitations persist, such as small sample sizes, limited regional focus, and insufficient longitudinal data on cultural impact. These gaps highlight the need for systematic reviews and comprehensive frameworks that link ICH with higher education pedagogies.

Table 2. ICH and University Dance Education

Focus Area	Methods	Key Findings	Limitations
Dance education and mental health	Survey, observation	Traditional dance alleviates student anxiety; improves engagement	Limited to one university; short-term study
ICH safeguarding through dance	Case study, interviews	Hands-on engagement strengthens cultural identity	Regional focus; qualitative only
Folk dance integration in curricula	Mixed methods	Enhances creativity, promotes cultural literacy	Small sample; lacks longitudinal data
University ICH programs evaluation	Comparative analysis	Formal programs increase student awareness of heritage	Limited dance-specific focus

2.3. Role of Cultural Identity, Creativity, and Aesthetic Education

Cultural identity is a critical outcome of integrating ICH into dance education. Engagement with traditional dances allows students to experience and internalize their heritage, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride. Empirical studies suggest that such involvement enhances self-expression, social cohesion, and intercultural competence. Creativity is another key benefit, as students reinterpret traditional movements in contemporary contexts, develop novel choreographies, and experiment with fusion styles that maintain authenticity while encouraging innovation [5].

Aesthetic education, encompassing the cultivation of artistic sensibilities and critical appreciation, is intrinsically linked to ICH. Exposure to regional dances enriches students' understanding of rhythm, spatial awareness, costume symbolism, and narrative

structures. This holistic approach aligns with China's broader educational goals of nurturing well-rounded individuals who are culturally literate, socially responsible, and artistically competent.

Despite these recognized benefits, the literature also points to several gaps. Many programs lack standardized curricula for ICH integration, and educators often face challenges in balancing traditional authenticity with modern pedagogical methods. Furthermore, systematic assessments of long-term impacts on students' creativity, cultural engagement, and professional outcomes are scarce. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing a robust theoretical framework that guides the symbiotic development of dance education and ICH preservation.

3. Regional Dances of Shandong: Cultural Significance and Educational Potential

Shandong province, located on China's eastern coast, is widely recognized for its rich and diverse dance traditions, which embody the historical, cultural, and social fabric of the region. The province's folk dances—ranging from the vigorous and rhythmic Yangko to the symbolic Plum Blossom Dance—represent centuries of communal practices, ritualistic observances, and local artistic evolution. Integrating these dances into university curricula offers a unique opportunity to bridge cultural heritage with contemporary pedagogy, enabling students to develop technical skills, aesthetic sensibilities, and a deep understanding of their cultural identity. This chapter examines the key regional dances of Shandong, their cultural significance, and their potential educational applications [6].

3.1. Yangko: Vibrancy and Community Engagement

Yangko, a prominent folk dance in northern Shandong, is characterized by vibrant, energetic movements, colorful costumes, and rhythmic steps. Traditionally performed during the Spring Festival and other community celebrations, Yangko serves both entertainment and social cohesion functions. Historically, it emerged as a form of collective expression for agricultural communities, allowing villagers to celebrate harvests, pray for prosperity, and strengthen interpersonal bonds. The dance often features large group formations, coordinated patterns, and lively music, fostering a sense of collective identity among participants [7].

Incorporating Yangko into university dance programs can significantly enhance students' rhythmic skills, spatial awareness, and group coordination. Pedagogically, Yangko can be used to teach ensemble performance techniques, improvisation within set patterns, and an understanding of folk music's role in guiding movement. From a cultural perspective, students gain insight into communal values, festival traditions, and the performative expression of local identity. Moreover, engaging in Yangko encourages creativity, as students can experiment with choreography that adapts traditional sequences to contemporary contexts while maintaining authenticity [8].

3.2. Folk Lantern Dance: Symbolism and Narrative Expression

The Folk Lantern Dance, prevalent in Jinan and other parts of Shandong, is traditionally associated with the Lantern Festival and temple fairs. Performers use lanterns as props, creating circular formations and intricate patterns that symbolize illumination, guidance, and collective harmony. Historically, the dance functioned as both a ritualistic offering and a public celebration, combining movement, music, and visual artistry to convey narrative and communal significance [9].

In an educational setting, the Folk Lantern Dance can be integrated to develop students' coordination, rhythm, and expressive storytelling abilities. The use of props introduces a layer of complexity, enhancing motor skills and spatial cognition. Pedagogical approaches may include analyzing traditional choreography, exploring symbolic meanings, and encouraging creative reinterpretation. Through participation, students gain an appreciation for historical rituals, the symbolic function of movement, and the interplay between narrative and aesthetics, thereby enriching their cultural literacy.

3.3. *Drum Dance: Rhythm, Energy, and Cultural Resilience*

Drum Dance, common in eastern Shandong, is distinguished by its vigorous footwork, strong rhythmic drumming, and dynamic interactions between dancers and percussionists. This dance traditionally accompanied harvest celebrations, weddings, and other communal events, reflecting local values of joy, resilience, and social solidarity. The percussive elements provide both auditory cues and motivational energy, requiring precise timing, stamina, and expressive coordination [10].

University programs can utilize Drum Dance to enhance students' rhythmic perception, endurance, and ensemble cooperation. Learning to synchronize movement with live percussion fosters acute listening skills and adaptability, essential competencies in both traditional and contemporary dance contexts. Additionally, the dance's communal origins provide a platform for discussing cultural resilience, social rituals, and the transmission of heritage through embodied practice. Encouraging students to compose new sequences inspired by Drum Dance promotes creativity while maintaining a link to historical performance practices.

3.4. *Plum Blossom Dance: Elegance and Symbolic Interpretation*

The Plum Blossom Dance, originating in central Shandong, emphasizes graceful gestures, symbolic hand movements, and narrative storytelling. Traditionally performed during cultural exhibitions and festivals, this dance celebrates aesthetic refinement, moral values, and seasonal symbolism associated with the plum blossom. It integrates subtle gestures, expressive facial cues, and stylized steps, offering a contrast to the more vigorous forms like Yangko or Drum Dance.

Incorporation into university curricula allows students to develop fine motor skills, interpretive expression, and an understanding of symbolic representation in dance. By analyzing movement motifs and narrative content, students cultivate critical thinking, aesthetic appreciation, and performance nuance. Furthermore, choreographic projects based on Plum Blossom Dance encourage creative adaptation while fostering cultural empathy, as students learn to convey meaning through subtle, symbolic movements [11].

3.5. *Educational Integration and Symbiotic Benefits*

Integrating Shandong regional dances into higher education curricula provides multifaceted benefits. Technically, students improve rhythm, coordination, expressivity, and ensemble performance skills. Culturally, they gain insight into historical practices, regional identity, and social cohesion mechanisms embedded in dance forms. Creatively, students are encouraged to reinterpret traditional sequences, blend genres, and innovate while respecting cultural authenticity. The symbiotic development between university dance education and ICH ensures that students serve as active transmitters of heritage while universities provide structured pedagogy, resources, and research-based frameworks [12].

Table 3 presents educational integration opportunities for Shandong dances, summarizing the skills developed, cultural values taught, and suggested curriculum integration strategies. This table illustrates the diverse pedagogical applications of each dance, providing educators with a practical reference for curriculum design. Incorporating these dances into formal coursework, workshops, performance projects, and research activities can effectively foster students' artistic growth and cultural engagement.

Table 3. Educational Integration Opportunities for Shandong Dances

Dance	Skills Developed	Cultural Values Taught	Suggested Curriculum Integration
Yangko	Rhythm, coordination, ensemble skills	Community cohesion, festival traditions	Core course in folk dance, group

			choreography workshops
Folk Lantern Dance	Coordination, prop handling, narrative expression	Symbolism, ritual significance	Elective course, festival performance projects
Drum Dance	Timing, stamina, expressive movement	Joy, resilience, social solidarity	Practical modules, percussion collaboration projects
Plum Blossom Dance	Fine motor skills, interpretive expression	Aesthetic appreciation, seasonal symbolism	Choreography seminars, interpretive performance projects

4. Symbiotic Development: Strategies and Practices

4.1. Concept of Symbiotic Development in Cultural and Educational Contexts

Symbiotic development, in the context of higher education and intangible cultural heritage (ICH), refers to a mutually reinforcing relationship whereby educational institutions and cultural traditions support and enrich each other. In this framework, universities provide structured pedagogical methods, research resources, and platforms for performance and dissemination, while ICH contributes unique content, historical depth, and cultural authenticity to educational programs. Unlike one-way transmission models, symbiotic development emphasizes dynamic interaction: students actively engage with traditional forms, reinterpret them creatively, and, in turn, contribute to the vitality and sustainability of cultural heritage [13].

This concept aligns with the broader goals of culturally responsive pedagogy and community-engaged learning. By fostering active participation in ICH practices, universities not only enhance students' artistic and cultural competencies but also facilitate the documentation, preservation, and evolution of traditional practices. The symbiotic model ensures that cultural heritage is not static but continuously re-contextualized within contemporary education, making it relevant and accessible to younger generations.

4.2. Models for Integrating ICH into University Dance Programs

Several models have emerged for integrating ICH into university dance curricula, each emphasizing different dimensions of pedagogy, cultural engagement, and creative innovation.

1) Curricular Integration Model: ICH elements are embedded into core and elective courses, ensuring students gain systematic exposure to regional dances. This approach typically involves technical training, historical context, and performance practice, fostering comprehensive understanding. For example, Yangko can be taught as part of a core folk dance course, combining ensemble work with theoretical lectures on regional festival traditions.

2) Workshop and Project-Based Model: Short-term workshops or semester-long projects enable students to engage directly with practitioners and community members. Folk Lantern Dance or Drum Dance can be taught in intensive workshops that culminate in public performances or research presentations. This experiential learning approach enhances both technical competence and cultural literacy.

3) Community Collaboration Model: Universities partner with local cultural organizations, heritage associations, or village performance troupes. Students participate in community festivals, document oral histories, and co-create choreographies that honor traditional forms while introducing innovative elements. This model strengthens university-community ties and promotes active cultural transmission.

4) Research-Integrated Model: Academic research on ICH informs teaching and performance, creating a feedback loop. Students analyze movement motifs, investigate historical context, and explore creative adaptations. Plum Blossom Dance, for instance, may serve as a case study for semiotic and aesthetic research, linking practical training with theoretical scholarship.

4.3. Case Studies of Successful Symbiosis

Several universities in China have pioneered programs that exemplify symbiotic development. For instance, Beijing Dance Academy has integrated folk dances from multiple provinces into its core curriculum, with students performing at local cultural festivals. Liaocheng University in Shandong has established partnerships with village dance troupes, allowing students to participate in community-based performances and ethnographic research projects. These initiatives demonstrate that symbiotic development not only enriches students' artistic and cultural competencies but also ensures the ongoing practice, visibility, and adaptation of ICH [14].

Empirical evidence from these programs suggests multiple benefits: enhanced student creativity, strengthened cultural identity, preservation of local traditions, and increased public engagement. Moreover, students trained under such models often develop interdisciplinary skills, including choreography, ethnography, and cultural management, which prepare them for careers in arts education, cultural heritage preservation, and creative industries.

4.4. Challenges and Barriers to Integration

Despite its potential, integrating ICH into university dance programs faces several challenges. Firstly, balancing authenticity with innovation can be difficult. Educators must respect traditional forms while encouraging creative adaptation, which requires nuanced pedagogical strategies. Secondly, resource limitations—including access to trained instructors, live music ensembles, and performance venues—can constrain implementation. Thirdly, administrative and curriculum-related barriers, such as rigid credit systems or standardized assessment methods, may hinder flexible, experiential learning opportunities. Additionally, students' prior exposure to traditional culture varies widely, requiring differentiated teaching approaches to ensure meaningful engagement [15].

Finally, measuring the impact of ICH integration remains challenging. While qualitative outcomes, such as cultural awareness and aesthetic appreciation, are apparent, quantitative evaluation metrics are limited. Developing robust assessment frameworks that capture both artistic development and cultural literacy is crucial for sustaining symbiotic programs.

Table 4 presents a summary of strategies for the symbiotic development of dance education and ICH, outlining their descriptions, expected outcomes, and associated challenges. This table provides a concise reference for educators and administrators seeking to implement effective integration approaches within university curricula.

Table 4. Strategies for Symbiotic Development of Dance Education and ICH

Strategy	Description	Expected Outcomes	Challenges
Curricular Integration	Embed ICH into core and elective courses	Systematic skill and knowledge acquisition	Balancing depth and breadth of content
Workshop and Project-Based	Short-term experiential learning with practical performance components	Enhanced creativity and cultural literacy	Limited duration may restrict skill mastery

Community Collaboration	Partner with local troupes and festivals	Active heritage transmission, strengthened community ties	Coordination complexity and logistical constraints
Research-Integrated Approach	Combine practical training with academic research on ICH	Deeper theoretical understanding and innovative application	Requires faculty expertise and research resources

4.5. Implications for Practice and Curriculum Design

The strategies discussed highlight how universities can create a dynamic interface between educational objectives and cultural heritage preservation. By embedding ICH into curricula through diverse modalities—curricular integration, workshops, community collaboration, and research-based approaches—educators can simultaneously foster technical mastery, cultural literacy, and creative thinking. The observed challenges, including balancing authenticity with innovation and addressing resource constraints, underscore the need for flexible program structures and interdisciplinary collaboration. Future research and practical experimentation are essential for refining these models, assessing long-term impacts on student outcomes, and ensuring that symbiotic development contributes meaningfully to both educational excellence and the sustainability of Shandong's regional dances. These considerations naturally lead to a broader discussion of the theoretical, cultural, and pedagogical implications, which will be addressed in the following section [16].

5. Discussion

The integration of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) into university dance education demonstrates a clear pattern of mutual reinforcement, in which both educational outcomes and cultural preservation objectives benefit. University programs provide structured pedagogy, performance opportunities, and research-based frameworks that facilitate systematic engagement with traditional dance forms. In turn, ICH enriches curricula with culturally embedded content, offering students opportunities to develop technical skills while cultivating aesthetic sensibilities and cultural literacy. This reciprocal relationship establishes a dynamic learning environment where students are not passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in the transmission and reinterpretation of regional dance traditions.

One of the most salient benefits of this integration is the enhancement of students' cultural identity. Engagement with Shandong's regional dances—such as Yangko, Folk Lantern Dance, Drum Dance, and Plum Blossom Dance—immerses students in historical practices, symbolic gestures, and narrative structures that convey local values and community norms. Such immersion fosters a sense of belonging and pride in regional heritage, encouraging students to perceive themselves as contributors to a living cultural continuum. Beyond personal identity, the collaborative and performance-oriented nature of folk dances reinforces social cohesion and teamwork skills, which are essential competencies in both artistic and broader professional contexts.

Creativity development is another significant outcome of integrating ICH into dance education. By studying and performing traditional forms, students learn movement vocabulary, rhythmic patterns, and choreographic structures unique to Shandong's folk heritage. At the same time, they are encouraged to reinterpret and innovate within these forms, generating contemporary choreographies that maintain authenticity while expressing individual artistic vision. This dual emphasis on preservation and innovation ensures that traditional dances remain relevant and adaptive, preventing cultural stagnation and promoting continued engagement by younger generations.

The symbiotic relationship also extends to communities and cultural preservation. University-led initiatives—such as collaborative workshops with local troupes, public performances, and documentation projects—create opportunities for heritage practitioners to share knowledge, ensuring that skills are transmitted accurately and sustainably. Communities benefit from increased visibility and validation of their cultural practices, while universities gain access to authentic material for research and teaching purposes. This mutually reinforcing ecosystem supports both the vitality of local culture and the development of students' practical, theoretical, and social competencies.

Despite these benefits, several gaps persist in current practice. One significant limitation is the uneven distribution of resources and institutional support across universities. While some institutions can afford comprehensive programs integrating workshops, research, and community engagement, others face constraints in terms of faculty expertise, funding, and access to authentic dance troupes. Additionally, standardized assessment frameworks for measuring the impact of ICH integration on student learning outcomes remain underdeveloped. Most evaluations focus on short-term skill acquisition rather than long-term cultural literacy, creative development, or contribution to heritage sustainability. These gaps suggest a need for more robust, multi-dimensional evaluation models that capture both educational and cultural outcomes.

Another challenge lies in balancing tradition and innovation. Educators must navigate the tension between maintaining authenticity in folk dances and allowing students creative freedom. Inappropriate adaptations risk diluting cultural meaning, while overly rigid adherence may limit students' expressive and interpretive potential. Developing clear pedagogical guidelines, informed by both ethnographic research and educational theory, is essential to mediate this tension effectively.

Future directions for research and practice should focus on scaling symbiotic models across institutions, integrating interdisciplinary approaches, and systematically documenting outcomes. Comparative studies across regions can illuminate best practices for curriculum design, community collaboration, and creative adaptation. Moreover, digital technologies—such as motion capture, video archiving, and virtual reality—offer promising tools for preserving and disseminating ICH while providing students with innovative learning platforms. Leveraging these technologies can enhance accessibility, encourage experimentation, and support longitudinal studies on cultural and educational impacts.

The discussion above underscores that the relationship between university dance education and ICH is mutually reinforcing, with substantial benefits for students, communities, and cultural sustainability. At the same time, careful attention to pedagogical design, resource allocation, and evaluative frameworks is necessary to maximize these benefits and address existing gaps. Such considerations set the stage for broader policy recommendations and strategic planning in integrating ICH into higher education, which will be elaborated in the concluding chapter.

6. Conclusion

The examination of Shandong's regional dances within the framework of university dance education reveals a mutually reinforcing relationship that benefits both students and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Engagement with folk forms such as Yangko, Folk Lantern Dance, Drum Dance, and Plum Blossom Dance provides students with opportunities to cultivate technical proficiency, aesthetic sensitivity, and creative expression, while simultaneously fostering cultural identity and social awareness. The integration of these dance traditions into higher education curricula demonstrates how structured pedagogical practices can support the transmission and adaptation of regional heritage, ensuring its continuity in contemporary contexts.

From a policy perspective, the findings underscore the importance of institutional support for ICH integration. Universities require adequate resources, faculty expertise, and flexible curricula to implement programs that balance authenticity with innovation. Strategic partnerships with local communities, cultural organizations, and heritage

practitioners are essential to create experiential learning opportunities and maintain the vitality of traditional dance practices. Policymakers and educational leaders should consider incentivizing interdisciplinary collaboration, performance-based assessments, and community-engaged research to strengthen these symbiotic relationships.

Curriculum design should emphasize a combination of theoretical knowledge, practical training, and creative exploration. Embedding Shandong dances into core courses, workshops, and project-based modules enables students to acquire comprehensive skills while developing critical awareness of cultural significance. Additionally, integrating research components—such as ethnographic documentation, choreographic analysis, and digital archiving—enhances both learning outcomes and the preservation of heritage resources. These strategies ensure that students are active participants in cultural transmission, rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

Future research should focus on evaluating long-term impacts of ICH integration on student outcomes, including creativity, cultural literacy, and professional development. Comparative studies across institutions and regions can illuminate best practices, while the application of digital technologies can enhance accessibility, documentation, and pedagogical innovation. By addressing gaps in assessment, resource allocation, and curriculum design, researchers and educators can develop robust models for sustaining the symbiotic relationship between university dance education and intangible cultural heritage.

Overall, the integration of Shandong's regional dances into higher education exemplifies the potential of a symbiotic approach, in which cultural preservation and educational enrichment mutually reinforce each other. Such practices not only contribute to the transmission of traditional knowledge but also cultivate a generation of culturally literate, creative, and socially engaged dance practitioners, bridging historical heritage with contemporary academic and artistic contexts.

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