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RESEARCH ON THE APPLICATION OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN CHILD-FRIENDLY URBAN PARK DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of urbanization, the construction of child-friendly urban parks has become a significant topic in urban planning and design. This paper aims to explore the application of Chinese traditional cultural elements in child-friendly urban park design by analyzing the connotations of Chinese traditional cultural elements and their manifestations in park design, proposing corresponding design strategies to achieve the organic integration of cultural inheritance and child-friendly urban parks.

KEYWORDS: *Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements; Child-Friendly Urban Parks; Design Strategies; Cultural Inheritance*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of "Child-Friendly Cities" originated from UNICEF, with its core aim being to create a comprehensive, child-friendly urban space that benefits all children in cities in their daily lives, enabling them to play and learn conveniently and safely anywhere, anytime. Children represent the future of cities, and their growth environment is crucial for sustainable urban development. Child-friendly urban parks, as important venues for children's growth, not only provide spaces for play, learning, and social interaction but also serve as essential carriers of cultural inheritance. Integrating Chinese traditional cultural elements into child-friendly urban park design can enrich the cultural connotation of parks, enhance park quality, and help cultivate children's awareness and interest in Chinese traditional culture, promoting cultural inheritance and development.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILD-FRIENDLY URBAN PARKS AND CULTURAL INHERITANCE

The integration of cultural inheritance and urban space manifests special significance in child-friendly urban parks, as it represents both the continuation of Chinese traditional cultural carriers and an essential component of children's growth environment. Therefore, exploring the path of integration between these two aspects is particularly necessary.

2.1 The Connotation of Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements

Chinese Traditional cultural elements refer to unique cultural symbols, values, and aesthetic concepts formed by a country or nation throughout its long historical development. These elements reflect the historical, cultural, and spiritual characteristics of the nation, possessing profound cultural heritage and unique artistic charm.

2.2 The Important Role of Child-Friendly Urban Parks in Cultural Inheritance

As important windows for children to connect with and understand society, child-friendly urban parks' design concepts and content significantly influence children's growth and value formation (Liu, 2022). Integrating Chinese traditional cultural elements into park design allows children to encounter Chinese traditional culture during play, understand ethnic history and culture, and cultivate their cultural confidence and ethnic pride. Additionally, through interactive and experiential park design, children's interest in Chinese traditional culture can be stimulated, promoting their in-depth learning and exploration of Chinese traditional culture.

3. DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR CHILD-FRIENDLY URBAN PARKS BASED ON CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Designing child-friendly urban parks based on Chinese traditional cultural elements requires balancing the dual objectives of cultural inheritance and child-friendliness. The following discussion will cover principles, objectives, and specific strategies to achieve the organic integration of culture and spatial design.

3.1 Design Principles and Objectives

When designing child-friendly urban parks based on Chinese traditional cultural elements, the following principles should be observed: First, respect for history and culture, maintaining the authenticity and integrity of Chinese traditional culture; second, focus on children's needs and interests, creating spaces suitable

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for children's play and learning; third, emphasis on interactivity and experience, allowing children to appreciate the charm of Chinese traditional culture through participation and experience (Yang, 2022). The design objective should be to create an urban park that possesses both cultural heritage and childlike interest, enabling children to experience the charm of Chinese traditional culture during play and cultivate their interest in and love for Chinese traditional culture.

3.2 Design Strategies

Based on the above principles and objectives, design strategies need to combine specific characteristics of Chinese traditional culture, using appropriate design methods to help children perceive the essence of Chinese traditional culture in a relaxed interactive environment. The following are specific strategy developments.

3.2.1 Integration and Refinement of Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements

Deeply explore Chinese traditional cultural elements, including Chinese traditional architectural forms, pattern symbols, and folk stories, and skillfully integrate them into various corners of the park through modern design techniques. In playground equipment design, Chinese traditional architectural forms such as pavilions and towers can be referenced, using Chinese traditional patterns for decoration, making the facilities not only practical but also rich in Chinese ethnic characteristics and cultural heritage.

3.2.2 Interactive Experience and Technological Innovation

Focus on enhancing the park's interactivity and experiential quality. Design highly interactive games and activities, such as Chinese traditional cultural activity scene design, placement of interactive Chinese traditional ornaments, Chinese traditional culture-themed role-playing, treasure hunts, etc., allowing children to personally experience the charm of Chinese traditional culture through participation. Meanwhile, utilize modern technological means such as virtual reality and augmented reality to create immersive cultural experiences for children, enabling them to understand and learn Chinese traditional culture more intuitively and vividly.

3.2.3 Strengthening and Expanding Educational Functions

In park design, emphasize educational functions through enriched cultural education programs to enhance children's understanding of Chinese traditional culture. Chinese Traditional culture lectures can be arranged, inviting experts and scholars to explain Chinese traditional cultural knowledge to children; organize handicraft-making activities to let children experience the charm of Chinese traditional culture firsthand; and combine festival celebrations to hold Chinese traditional culture-themed performances and exhibitions, allowing children to experience the flavor of Chinese traditional culture in a joyful atmosphere.

3.2.4 Cultural Communication Through Wayfinding Systems

The wayfinding system is an indispensable part of parks, serving not only as an important tool for guiding visitors but also as a significant carrier of cultural information. Chinese Traditional cultural elements can be integrated into the wayfinding system design, such as using Chinese traditional patterns and colors for decoration, or adopting calligraphic fonts for signage, making the wayfinding system itself a window for displaying Chinese traditional culture. Additionally, the wayfinding system can incorporate storytelling design, guiding children to explore and discover cultural elements in the park through interesting storylines, enhancing their interest and participation.

4. EXPRESSION CARRIERS OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN CHILD-FRIENDLY URBAN PARK DESIGN

The specific expression carriers of Chinese traditional cultural elements in child-friendly urban park design cover multiple aspects. The following analysis examines their implementation forms from the perspectives of playground equipment, spatial layout and landscape design, educational programs, and public art and wayfinding systems.

4.1 Playground Equipment Design

As an essential component of children's parks, playground equipment design needs to skillfully integrate Chinese traditional cultural elements while meeting safety and entertainment requirements, enhancing cultural influence and educational functions.

4.1.1 Creating Playground Equipment with Chinese Ethnic Characteristics

In the park's play area, ancient pavilion-style playground equipment can be designed, with Chinese traditional upturned eaves on top and classical painted decorations on the body, giving the equipment an overall classical and elegant quality. Such design not only allows children to experience the atmosphere of Chinese traditional culture during play but also adds a unique cultural touch to the park (Qiu & Cai, 2022).

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4.1.2 Creating Playground Equipment with Chinese Traditional Flavor

Utilize Chinese traditional bamboo weaving techniques to create playground equipment seats and railings, which are both environmentally friendly and rich in Chinese ethnic characteristics. Meanwhile, we can also employ Chinese traditional stone carving and brick carving techniques to integrate Chinese traditional cultural elements into facility decorations, making the equipment more artistic and culturally meaningful.

4.1.3 Combining Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements with Modern Playground Equipment

Design interactive playground equipment incorporating Chinese traditional mythological stories, allowing children to learn about Chinese traditional cultural stories while playing, enhancing their interest in and identification with Chinese traditional culture. Additionally, we can utilize modern technological means such as virtual reality and augmented reality to provide children with immersive Chinese traditional cultural experiences, enabling them to understand and learn Chinese traditional culture more deeply through play.

4.2 Spatial Layout and Landscape Design

Spatial layout and landscape design are core elements of child-friendly urban park design and important aspects for displaying Chinese traditional cultural elements. In terms of spatial layout, we can draw from Chinese traditional garden layout techniques to create spaces with rich layers and changing scenery with each step. First, we can use Chinese traditional garden layout techniques such as borrowed scenery and corresponding scenery to create mutual referencing and echoing between natural and cultural landscapes within the park, forming a harmonious and unified spatial atmosphere. For example, placing a Chinese traditional-style gate at the park entrance with a lush bamboo forest behind it creates a beautiful scene while guiding children into the park and allowing them to experience the flavor of Chinese traditional culture. Second, we can create landscape environments with Chinese traditional charm by combining topography and vegetation characteristics. For instance, in the park's lake area, we can use Chinese traditional rock-stacking landscape techniques to create scenery where mountains and waters depend on each other, creating profound artistic conception. Meanwhile, we can also select and arrange plants with local characteristics to form distinctive regional plant landscapes, enhancing the park's cultural identity. In landscape design, we can employ Chinese traditional garden-making techniques and plant configuration methods to create an atmosphere that is both classical and naturally harmonious (Qiu & Cai, 2022). For example, along the park's walkways, we can place Chinese traditional-style stone carvings and landscape lighting to add cultural atmosphere to the park. Meanwhile, we can also utilize terrain changes and water system distribution to create rich spatial layers and landscape variations, allowing children to experience different landscape experiences during play. Furthermore, we can design some cultural landmark nodes based on the park's theme and functional positioning. For instance, we can place Chinese traditional culture-themed sculptures or murals in the central plaza as iconic landscapes; in the leisure area, we can set up Chinese traditional-style seats and pavilions to provide children with a comfortable resting environment.

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4.3 Educational Program Design

Educational programs are an important function of child-friendly urban parks and a crucial pathway for inheriting Chinese traditional culture. Through designing various cultural education programs, we can help children understand and learn Chinese traditional culture through participation. By regularly organizing Chinese traditional culture lectures and exhibitions, inviting experts, scholars, or folk artists to explain Chinese traditional cultural knowledge to children in the park, and displaying Chinese traditional handicrafts and cultural relics, children can experience the charm of Chinese traditional culture through listening and viewing. We can also conduct handicraft-making activities by setting up handicraft-making areas, providing Chinese traditional handicraft materials and tools, allowing children to experience the Chinese traditional handicraft-making process firsthand, cultivating their hands-on abilities and creativity. Meanwhile, we can invite craftsmen to provide on-site guidance to children in their creation, helping them understand and learn Chinese traditional handicrafts more deeply. Furthermore, we can develop outdoor education activities combining the park's natural landscape and cultural environment. For example, organizing Chinese traditional culture-themed outdoor adventure activities for children to learn about Chinese traditional cultural stories and historical legends through exploration, or conducting Chinese traditional culture-themed outdoor performances for children to demonstrate their understanding and love of Chinese traditional culture through performance. Through the design and implementation of these educational programs, we can help children understand and learn Chinese traditional culture more deeply through play, cultivating their cultural confidence and ethnic pride.

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4.4 Public Art and Wayfinding System Design

Public art and wayfinding systems are important visual elements within parks and significant means of displaying Chinese traditional culture. Through designing public art works and wayfinding systems with Chinese traditional cultural characteristics, we can add more cultural atmosphere and artistic charm to the park. In public art design, we can create sculptures, murals, and other works with Chinese traditional cultural characteristics based on the park's theme and style positioning. These works can present Chinese traditional cultural stories, historical figures, or folk tales, allowing children to experience the charm of Chinese traditional culture through appreciation. Meanwhile, we can also utilize modern artistic methods and technical means to create public art works that possess both Chinese traditional characteristics and meet modern aesthetic needs.



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5. CONCLUSION

Integrating Chinese traditional cultural elements into child-friendly urban park design not only enriches the park's cultural connotation but also enhances its educational function and social value. This design strategy holds significant importance for inheriting and promoting excellent Chinese traditional culture and cultivating children's cultural confidence and ethnic pride. Through Chinese traditional cultural elements in parks, children can gradually absorb Chinese traditional culture while playing, strengthening their cognition and understanding of Chinese traditional culture. Meanwhile, this design approach also helps enhance the park's cultural identity, making it an important window for displaying urban cultural image. Furthermore, as an important component of urban public space, child-friendly urban parks' design should fully consider children's needs and interests, while the integration of Chinese traditional cultural elements adds more interest and exploration to parks, helping attract children to actively participate in outdoor activities and promoting their physical and mental health development. Therefore, applying Chinese traditional cultural elements in child-friendly urban park design not only has profound cultural value but also significant social importance, playing a positive role in promoting urban cultural construction and social harmonious development.

In practical design processes, we need to deeply explore the essence of Chinese traditional culture, combining it with modern design concepts to create designs that possess both Chinese traditional characteristics and meet modern aesthetic needs. During the design process, we should also focus on children's participation and experience, allowing them to experience the charm of Chinese traditional culture while playing, thus inspiring their love and respect for Chinese traditional culture. With continuous social development and progress, child-friendly urban park design will face new challenges and opportunities. In future designs, we should continue to focus on changes in children's needs and interests, continuously explore and innovate ways to apply Chinese traditional cultural elements, creating a better growing environment with richer cultural connotation for children.

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