

An Overview of the Inheritance and Development of Festival Culture in the Field of Non-Heritage Education

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Abstract: The twenty-four solar terms are an important component of Chinese traditional culture, containing scientific and cultural knowledge and national culture and spirit, and were selected as the World Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2016. Research in various fields has grown rapidly in recent years. As education is an important position for cultural dissemination, the education of festive seasons has become a research hotspot in academia. Taking China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) as the database sample, this review analyses the relevant literature since 2020, tries to discover the current situation of the research on solar terms education, with a view to exploring its diversified paths and development trends in the practice of intangible cultural heritage education, and seeks to put forward suggestions and strategies for the future development accordingly, so as to promote the "two creations" of the Chinese excellent traditional culture and the subsequent research to provide support and reference.

Keywords: Non-heritage education; Twenty-four solar terms; Solar terms education; Research review

Online publication: April 26, 2025

1. Introduction

Education is the key carrier of knowledge transmission and value shaping. With the knowledge system, traditional customs, and cultural connotations of the twenty-four solar terms as the core, solar terms education aims to cultivate the public's knowledge and love of traditional culture and promote its inheritance and innovation. Along with the national emphasis on traditional cultural heritage, the twenty-four solar terms have received increasing attention in the field of non-heritage education.

Based on the literature related to "solar terms and education" on China National Knowledge Infrastructure since 2020, this study systematically combs through the current status of its inheritance and the development trend of non-heritage education in various school segments, so as to provide reference for the "two creations" of traditional culture. The study finds that the current solar terms education is fruitful in early childhood education, but the practice in the field of higher education still needs to be strengthened.

2. Analysis of articles on the theme of solar terms education

2.1. Analysis from the perspective of disciplines

In order to investigate the development status of solar terms education, this study takes China National Knowledge Infrastructure as the authoritative database, and searches with "solar terms and education" as the theme word juxtaposition, and as of June 2025, there are 261 articles. Among them, there are 39 academic journals, 165 specialty journals, 27 master's theses, 0 doctoral theses, and 21 conference papers. In terms of section distribution, there were 162 articles in the field of preschool education and 43 articles in primary education; while 16 and 7 documents were found in secondary and higher education, respectively, as well as 3 articles in the field of vocational education. The distribution of retrieved data reveals the current disciplinary fields of temperance education research and its current status (**Figure 1**). Research on temperance education is unevenly distributed across educational fields, with preschool education having the most literature, followed by primary education, and secondary and higher education being under-represented. This may reflect the difference in emphasis and demand for temperance education at different stages. Overall, there is still room for research in this field, especially in higher education and vocational education.



Figure 1. Percentage of distribution of disciplines in solar terms education (Image source: China National Knowledge Infrastructure)

2.2. Analysis of annual publication volume

The analysis of the retrieved data shows that the research on temperance education has shown significant growth since 2019. The number of articles published in 2020–2024 is 29, 23, 45, 48, and 56, respectively, and 64 articles have been published on June 9, 2025, and the research popularity continues to climb. According to the trend graph of the quantity change (**Figure 2**), it shows that the number of related literature has been increasing year by year since the inclusion of the twenty-four solar terms in the list of non-heritage in 2016, which not only reflects the importance of the protection and inheritance of traditional culture in both the academic and practical fields, but also indicates that the value of solar term education as a bridge connecting the modern life and the traditional culture has been increasingly prominent. This feature of the data confirms that the research in this field is in a stage of rapid development and deepening, and the academic influence and social value are increasing.



Figure 2. Number of published literature on the topic of solar terms education by year (Image source: China National Knowledge Infrastructure)

This study will focus on the literature published from 2020 to 2025, aiming to deepen the understanding of the development trend of temperance education and reveal its diversified paths in educational practice as well as the challenges for future development. It also provides an outlook on the future development trends of temperance education.

3. Research status of various academic segments of temperance education

3.1. Pre-school education

Through combing the relevant literature, the research results on the application of the 24 solar terms in the field of early childhood education are remarkable. Scholars have explored the path of integrating the festival culture into early childhood education through practical activities such as planting observation, custom experience, and environment creation, and have emphasized co-education through home and family. Chen ^[1] addressed the main challenges faced in teaching seasonal education in kindergarten activities. Based on the actual situation of young children, she proposed effective strategies in terms of teaching environment, theoretical learning, artistic activities, and social practice. She advocated home-school cooperation, improved activity evaluation, and achieved the integration of "teaching-learning-evaluation" ^[1]. Wang took festival activities as the starting point, enriched the garden-based curriculum system, and designed diversified labor education such as farming and creativity in combination with the age characteristics of young children, and also put forward the co-education mode in which "garden + family + society" works together ^[2]. Chen provided practical solutions such as knowledge decomposition teaching, interest-oriented creation, diversified activities, and innovative evaluation and reflection ^[3].

The above activities show that the educational concept of "learning by doing" is effective in the practice of festive season education, which provides an innovative path for the development of non-heritage education. Future research should focus on the integration of festivals and other projects to build a special education system; pay attention to regional cultural differences to optimize practice strategies; deepen multi-party collaboration and interdisciplinary integration to promote the inheritance and innovation of festivals and non-heritage culture.

3.2. Primary education

In the field of primary education, solar terms education mainly focuses on the integration of primary school language and labor education curriculum. Through the integration with primary school curriculum, it helps students to deepen traditional cultural knowledge, improve cultural literacy, strengthen labor practice ability, and cultivate a sense of cultural identity. Peng and He, in view of the current situation of primary school language teaching, proposed to take students' core literacy as the guide, enhance the systematic nature of festival culture education, create authentic learning situations, and carry out interdisciplinary learning activities ^[4]. Combined with comprehensive practice activities in primary schools, Ling and Zhou

emphasized the deep integration of festival culture and labor education through the development of school-based curricula, practice leading, and subject teaching ^[5]. Zhang proposed the paths of mining textbook resources, carrying out practical and thematic activities, and promoting interdisciplinary integration for the construction of a microcourse group of festival culture ^[6].

The integration of the 24 solar terms into primary education has achieved a win-win situation of traditional cultural heritage and students' literacy cultivation through interdisciplinary integration. Future research should continue to explore innovative strategies to further expand the boundaries of its application in non-heritage education and help the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese outstanding traditional culture.

3.3. Secondary education

In the field of secondary education, the 24 solar terms are mainly combined with secondary school biology curriculum and labor education, while some scholars advocate for their integrated development with the five education. Wang and Zi proposed to integrate the biological knowledge in the festive seasons into teaching through developing school-based curricula and carrying out social practice ^[7]. Jiang *et al.* proposed the festive season as the background and suggested setting up practical activities based on the characteristics of knowledge to achieve the combination of biology teaching and labor education ^[8]. Kang thought that the specific path of integrating the 24 festivals with the five education (moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor) in depth from the perspective of life education provides diversified ideas for the inheritance of traditional culture in secondary education (**Figure 3**) ^[9].



Figure 3. A list of cases of classroom life education system based on the culture of the "24 Solar Terms" [9]

The development of a school-based curriculum on the solar terms can enrich the teaching content and innovate the teaching methods. In the future of secondary education, the application of the twenty-four solar terms will tend to be diversified, strengthen the practicality and social participation, deepen the interdisciplinary integration in order to synergize the five education, and focus on personalized teaching. This not only conforms to the change of education concepts but also helps traditional cultural inheritance and the overall development of students.

3.4. Higher education

In the field of higher education, the inheritance of the 24 solar terms faces multiple challenges, such as curriculum integration, carrier selection, planning and design, and the enhancement of student participation. Huang proposed integrating traditional cultural concepts into the classroom knowledge system, building innovative bases for non-heritage protection and inheritance education, developing library resources, and expanding the "second classroom" ^[10]. Li advocated for strengthening traditional culture education from three aspects: classroom teaching, campus environment creation, and social practice ^[11]. Liu *et al.* proposed to introduce a compulsory course of "Chinese traditional culture" for all students, and to show the cultural connotation of festivals through diverse activities such as micro-expression making and singing festive songs ^[12].

The solar terms education in higher education will develop in multiple dimensions. Curriculum construction explores diversified carriers and builds a systematic system; teaching focuses on practical interaction and popularization of non-heritage knowledge. Digital technology promotes the innovation of festival culture protection, while encouraging students to participate in subject research and project practice, deepening inter-school cooperation, and jointly promoting festival culture inheritance.

4. Analysis of the current situation of solar terms education in the field of non-heritage education

4.1. Dilemmas and challenges of temperance education

In recent years, although there has been progress in solar terms education in the field of non-heritage education, it still faces many challenges. At the pre-school education stage, there are differences in teachers' understanding and knowledge of the 24 solar terms, the connotation is not grasped systematically enough, the practical activities are mostly based on traditional teaching such as planting and food production, and the transfer of knowledge relies on teacher-led teaching, with insufficient use of modern technologies such as internet resources and educational applications. At the primary and secondary education levels, there are fewer interdisciplinary programs focusing on the 24 solar terms, and they fail to fully integrate knowledge from multiple fields. In higher education, although attempts have been made to incorporate the culture of the solar terms into the curriculum, there is a general lack of systematicity and depth, insufficient student awareness and low enthusiasm for participation, and the educational approach is still based on the transmission of knowledge, making it difficult to stimulate interest in learning.

4.2. Suggestions and strategies for solar terms education

The inheritance and development of the 24 solar terms in the field of non-heritage education needs to be optimized from multiple dimensions. On the level of teacher construction, the leading role of key teachers should be played, and the cultural literacy of teachers in festive seasons should be improved through online and offline thematic training, expert lectures and demonstration classes, and teacher learning communities; at the same time, teaching resource packages and activity guides should be provided to enrich the teaching materials. In terms of pedagogical innovation, project-based learning, role-playing, and other diversified methods should be integrated, and digital technologies such as VR and AR should be used to recreate the scenes of festive seasons and climates, develop STEAM projects, design cross-disciplinary learning units, and carry out inquiry-based learning and theatre education, so as to enhance the fun and practicability of learning.

In the field of higher education, it is necessary to strengthen the systematic nature of festival culture education. Incorporate it into the general education curriculum system, offer elective courses and lectures; promote interdisciplinary integration with literature, art, and other disciplines; use modern information technology to create immersive learning scenarios; encourage teachers and students to carry out academic research and social practice activities, and create an atmosphere of inheritance in the form of cultural festivals and folklore activities, so as to help the innovative development

of traditional culture.

5. Vision and prospect of solar terms education in the field of non-heritage education

In the field of non-heritage education, the integration of multiple disciplines and the empowerment of digital technology are the core development directions of the 24 solar terms education. Through the integration of disciplinary resources, a more three-dimensional festival culture education system can be constructed. With the help of the Internet, big data, artificial intelligence, and other technologies, an immersive online learning platform can be created to enhance the educational experience. Currently, solar terms education presents trends of diversification, digitalization, practicability, interdisciplinary integration, and strengthening of higher education leadership, playing an important role in enriching subject teaching, cultivating students' comprehensive ability, and promoting the "two creations" of traditional culture.

Future research needs to focus on the path of deep integration of different educational stages and disciplines, break through the status quo dominated by early childhood education, systematically integrate festival culture education into higher education, and deeply explore its cultural connotations and spiritual values. At the same time, we should further explore the innovative application of modern educational technology in the inheritance of festival culture, so as to provide theoretical support and practical paths for the cultivation of new-age talents with both cultural self-confidence and innovation ability.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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