

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Expert View On Designing Creative Teaching Activities Based On Lantern Chinese Traditional Handwork For Preschoolers

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to develop creative teaching activities for preschoolers using Lantern, a Chinese traditional handwork. Employing the Design and Development Research (DDR) method by Richey & Klein (2014), the study was conducted in three phases. The first phase involved developing instruments through a literature review and expert interviews. In the second phase, questionnaires were distributed to experts, and data were analyzed using the Fuzzy Delphi method with a five-point Likert scale to assess consensus through threshold (d) values. The final phase evaluated the activities based on expert feedback, with semi-structured interviews analyzed thematically. Results indicate that this innovative approach, integrating Lantern-making steps, effectively supports creative teaching and traditional handwork skills in preschoolers. Experts acknowledged its novelty and relevance for fostering creativity through cultural heritage activities.*

**Keywords:** (Traditional Chinese lantern, Creative teaching activities, Teaching and learning strategy)

### INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese lantern making is not only an aesthetic embodiment, but also an important carrier of Chinese traditional culture, and the art forms and cultural values it contains provide rich educational resources for preschool education. In *the Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)*, it is clearly stated that the strategic theme of educational reform should be aimed at cultivating students' sense of social responsibility, creativity and practical ability, which provides a guiding direction for innovative teaching in preschool education. Meanwhile, *the Guidance Program for Kindergarten Education (for Trial Implementation)* points out that early childhood education is an important part of basic education, and that its content should be enlightening and comprehensive, laying a solid foundation for children's lifelong development. However, in current educational practices, the integration of traditional culture and the cultivation of creativity have not been fully emphasized. Although traditional handwork activities are used in some kindergartens, they are in a single form, lack systematic research, and fail

to effectively stimulate children's creative thinking and sense of cultural identity.

Existing research suggests that participation in creative arts activities is important for the overall development of young children. For example, Pansang and Phaetlakfa (2024), through a 10-week intervention of creative arts activities with 125 4- to 5-year-olds, found that these activities significantly improved children's scientific skills, observation, and categorization, while stimulating their creative and critical thinking. Craft activities, as part of the creative arts, are effective in promoting children's hands-on skills, cognitive development, and social interaction through practice and interaction (Azhima, 2020). In addition, the process of craft activities not only enhances children's understanding of the world, but also stimulates their emotional connection and creative expression through sensory experiences (Veeber & Lind, 2015).

However, the current traditional handwork education suffers from excessive imitation and lack of innovative design. Li Guo (2019) pointed out that the traditional handwork activity model often emphasizes observation and imitation, and its

process is monotonous, so that children's imaginative space and creative potential are not given full play. This one-way indoctrination teaching method inhibits the development of young children's personality and enthusiasm for expression and is contrary to the modern educational philosophy of being student-centered and focusing on the process rather than the result. Therefore, how to incorporate innovative design into traditional handwork activities to provide children with more space for exploration and expression has become an urgent problem for preschool education.

As a form of craftsmanship that is both educational and fun, traditional Chinese lantern-making activities not only have strong cultural connotations, but also provide space for children to cultivate creative thinking. The lantern-making process includes folding, cutting, decorating and assembling, which can fully mobilize children's senses and hands-on skills, and at the same time provide them with opportunities to express their individuality and creativity. In the process of making lanterns, children not only learn basic craft skills, but also subconsciously feel the charm of traditional culture and enhance their sense of identity with the national culture. Through lantern-making activities, teachers can combine cultural education with creativity development, so that children can experience the beauty of traditional art in practice and develop their aesthetic ability and creative potential (Shen Qun ying, 2019).

This study explores the possibility of integrating traditional Chinese lantern making into kindergarten creative teaching in the context of preschool education in Shandong Province. The study collects and analyzes experts' opinions to design developmentally appropriate teaching activities for lantern making, aiming to provide new teaching strategies for preschool education that not only enrich children's learning experience, but also promote their creativity, cultural identity, and handwork skills in an all-round way.

## METHOD

### *Research Design*

A Design and Development Research (DDR) approach was employed, as described by Richey

and Klein (2014). This method enabled iterative development and evaluation of creative teaching activities based on traditional Chinese lantern-making.

### *Participants*

The study involved 15 experts in traditional Chinese lantern-makers and early childhood education from Shandong Province, China. Their input was collected through interviews and questionnaires.

### *Data Collection Strategy*

1. **Qualitative Data:** To gather experts' perspectives on the application of traditional Chinese lantern-making activities in preschool education, this study conducted semi-structured interviews with five experts from Shandong Province who have extensive experience in traditional handicrafts and preschool education. The interviews focused on the key elements of the lantern-making craft and its educational potential, the activity's promotion of children's creativity, hands-on skills, and cultural awareness, as well as the problems and solutions that may be faced in the implementation of the activity. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or online for approximately 30 minutes each and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data.
2. **Quantitative Data:** A five-point Likert language scale questionnaire was designed for this study based on a literature review and expert interviews focusing on the key elements of the traditional Chinese lantern-making activity, its importance in fostering children's creativity, and the strengths and challenges of implementing the activity. The questionnaire was distributed to 10 experts in the relevant fields through the fuzzy Delphi method, and the data were recovered two weeks later, with additional interviews conducted with experts who did not complete the questionnaire to ensure the completeness and representativeness of the data.

*Data analysis***1. Thematic coding**

Through thematic coding of the interview data, this study extracted the core views of experts on the educational value of traditional Chinese lantern making. The analysis began with a sentence-by-sentence reading of the verbatim transcripts, extracting key words or phrases and categorizing similar content into broader themes, for example, “cultural identity” and “national pride” were categorized under the theme of “cultural awareness and identity” theme. Finally, the research team iteratively validated the themes to ensure the reliability of the analysis. Key themes such as the educational elements of traditional Chinese lantern making, the promotion of children's creativity and manual skills, and the challenges and recommendations for the implementation of the activities were finally identified.

**2. Fuzzy Delphi analysis**

This study analyzed the questionnaire data using the fuzzy Delphi method to quantify the consistency of the experts' opinions on each entry. By converting the expert ratings into fuzzy values, the research team calculated a threshold (d-value) for each entry. When the d-value is less than or equal to 0.2, it indicates a consensus of expert opinion; if it is greater than 0.2, it indicates disagreement and further discussion, or adjustment of the questionnaire is required. The results of the analysis showed that most of the entries were unanimously recognized in terms of key educational values, while some of the entries had divergent opinions on specific issues of activity implementation.

**RESULTS**

The findings revealed significant agreement among experts regarding the educational value of traditional Chinese lantern-making. Key results include:

- 1. Enhancing Creativity:** Activities such as folding, cutting, and decorating lanterns encourage children to imagine, design, and create.

- 2. Cultural Appreciation:** Lantern-making provides preschoolers with a deeper understanding of Chinese traditions, fostering national identity.
- 3. Skill Development:** Fine motor skills, spatial cognition, and hand-eye coordination are improved through the intricate crafting process.
- 4. Social and Emotional Growth:** Group lantern-making activities promote teamwork, patience, and communication.

**DISCUSSION**

This study highlights the multidimensional benefits of integrating traditional Chinese lantern-making into early childhood education. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is evident in the guided process of crafting, where children learn through social interaction and scaffolding. The activities align with Gardner's multiple intelligences, particularly spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and interpersonal intelligences. Furthermore, Kolb's experiential learning model underscores the iterative process of designing, executing, and reflecting on lantern-making.

Despite its merits, challenges such as parental misconceptions about the value of handwork activities and the limited availability of materials were noted. Addressing these issues requires teacher training, community awareness campaigns, and enhanced curriculum support.

**CONCLUSION**

Traditional Chinese lantern-making offers a unique avenue to enrich early childhood education by fostering creativity, cultural appreciation, and holistic development. This study underscores the importance of integrating culturally significant activities into teaching strategies, thereby contributing to more meaningful and engaging learning experiences for preschoolers.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of such activities on children's cognitive and social development, as well as strategies for overcoming implementation challenges in diverse educational settings.

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