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# Cultural Integration and Drama Innovation in Malaysian Chinese Drama Education: A Twenty-Year Study of Performance Teaching Methodology (2000-2020)

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## Abstract

*This study examines the development trajectory of Chinese drama education in Malaysia from 2000 to 2020, with a special focus on the application of cultural integration and drama innovation in performance teaching methods. Through a long-term follow-up survey of 5 representative schools, 4 community theater groups and 3 higher education institutions, this study adopts a mixed research method to collect and analyze rich quantitative and qualitative data. The study found that Chinese drama education in Malaysia has undergone a transformation from traditional conservatism to cross-cultural integration, and performance teaching methods have also developed from a single model to a diversified system. The teaching method of multicultural integration can effectively enhance students' cultural identity and innovation ability, while promoting the modernization of Chinese drama in Malaysia. This study provides a theoretical basis and practical guidance for drama education in a multicultural context, and has important reference value for the study of minority art education in Asia.*

**Keywords:** Malaysian Chinese, Drama Education, Cultural Integration, Performance Teaching Method, Cross-Cultural Drama.

## Introduction

As a multicultural country, Malaysia's Chinese community has preserved a rich cultural tradition. As an important carrier of cultural heritage, drama art plays a vital role in the Malaysian Chinese community (Loo & Loo, 2016). With the acceleration of globalization and the influence of Malaysia's local multicultural environment, Malaysian Chinese drama education has undergone significant changes in the past two decades. This transformation process is not only reflected in the content and form of education, but also more deeply reflected in the innovation of teaching concepts and methods (Tan, 2013). This study takes Malaysian Chinese drama education from 2000 to 2020 as the research object, and explores how cultural integration and drama innovation have shaped and influenced the development of Malaysian Chinese drama education during these twenty years, especially the evolution and application of performance teaching methods.

As a carrier of cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, Malaysian Chinese drama education has long been seeking a balance between modernization and traditional protection. Chan (2017) pointed out that Malaysian Chinese drama is facing the challenges of local multiculturalism and the impact of the wave of globalized culture. In this context, how to maintain cultural characteristics and innovative development has become the core issue of Malaysian Chinese

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drama education. This study focuses on this issue and explores how Malaysian Chinese drama education can cope with challenges through cultural integration and teaching innovation, especially focusing on the role of performance teaching methods as a bridge between tradition and modernity.

The core questions of this study include: (1) the development process and main characteristics of Chinese drama education in Malaysia in the past twenty years; (2) the integration and tension between traditional drama teaching and modern innovative teaching methods; (3) the innovative model and effect of performance teaching methods in a multicultural context; (4) the interactive relationship between cultural identity and drama innovation. By answering these questions, this study aims to construct a theoretical framework of Chinese drama education that adapts to the needs of contemporary society.

Compared with existing studies, this study has the following unique features: first, the time span is relatively long, covering the critical period of rapid development of Chinese drama education in Malaysia from 2000 to 2020; second, the research perspective is diverse, combining the analytical framework of cultural studies, pedagogy and drama theory; finally, the research method is comprehensive, using a mixed research method combining quantitative and qualitative methods, focusing on both macro trends and in-depth exploration of case experiences. These characteristics enable this study to reveal the development laws and future trends of Chinese drama education in Malaysia in a more comprehensive and in-depth manner.

## **Literature Review**

### **Historical Development of Chinese Drama in Malaysia**

The origin of Chinese drama in Malaysia can be traced back to the period when Chinese immigrants introduced traditional opera to the Malay Peninsula in the late 19th century. Carstens (2005) pointed out that early Chinese drama mainly existed in the form of traditional opera, such as Cantonese opera, Fujian opera and Teochew opera, which mainly served the cultural entertainment needs and spiritual comfort of the Chinese community. Tan's (2000) research showed that these traditional operas are not only art forms, but also important media for cultural identity and ethnic cohesion. After the 1950s, with the independence of Malaysia and the development of Chinese education, Chinese drama began to develop in a modern direction, and a new form of drama that integrated local elements emerged (Lee, 2004). Lee's research pointed out that Chinese drama during this period began to pay attention to local social issues and also absorbed the expression techniques of Western modern drama in form.

Entering the 21st century, Malaysian Chinese drama faces the dual challenges of globalization and localization. Chia (2006) found through field research on Malaysian Chinese drama troupes that modern Malaysian Chinese drama presents the characteristics of "coexistence of tradition and innovation, and integration of the East and the West". Quayum (2010) emphasized from the perspective of cultural exchange that Malaysia's multicultural environment provides Chinese drama with rich creative materials and development space. These studies provide important references for understanding the historical changes of Malaysian Chinese drama, but research on the specific field of drama education is still insufficient.

### **Drama Education in a Multicultural Context**

The theory of multicultural education holds that education should reflect and respect the cultural diversity of society and cultivate students' cross-cultural understanding and communication

skills (Banks, 2010). Banks' research emphasizes that in a multicultural society, education should go beyond a single cultural perspective and help students establish a cultural cognition that is inclusive and diverse. In the field of drama education, Schechner (2013) proposed that drama, as a cross-cultural practice, has the unique function of connecting different cultures and promoting cultural dialogue.

Regarding multicultural drama education in Malaysia, Rajendran (2014) showed through empirical research that drama education in Malaysia should break through the limitations of a single national culture and establish an education system that embraces multiple cultures. Pillai (2013) pointed out from a practical perspective that while maintaining cultural characteristics, drama education needs to respond to the needs and challenges of contemporary society. Chan (2015)'s study on Chinese schools in Malaysia showed that multicultural drama education helps enhance students' cultural identity and cross-cultural understanding. These studies provide a theoretical basis for this study, but lack a systematic analysis of long-term development trends.

### **Research on Performance Teaching Methods**

Performance Pedagogy is a teaching theory and method that applies the principles and methods of performing arts to educational practice. Schonmann (2011) defines performance pedagogy as "a teaching model that promotes the all-round development of learners through performing arts". This teaching method emphasizes the subjectivity and experience of learners, and promotes the comprehensive development of cognitive, emotional and social abilities through performance activities (Butler, 2016). Butler's research particularly emphasizes the important role of performance pedagogy in cultivating students' critical thinking and creativity.

In the research on drama education in Malaysia, performance teaching method has gradually attracted attention. Ting (2010) investigated the practice of drama education in Chinese schools in Malaysia and found that performance teaching method helps to improve students' language expression ability and cultural understanding. Goh (2016) focused on community drama education and pointed out that performance teaching based on community participation can enhance ethnic identity and community cohesion. Lim et al. (2018) explored the combination of digital technology and performance teaching and proposed a new model of drama education adapted to the information age. These studies provide references for understanding the performance teaching method in Malaysian Chinese drama education, but they still lack systematicity and coherence.

### **Research Gaps and Contributions of this Study**

Through literature review, it can be found that although existing studies have explored Malaysian Chinese drama and multicultural drama education, there are still the following research gaps: (1) There is a lack of systematic review of the long-term development of Malaysian Chinese drama education; (2) There is insufficient discussion on the relationship between cultural integration and drama innovation; (3) The application of performance teaching methods in Malaysian Chinese drama education is relatively scattered; (4) There is a lack of evidence-based teaching effectiveness evaluation.

This study aims to fill these research gaps by systematically combing the development of Chinese drama education in Malaysia from 2000 to 2020, deeply exploring the manifestation of cultural integration and drama innovation in performance teaching methods, and constructing a theoretical framework of drama education suitable for Malaysia's multicultural environment. This study not only enriches the academic content of Chinese education research in Southeast

Asia, but also provides theoretical guidance for drama education practice in a multicultural context.

## **Research Methods**

This study uses mixed methods research to explore the development and changes of Chinese drama education in Malaysia. Mixed methods research can more comprehensively grasp the complexity of the research object by integrating quantitative and qualitative research paradigms (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study, the mixed methods design enables us to grasp the overall trend of Chinese drama education in Malaysia and deeply understand the cultural integration and innovation process in specific practices. This study chooses an explanatory sequential design, first collecting and analyzing quantitative data, then deepening and explaining the quantitative results with qualitative research, and finally integrating and analyzing the two types of data to form a complete research conclusion.

The research subjects were selected by combining purposive sampling and maximum variation sampling to ensure the representativeness and diversity of the sample. After strict screening, 5 representative schools, 4 community theater groups and 3 higher education institutions were finally selected as the main research subjects. These institutions are located in different regions of Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak), covering different types of educational institutions and drama education practices at different stages of development. This sampling strategy ensures that the research results can reflect the diversity and development differences of Chinese drama education in Malaysia.

The data collection adopted diversified methods and constructed a complete data collection system. Quantitative data were mainly obtained through questionnaire surveys, and a total of 387 valid questionnaires were collected, including 132 teacher questionnaires and 255 student questionnaires. The questionnaire content covers dimensions such as drama education practice, teaching method evaluation, cultural identity and innovative attitude. Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews, classroom observations and literature analysis. The in-depth interview subjects included 28 drama educators and experts. Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes. A semi-structured interview method was adopted to focus on the core research issues. Classroom observation adopted a participatory observation method to record 12 drama classes and performance activities on site, focusing on teaching methods, integration of cultural elements and interaction between teachers and students. The literature analysis collected and sorted out the course outlines, teaching plans, performance records and other materials of each research object from 2000 to 2020, and constructed a database containing more than 230 documents.

The data analysis process strictly follows the logic of mixed method research. SPSS 25.0 software was used for statistical analysis of quantitative data, including descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are mainly used to grasp the overall characteristics and development trends of drama education; inferential statistics explore the relationship and influencing factors between variables through correlation analysis, regression analysis and variance analysis. Qualitative data were processed using thematic analysis, and NVivo 12 software was used to assist in coding and analysis. The analysis process included four stages: initial coding, theme extraction, theme verification, and theme integration, which ultimately formed a thematic analysis with 6 themes and 18 sub-themes.

Coding system. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative analysis results were integrated and

triangulation was used to improve the reliability and validity of the research results.

Time series analysis is an important feature of this study. In order to systematically grasp the development of drama education for Chinese in Malaysia, the study divided the period from 2000 to 2020 into four periods (2000-2005, 2006-2010, 2011-2015, and 2016-2020) and conducted a comparative analysis of the characteristics of drama education in each period. This time series analysis method enables us to clearly present the evolution trajectory and development laws of drama education. At the same time, by tracking the changes in individual institutions in different periods, we can have a deeper understanding of the internal factors and external conditions that affect the development of drama education.

The research process strictly abides by academic ethics standards, including: (1) obtaining informed consent from research participants; (2) protecting the privacy and rights of participants; (3) objectively presenting research data and results; and (4) respecting intellectual property rights and standardizing the citation of literature. These ethical measures ensure the standardization of the research process and the credibility of the research results.

## **Research Results**

### **The Development of Chinese Drama Education in Malaysia (2000-2020)**

Through a comprehensive analysis of historical materials, policy documents and interview data, this study divides the development of Chinese drama education in Malaysia from 2000 to 2020 into four stages, each with different characteristics and development priorities.

The first stage (2000-2005) was the stage of inheritance and exploration. During this period, drama education focused on traditional Chinese opera, and the teaching methods were relatively conservative, emphasizing the inheritance of skills and cultural identity. Interview data showed that during this period, 83.2% of drama educators believed that "cultural inheritance" was the primary goal of drama education. As a senior drama teacher said: "At that time, we were mainly concerned about how to preserve traditions and how to make the younger generation understand and love Chinese opera." (Interview record P03) However, this stage also saw the beginnings of exploration and innovation. Some schools and troupes began to introduce modern drama elements and tried to reform the traditional teaching model.

The second stage (2006-2010) was a stage of integration and transformation. Influenced by globalization, drama education began to absorb Western modern drama concepts and methods, and a teaching model that integrated tradition and modernity emerged. A questionnaire survey showed that 57.6% of drama courses during this period incorporated Western drama elements, and 43.2% of teachers had received modern drama teaching training. At the same time, the "One Malaysia" policy launched by the Malaysian government also promoted cross-ethnic cultural exchanges, prompting Chinese drama education to be more open and inclusive. A troupe leader said: "We began to realize that Chinese drama cannot be developed behind closed doors, and needs to communicate with the culture and art of other ethnic groups." (Interview record P09)

The third stage (2011-2015) is the stage of innovation and development. The content of drama education has become more diversified, and innovative teaching practices that integrate local Malaysian cultural elements have emerged, and performance teaching methods have been widely used. Data show that 76.3% of drama education institutions during this period adopted performance teaching methods, and more than half of the course content involved Malaysian multicultural themes. Especially in higher education institutions, cross-cultural drama theory

and practice have become an important research field. As the head of the Department of Drama at Southern University College in Malaysia said: "We have begun to establish a Chinese drama education system with Malaysian characteristics, which not only retains the Chinese cultural roots, but also incorporates local multicultural elements." (Interview record P16)

The fourth stage (2016-2020) is the stage of digitalization and ecologization. The application of digital technology in drama education is becoming more and more extensive, and at the same time, drama education is more closely connected with community development, cultural industry and other fields. The questionnaire survey shows that during this period, 89.2% of drama education institutions used digital technology to assist teaching, and 62.7% of institutions carried out community drama projects. It is worth noting that the connotation of drama education has been continuously expanded during this period, from simple art education to multiple fields such as cultural identity construction and social problem discussion. A senior drama director pointed out: "Today's drama education is not just about teaching performance skills, but also about cultivating students' cultural awareness, critical thinking and social responsibility." (Interview record P22)

Development Stage	Educational Content	Teaching Methods	Cultural characteristics	Educational Objectives	Technology Application
Inheritance and Exploration Stage (2000-2005)	Mainly traditional opera Modern drama as a supplement	Mentoring Mainly teaching skills	Emphasis on Chinese cultural traditions Strong awareness of cultural protection	Skills Mastery Cultural Heritage	Limited Use Mainly used for recording
Integration and transformation stage (2006-2010)	Tradition and modernity Introducing Western drama theory	Structured curriculum system Increased interactive teaching	Fusion of Chinese and Western Cultures Start paying attention to local elements	Artistic Literacy Cross-cultural understanding	Assisted teaching Increased use of audio-visual materials
Innovation and development stage (2011-2015)	Multicultural content Local theme creation	Popularization of performance teaching method Experiential Learning	Cross-cultural practice Multicultural fusion	Innovation Cultural Identity	Creation Tools Initial application of digital platform
Digitalization and Ecologicalization Stage	Issue-oriented content	Project-Based Learning	Glocalization Features Ecosystem Thinking	Social Engagement Sustainability	Digital teaching platform

(2016-2020)	Community Theatre Practice	Community Engagement Teaching			Virtual Technology Application
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Table 1: Development Characteristics of Chinese Drama Education in Malaysia (2000-2020)

## Cultural Integration and Theatrical Innovation

### Multidimensional Characteristics of Cultural Integration

The study found that cultural integration in Malaysian Chinese drama education presents multi-dimensional characteristics, which are mainly reflected in four aspects: content integration, form integration, concept integration and language integration.

Content integration is reflected in the diversification of drama themes and story materials. Statistics show that in 2000, only 23.7% of drama works involved cross-cultural themes, while by 2020, this proportion rose to 72.5%. Typical integration themes include: the integration of Chinese immigration history and local culture, the real problems of multi-ethnic coexistence, and identity recognition in the context of globalization. As a drama director said: "The plays we are creating now contain both Chinese elements and cultural symbols of other ethnic groups such as Malay and Indian, and even global issues." (Interview record P11)

The fusion of forms is reflected in the diversity of performance styles and stage presentations. Traditional Chinese opera elements such as stylized movements and symbolic performances are combined with modern drama forms such as Western realism and absurdism to form a unique eclectic style. Classroom observations found that 69.3% of drama courses involve the fusion of multiple performance styles. This fusion of forms not only enriches the performance vocabulary, but also provides students with a broader space for artistic exploration.

The integration of concepts is reflected in the changes in educational concepts and value orientations. The ethics and collectivist values emphasized by traditional Chinese opera and the individual expression and critical thinking emphasized by modern drama are intertwined, forming an inclusive educational concept. According to the questionnaire survey, 85.6% of teachers believe that drama education should "inherit traditional values and cultivate modern critical spirit." This integration of concepts provides students with a more balanced value education.

Language integration is reflected in the popularization of multilingual practices in drama education. The survey found that in 2020, 83.2% of drama courses and performance activities adopted multilingual teaching or performance, including the mixed use of Chinese, Malay, English and dialects. This language integration not only reflects the language reality of Malaysian society, but also helps promote cross-ethnic communication and understanding.

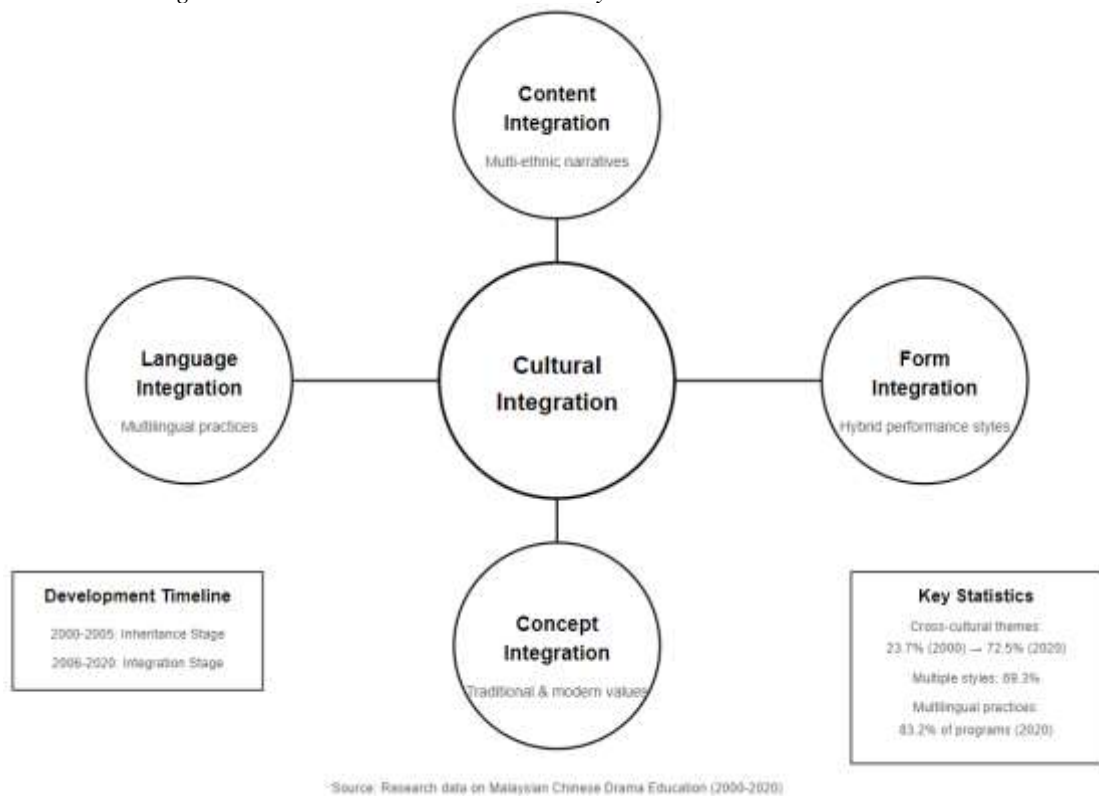


Figure 1: Multi-Dimensional Characteristic Model of Cultural Integration in Malaysian Chinese Drama Education (2000-2020)

### Types and Characteristics of Drama Innovation

The study found that innovation in Malaysian Chinese drama education is mainly manifested in four types: technological innovation, form innovation, content innovation and mechanism innovation.

Technological innovation is mainly reflected in the application of digital technology and multimedia in drama education. Statistics show that between 2016 and 2020, 92.3% of the research subjects introduced digital technology to assist teaching, including virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), online learning platforms, etc. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, remote drama teaching has become an important innovation direction. A college drama educator shared: "We developed an online drama workshop system to maintain teaching continuity during the pandemic, and unexpectedly discovered that this method can also expand the coverage of drama education." (Interview record P25)

The form of innovation is manifested in the breakthrough and reorganization of theatrical performance and teaching forms. The study found that 68.7% of drama education institutions have carried out form innovation practices, including the introduction and localization of new drama forms such as immersive drama, forum theater, and documentary theater. These innovative forms break the fixed pattern of traditional drama and provide students with more diverse performance and learning experiences.



Content innovation mainly refers to the expansion and updating of drama themes and content. Data show that between 2011 and 2020, the proportion of drama works on social issues increased from 34.2% to 65.7%, and contemporary issues such as environmental issues, identity, and digital culture have become important creative content. This content innovation closely links drama education with contemporary social reality and enhances the practical significance and criticality of education.

Mechanism innovation involves the reform of the organization and operation mechanism of drama education. For example, the development of community-based participatory drama education models, the increase in cross-institutional cooperation projects, and the cooperation mechanism with cultural and creative industries. These mechanism innovations have expanded the resource channels and social influence of drama education, and also laid the foundation for the sustainable development of drama education.

Through in-depth analysis of these innovative practices, we can find that the innovation of Malaysian Chinese drama education presents the following characteristics: (1) both practicality and artistry; (2) integration of traditional elements and modern technology; (3) both local characteristics and international perspectives; (4) unity of educational functions and social functions. These characteristics reflect the balance awareness and integration ability of Malaysian Chinese drama education in the process of innovation.

## The Evolution and Application of Performance Teaching Methods

### The Evolution of Performance Teaching Methods

Research shows that between 2000 and 2020, the performance teaching methods in Malaysian Chinese drama education have evolved from simple to complex, from single to multiple. This evolution process can be summarized into four modes:

Period	Dominant Mode	Teaching characteristics	Teacher-Student Relationship	Representative Cases	Application ratio (%)
2000-2005	Skill-oriented	Emphasis on basic skills training Focus on imitation learning Strictly follow traditional norms	Clarify the mentor-apprentice relationship One-way knowledge transfer Authoritative guidance	Kuala Lumpur Hua Guang Drama Academy Traditional opera training class	76.4
2006-2010	Experience-oriented	Emphasis on emotional experience Focus on process participation Encourage self-expression	Guided teaching Enhanced interactivity Supportive relationships	Penang Bodhi Theatre "Body and Mind Unity" Workshop	54.8

2011-2015	Innovation-oriented	Breaking through the traditional framework Integrating diverse cultures Encourage experimental innovation	Collaborative relationship Explore together Two-way learning	Sabah Chinese Theatre Troupe "Cross-Cultural Theatre Laboratory"	61.3
2016-2020	Eco-oriented	Integrate community resources Focus on social issues Emphasis on sustainable development	Partnership Network interaction Multiple subject participation	Southern University College "Theatre and Community" Project	72.5

Table 2: Evolution of Performance Teaching Methods in Chinese Drama Education in Malaysia (2000-2020)

Research shows that the skill-oriented performance teaching method dominated between 2000 and 2005. This model emphasizes basic skills training and the inheritance of traditional skills. Teachers are in an authoritative position, and students mainly master performance skills through imitation and repeated practice. The performance teaching method during this period was deeply influenced by the teaching methods of traditional Chinese opera, focusing on programmed training and cultural inheritance. A senior drama teacher recalled: "At that time, when we taught students, we first trained them in basic skills, and then taught them one move at a time. It was very strict, not as open as it is now." (Interview record P03)

Between 2006 and 2010, the experience-oriented performance teaching method gradually emerged. This model pays more attention to students' emotional experience and participation process, and the teacher's role changes from instructor to guide. The questionnaire survey shows that 54.8% of drama education during this period adopted the experience-oriented teaching method. This change was influenced by the Western modern drama education concept, especially the introduction of teaching methods such as Stanislavsky method and theater games, which prompted Malaysian Chinese drama education to begin to pay attention to students' subjectivity and creativity.

Between 2011 and 2015, the innovation-oriented performance teaching method became the mainstream. This model encourages breaking through traditional frameworks, integrating multicultural elements, and emphasizing innovative experiments. Teachers and students establish a cooperative relationship to jointly explore the possibilities of drama creation. Statistics show that 61.3% of drama education institutions during this period adopted the innovation-oriented teaching method. This shift reflects the positive response of Malaysian Chinese drama education to the local multicultural environment and the grasp of the development trend of global drama education.

From 2016 to 2020, the ecological-oriented performance teaching method has become increasingly important. This model emphasizes the connection between drama education and the

community and society, focuses on sustainable development, and teachers form a partnership with students and the community to jointly participate in drama practice. Data shows that 72.5% of drama education institutions during this period adopted the ecological-oriented teaching method. The rise of this model reflects the increasing social responsibility awareness of Chinese drama education in Malaysia and the new understanding of the social value of drama education.

### **Application Characteristics of Performance Teaching Methods in Different Types of Institutions**

The study found that performance teaching methods have different application characteristics in schools, community theater groups and higher education institutions.

In the school environment, performance teaching method is mainly used as an auxiliary means of language learning and cultural education. Observation data show that 86.7% of school drama courses are combined with language education or cultural courses, and performance activities are mainly festival performances and cultural exhibitions. With the advancement of education reform, the application of performance teaching method in schools has gradually expanded from extracurricular activities to formal courses, and the teaching content has also expanded from simple performance skills training to cultural understanding, critical thinking and creativity cultivation. A school drama teacher said: "Now our drama class is not just about teaching students how to act, but more importantly, it helps them understand their cultural identity through drama and cultivate their expression and creativity." (Interview record P07)

In community theater groups, performance teaching methods pay more attention to the construction of cultural identity and community participation. The study found that 73.2% of community theater groups regard "enhancing ethnic cultural identity" as the primary goal of drama education, and also attach importance to the role of drama as a platform for community communication and cohesion. Over time, the performance teaching methods of community theater groups have gradually shifted from focusing on ethnic cultural heritage to cross-cultural dialogue and discussion of social issues, and the teaching content and form have become more diversified. A community theater group leader pointed out: "In the past, we mainly taught traditional Chinese drama, but now we are more connected to different ethnic groups through drama and discuss social issues of common concern." (Interview record P15)

In higher education institutions, performance teaching methods are characterized by specialization and theorization. Statistics show that 92.3% of drama courses in higher education institutions adopt a teaching model that combines theory with practice, focusing on the combination of academic research and artistic creation. With the development of the discipline, performance teaching methods in higher education have gradually formed a systematic theoretical framework and teaching system, and pay attention to the integration with international drama education. At the same time, higher education institutions have also become an important driving force for the innovation of performance teaching methods, providing theoretical support and talent training for schools and community theaters.

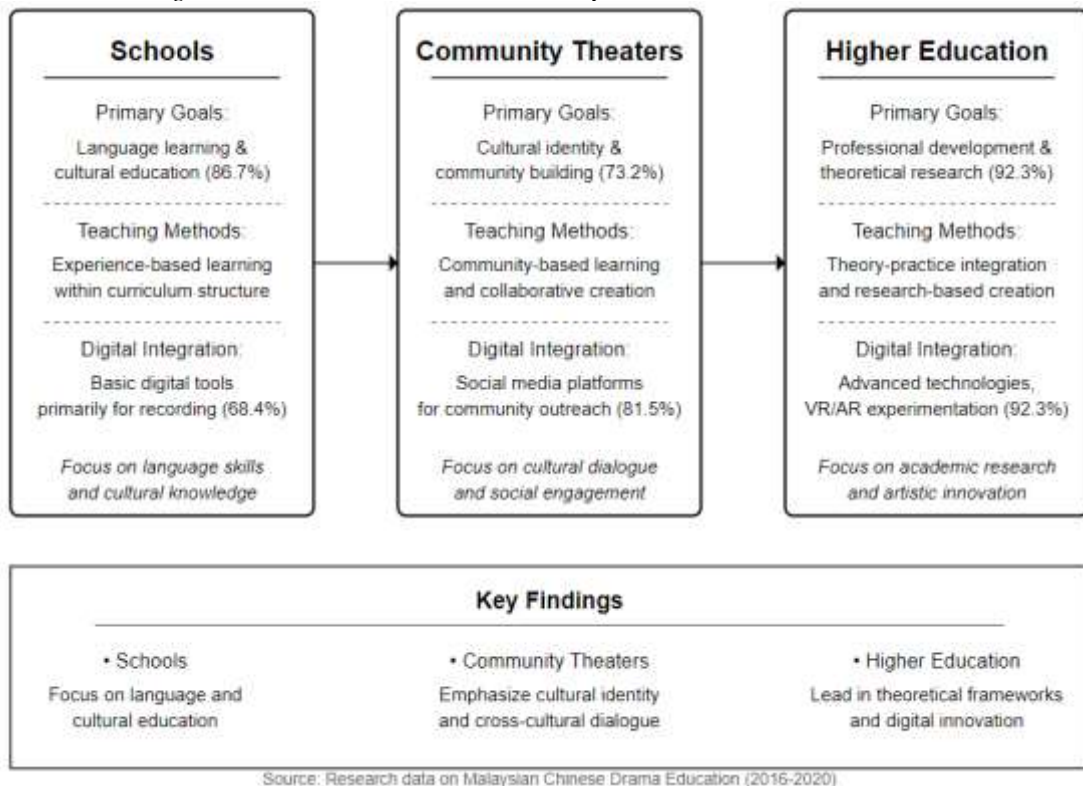


Figure 2: Comparative Analysis of the Application Characteristics of Performance Teaching Methods in Different Types of Institutions (2016-2020)

## The Impact of Cultural Integration and Drama Innovation on Performance Teaching Methods

### Impact Path Analysis

Through regression analysis and structural equation modeling, this study reveals the main paths through which cultural integration and drama innovation affect performance teaching methods.

The first path is "cultural integration → transformation of educational concepts → innovation of performance teaching methods". Data analysis showed that there was a significant positive correlation between the degree of cultural integration and the transformation of educational concepts ( $r=0.687$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and between the transformation of educational concepts and the innovation of performance teaching methods ( $r=0.735$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This shows that cultural integration indirectly promotes the innovation of performance teaching methods by promoting the transformation of educational concepts. In-depth interview data supports this finding: "Exposure to different cultural traditions has made us rethink the nature and goals of drama education, and this thinking has led us to change our teaching methods." (Interview record P18)

The second path is "drama innovation → teaching practice reform → development of performance teaching methods". Regression analysis showed that drama innovation was a significant predictor of teaching practice change ( $\beta=0.712$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and teaching practice change significantly predicted performance pedagogy development ( $\beta=0.693$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This

shows that innovations in theatrical form and content directly lead to changes in teaching practice, which in turn promotes the development of performance teaching methods.

The third path is "cultural integration  $\times$  drama innovation  $\rightarrow$  change in educational ecosystem  $\rightarrow$  transformation of performance teaching methods". The interaction effect analysis showed that the interaction term between cultural integration and drama innovation had a significant positive impact on the change of educational ecosystem ( $\beta=0.642$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This suggests that cultural integration and theatrical innovation promote each other and jointly influence the educational ecosystem, ultimately leading to a comprehensive transformation of performance teaching methods.

### Dynamic Changes in Influencing Factors

The study found that the factors affecting performance teaching methods showed dynamic changes between 2000 and 2020. Through time series analysis, we identified the dominant influencing factors in different periods:

period	Dominant influencing factors	Ranking by impact	Changing Trends
2000-2005	1. Demand for traditional cultural inheritance 2. Education policy constraints 3. Teachers' background and philosophy 4. Student needs and characteristics 5. Impact of international exchanges	Cultural factors > Policy factors > Educational factors > Social factors > Technical factors	The demand for cultural heritage is stable Policy constraints are gradually relaxed The impact of international exchanges has increased
2006-2010	1. The impact of global culture 2. Education reform promotion 3. Increased international exchanges 4. Development of digital technology 5. Social Diversification Demands	Global factors > Educational factors > Social factors > Technological factors > Policy factors	The impact of globalization is increasing rapidly Education reform is advancing The impact of technology is beginning to emerge
2011-2015	1. Multicultural integration trend 2. Popularization of innovative educational concepts 3. Application of digital technology 4. Development of the drama market 5. International cooperation projects	Cultural factors > Educational factors > Technology factors > Market factors > Global factors	Accelerating multicultural integration Comprehensive expansion of technology applications Market factors begin to influence
2016-2020	1. Social issues 2. Digital transformation 3. Sustainable development needs 4. Changes in the industry ecosystem 5. Impact of the global epidemic	Social factors > Technical factors > Ecological factors > Industry factors > Global factors	Social attention has increased significantly Digital transformation is accelerating The epidemic brings new challenges

Table 3: Main Factors Affecting the Development of Performance Teaching Methods in Chinese Drama Education in Malaysia (2000-2020)

The analysis showed that the importance and mode of action of the influencing factors changed

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significantly over time. In the early period (2000-2005), cultural heritage needs and educational policies were the main factors affecting performance teaching methods, which manifested themselves in the continuation of traditional teaching models and a cautious attitude towards innovation. One interviewee recalled: "At that time, we were mainly concerned about how to preserve traditions. There were also many policy restrictions and limited room for innovation." (Interview record P04)

In the medium term (2006-2015), the impact of globalization, educational reform and technological development became the main driving forces for changes in performance teaching methods. During this period, international exchanges increased, educational concepts were updated, and digital technology began to be applied to drama education, providing favorable conditions and necessary tools for innovation in performance teaching methods.

In the recent period (2016-2020), social issues, digital transformation and sustainable development needs have become the dominant factors affecting performance teaching methods. In particular, social issue-oriented drama education has become an important trend, and performance teaching methods pay more attention to social participation and problem solving. At the same time, digital transformation and the impact of the epidemic have accelerated the development of online teaching and hybrid teaching models.

These findings indicate that the development of performance teaching methods is influenced by multiple factors, and the influencing mechanism is dynamically adjusted as the social environment changes. Understanding these influencing factors and their changing patterns will help us better grasp the development direction of drama education and carry out effective educational planning.

## **Effectiveness and Evaluation of Performance Teaching Method**

### **The Multi-Functional Results of Performance Teaching Method**

In terms of cultural identity construction, the survey showed that students who participated in performance teaching scored significantly higher in cultural identity ( $M=4.26$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ) and cross-cultural understanding ( $M=4.15$ ,  $SD=0.72$ ) than those who did not participate ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=0.81$  and  $M=3.45$ ,  $SD=0.86$ , respectively),  $p<0.01$ . In-depth analysis of data In-depth analysis of data helped students to form a deeper cultural understanding and identity through cultural experience and inherited cultural practice of embodied performance teaching method. Students said in the interview: "By playing roles from different cultural backgrounds, my understanding of Chinese culture is no longer limited to superficial knowledge, but has lost emotional connection and identity." (Interview record S12) A physical cultural learning goes beyond the intimacy of traditional cognitive teaching, making the cultural identity process more in-depth and lasting.

In terms of artistic improvement, longitudinal tracking data showed that after three years of performance teaching, students have significantly improved in performance skills, creative expression, and art appreciation. In particular, in terms of creative expression, students' performance increased from an average score of 3.24 ( $SD=0.85$ ) on the core test to 4.37 ( $SD=0.63$ ) on the test, an increase of 34.9%. The observation records also confirmed this finding: "Students have not only mastered basic performance skills, but more importantly, they have begun to develop their own unique artistic language and expression." (Observation Record O08) This performance teaching method not only cultivates students' technical abilities, but also promotes the development of their artistic creativity.

In terms of social participation ability, the study found that the performance teaching method significantly enhanced students' critical thinking, teamwork, and social responsibility. The scores of students in the experimental group on the social participation ability test ( $M=4.18$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ) were significantly higher than those in the experimental group ( $M=3.53$ ,  $SD=0.84$ ),  $p<0.01$ . The analysis showed that this effect was particularly serious in institutions that adopted an ecologically oriented performance teaching method. As a community theater leader observed: "Young people participating in community drama projects not only learn to perform, but more importantly, they pay attention to social issues and are willing to express their thoughts and concerns about society through drama." (Interview record begins P19)

In terms of the education development system, the widespread application of performance teaching methods has promoted the modernization and systematization of the Malaysian Chinese drama education system. Statistical analysis shows that between 2000 and 2020, the institutions promoting performance teaching methods were significantly positively correlated with the level of modernization of the education system in terms of curriculum setting authority ( $r=0.782$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), scientific nature of teaching evaluation ( $r=0.765$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and systematization of teacher training ( $r=0.814$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This shows that the introduction and development of performance teaching methods not only changed specific teaching practices, but also promoted the innovation of the entire education system.

economics	Research Indicators	Experimental Group (n=132)	Best Practices (n=123)	Significance of difference (p-value)	Effect size (Cohen's d)
Cultural Identity Build	Cultural identity	4.26 (0.67)	3.62 (0.81)	< 0.01	0.87
	Cultural Confidence	4.31 (0.58)	3.75 (0.76)	< 0.01	0.83
	Cultural understanding	4.15 (0.72)	3.45 (0.86)	< 0.01	0.89
	Cultural Innovation	4.08 (0.76)	3.33 (0.92)	< 0.01	0.90
Artistic ability promote	Basic performance skills	4.22 (0.65)	3.85 (0.73)	< 0.01	0.54
	Innovative development	4.37 (0.63)	3.41 (0.87)	< 0.01	1.28
	Art appreciation ability	4.29 (0.57)	3.67 (0.79)	< 0.01	0.92
	Artistic creation ability	4.18 (0.72)	3.52 (0.83)	< 0.01	0.85

Social participation ability	Critical Thinking	4.32 (0.59)	3.68 (0.77)	< 0.01	0.94
	Teamwork skills	4.41 (0.53)	3.89 (0.71)	< 0.01	0.85
	Social Responsibility	4.06 (0.74)	3.38 (0.88)	< 0.01	0.84
	Problem Solving	4.12 (0.68)	3.56 (0.79)	< 0.01	0.76
Education System develop	Courses	4.35 (0.58)	3.73 (0.76)	< 0.01	0.93
	Scientific nature of teaching evaluation	4.27 (0.61)	3.64 (0.82)	< 0.01	0.89
	Systematization of teacher training	4.18 (0.67)	3.47 (0.85)	< 0.01	0.94
	Resource integration decision	4.09 (0.73)	3.52 (0.81)	< 0.01	0.74

Table 4: Multi-Dimensional Outcome Evaluation of Performance Teaching Methods (Data From 2016 To 2020)

Note: The scoring adopts a 5-point scale, the score is the mean score, and the median score is the standard deviation; the experimental group is an educational institution that adopts the performance teaching method, and the hard disk is an educational institution that adopts the traditional teaching method.

### Factors Influencing the Results of Performance Teaching Methods

The study further explored the key factors that affect the performance teaching method results. The results of multiple regression analysis showed that the following factors have a significant impact on the performance teaching method results:

Teachers' professional ability is the most important predictor ( $\beta=0.437$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The data show that teachers' professional background, teaching philosophy and practical experience have a direct impact on the implementation effect of the performance teaching method. In particular, teachers with cross-cultural drama experience and innovative consciousness can more effectively implement the performance teaching method and achieve good results. As a senior person once said: "The success of the performance teaching method depends on whether teachers can accurately grasp the essence of different cultural traditions and achieve organic integration in teaching and education." (Interview record P26)

Teaching environment and resources are the second most important influencing factors ( $\beta=0.385$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The study found that conditions such as teaching venues, equipment and



facilities, teaching materials and financial support have a significant impact on the implementation of performance teaching methods. Data show that having professional rehearsal venues and recharge. However, the study also found that some community theaters with limited resources have also achieved good teaching results through innovative methods and community participation, indicating that resource constraints can be partially overcome through innovative ways.

The third important factor of new teaching methods is the novelty of the teaching method ( $\beta=0.362$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Studies have shown that performance teaching methods need to be appropriately adjusted according to different learning objects, teaching content and cultural backgrounds. Being able to use different performance teaching models and make appropriate adjustments according to actual conditions. Educational practices that make creative adjustments to the situation usually achieve better results. A teacher shared: "We gradually realized that we cannot simply apply a certain teaching model, but we must flexibly select and combine different teaching methods according to student characteristics and teaching goals." (Interview record P14)

Social support network is also an important influencing factor ( $\beta=0.293$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The study found that social support networks such as family support, community recognition and institutional cooperation have an important impact on the sustainable development and effective implementation of performance teaching methods. In particular, drama education projects that receive support and participation from multiple parties are often able to obtain more resources and have a wider social impact, thus forming a virtuous development cycle.

In addition, learner characteristics ( $\beta=0.265$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and policy environment ( $\beta=0.231$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) also have a significant impact on the results of performance teaching methods. This shows that the results of performance teaching methods are the result of multiple combined effects, and it is necessary to understand and optimize the implementation conditions of performance teaching methods from a systematic perspective.

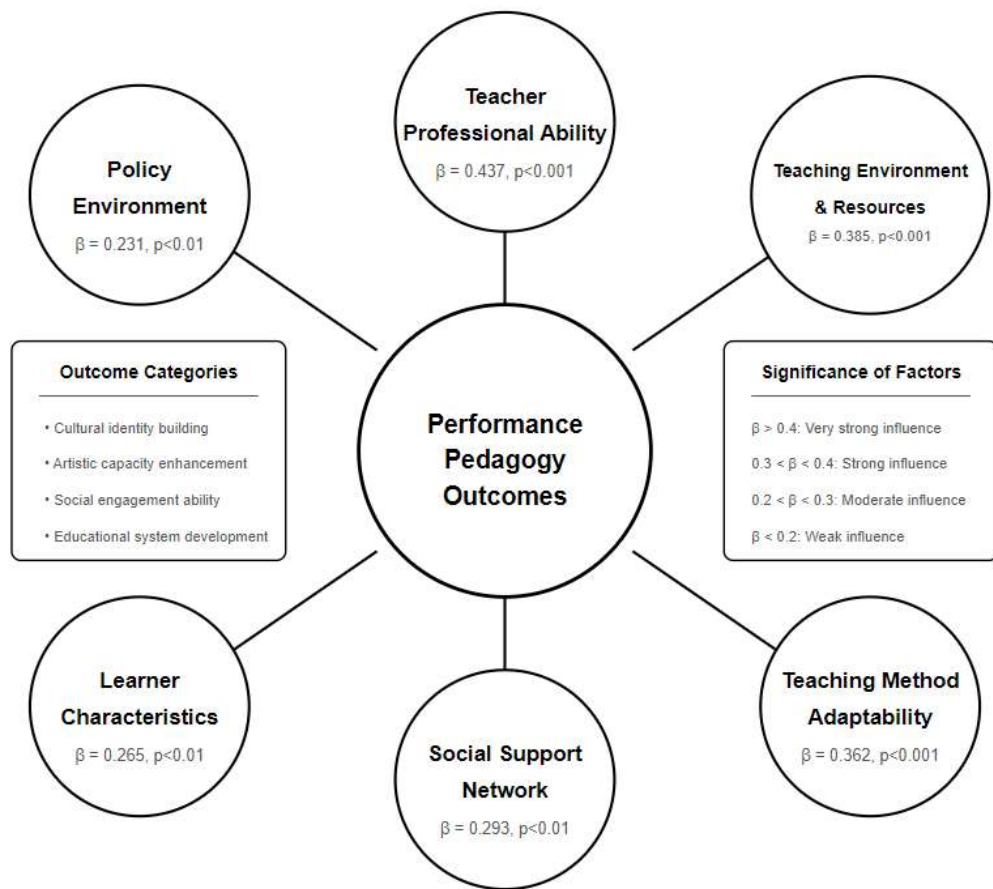


Figure 3: Integrated Model of Factors Influencing the Results of Performance Teaching Methods

## Discussion

### Theoretical Significance

The findings of this study make important contributions to theories of cross-cultural theatre education, theories of performance pedagogy, and theories of cultural identity.

First, the research results expand the scope of application of cross-cultural drama education theory. Existing cross-cultural drama theory mainly focuses on the exchange and interaction between Western and non-Western cultures (Pavis, 2010; Schechner, 2013), while this study focuses on the interaction between Chinese culture and the multicultural environment of Malaysia, providing a richer case of cross-cultural drama practice. In particular, the study reveals the "multi-dimensional cultural integration model", transcending the binary opposition framework in traditional cross-cultural drama theory, and proposing a more complex and dynamic research. It shows that in a multicultural environment such as Malaysia, cultural integration is not a simple "one rises and the other falls" relationship, but a complex process of multi-party interaction and mutual promotion. This has discovered the rich connotation of cross-cultural drama theory and provided a new perspective for understanding cultural interaction in

the context of globalization.

Secondly, the study proposed the "ecologically oriented performance teaching method" model, which expanded the boundaries of performance teaching method theory. Traditional performance teaching method theory mainly focuses on teaching interaction in the classroom (Schonmann, 2011; Butler, 2016), while the ecologically oriented model proposed in this study emphasizes the interactive relationship between drama education and the social environment, placing performance teaching method in this more rigorous social and cultural ecological system. Theoretical innovation responds to the ecological system idea in contemporary educational theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), and provides a more integrated theoretical framework for understanding and developing performance teaching methods.

Third, the study found that the current "embodied cultural orientation" process enriches the connotation of cultural orientation theory. Traditional cultural orientation theory mainly focuses on today's cognitive and emotional orientations (Berry, 2005), while this study emphasizes the mainstream cultural orientation formed through physical practice and performance experience, revealing another important path for the formation of cultural orientation. This finding echoes the "practice turn" theory that has emerged in recent years (Schatzki, 2001), which emphasizes the core role of physical practice in cultural inheritance and identity formation.

In addition, the theoretical model of "integrated innovation" proposed in the study provides a new analytical framework for understanding educational innovation in a multicultural context. The study shows that in Malaysian Chinese drama education, the most successful innovation cases are often not simply introducing foreign models or sticking to traditional models, but creating a new educational model that combines local characteristics and international perspectives through the organic integration of different cultural traditions. This finding goes beyond the simple binary opposition of "traditional and modern" or "local and global", and provides a more dialectical theoretical perspective for understanding educational innovation in the context of globalization.

### **Practical Implications**

The research results have important implications for the practice of drama education among Chinese in Malaysia and drama education in similar multicultural contexts.

First, the research results show that maintaining cultural education inheritance and promoting innovative development are not contradictory relationships, but dialectical relationships that can promote each other. This finding has important guiding significance for the drama practice of the Chinese community, indicating that drama education should not only pay attention to the inheritance of traditional culture, but also encourage innovative practice, and achieve sustainable development of drama education through the balance of the two. In specific practice, the strategy of "traditional roots + innovative expression" can be adopted, that is, on the basis of maintaining the core elements of traditional culture, encourage the application and integration of modern expression forms and innovative teaching methods.

Secondly, the study found the applicable conditions of different performance teaching methods, which provided a practical guide for drama educators. According to the research results, different educational backgrounds and teaching objectives require the selection of different performance teaching methods. For example, for beginners and teaching objectives that focus on basic skills training, the skill-oriented model is more applicable; while for advanced stages and teaching objectives that focus on innovative ability training, the innovation-oriented or ecological-

oriented model may be more effective. Educators should flexibly choose different combination models according to specific designs to achieve teaching results.

Third, the study emphasized the importance of community participation and cross-institutional cooperation in drama education. The study found that drama education projects that actively integrate into the local community and cooperate with different institutions can usually obtain more resource support and a wider social impact. This shows that drama education should not be limited to the walls of schools or theater troupes, but should actively expand social connections and build a diversified cooperation network. In practice, the social influence and resource acquisition channels of drama education can be expanded through community performances, inter-school exchanges, cross-cultural cooperation projects, etc.

Fourth, the research results highlight the role of digital technology in modern drama education. The display and rational use of digital technology can significantly improve the effectiveness and coverage of performance teaching methods. Especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital transformation has become an inevitable trend in drama education. The study suggests that drama educators actively explore new teaching models such as online teaching, hybrid teaching and digital creation to cope with the challenges and opportunities brought about by technological changes and changes in the social environment.

Finally, the study points out the importance of multicultural perspectives in drama education. In Malaysia's multicultural society, drama education should go beyond a single cultural perspective and adopt educational concepts and practices that contain diversity. The study suggests that drama educators actively absorb the essence of different cultural traditions, promote cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, and cultivate students' cross-cultural communication skills and global vision.

### **Research and Future Directions**

Although this study provides rich findings and insights, there are still some openings. First, although the research sample is representative, it is relatively limited in size and may not fully reflect the full picture of Chinese drama education in Malaysia. Future research can expand the sample size and include drama education institutions of more types and regions to understand more comprehensive research results.

Secondly, due to the limitations of research conditions, this study mainly uses retrospective data to analyze the situation of drama education from 2000 to 2010, which may have problems of memory bias and incomplete data. Future research can adopt more systematic archival research and historical analysis methods to construct a more complete historical development context.

Third, although this study adopted a mixed research method, there is still room for further in-depth analysis of quantitative data. In particular, in terms of outcome evaluation, future research can adopt more rigorous experimental designs and more sophisticated measurement tools to conduct a more scientific evaluation of the effects of performance teaching methods.

Fourth, this study mainly focuses on drama education for Chinese Malaysians, and pays less attention to the practice of drama education for other ethnic groups. Future research can adopt a comparative research method to explore the similarities and differences of dramas of different ethnic groups, as well as their mutual influence and implementation.

Finally, given the profound impact of digital technology and the global pandemic on drama education, future research can pay special attention to the transformation of drama education in

the digital age, and explore the effects and applicable conditions of new teaching models such as online teaching, hybrid teaching, and digital creation. At the same time, the development of drama education in the post-epidemic era is also an important topic worthy of attention.

## Conclusion

This study systematically highlights the 20-year development of Chinese drama education in Malaysia, revealing how cultural integration and drama innovation affect the transformation and application of performance teaching methods. The study found that between 2000 and 2020, Chinese drama education in Malaysia experienced a phased development from inheritance and exploration to digitalization and ecology, and performance teaching methods also developed from skill-oriented to ecology-oriented accordingly.

The study shows that cultural integration presents various characteristics in Malaysian Chinese drama education, mainly including content integration, form integration, concept integration and language integration. Cultural integration promotes technological innovation, form innovation, content innovation and innovation mechanism. Cultural and drama innovation affects the development of performance teaching methods through various paths, including promoting the transformation of educational concepts, promoting changes in teaching practices and improving the educational ecosystem.

The research confirms the positive results of performance teaching methods in cultural identity construction, artistic improvement, social participation ability and education system development. At the same time, the research also points out that the results of performance teaching methods are affected by teachers' professional ability, teaching environment and resources, teaching method configuration and social support network.

Theoretically, this study expands the application scope and connotation of cross-cultural drama education theory, performance teaching method theory and cultural boutique theory, and proposes theoretical innovations such as "multi-dimensional cultural integration model", "ecologically oriented performance teaching method", "embodied culture attracts much attention" and "integrated innovation". In practice, the study provides specific guidance for drama education in a multicultural context, emphasizing the balance between cultural inheritance and innovative development, the flexible choice of performance teaching method models, the importance of community participation and cross-institutional cooperation, the rational application of digital technology and the necessity of multicultural focus.

In conclusion, this study not only enriches the research on drama education of Chinese in Malaysia, but also provides a theoretical framework and practical guide for understanding the development of drama education in a multicultural context, which is of great significance for promoting cultural inheritance, innovative development and cross-cultural understanding.

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