

A Study on Characteristics of Learning Interests in the Teaching of Chanting Ancient Poetry in the First Grade of Primary Schools in Shizuishan City, China

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Abstract

This study investigated the implementation of education in a primary school in Ningxia, China, employing a quantitative methodology through questionnaire and statistical analysis to achieve two objectives: 1) the influencing factors of situational interest and individual interest in learning Chinese ancient poetry chanting among Grade 1 students of Shizuishan No.11 Primary School, and 2) the differences in ancient poetry chanting learning attitudes between groups with demographic characteristics, including age, family economic situation and parents' level of education. The research population consisted of 210 students from Shizuishan No.11 Primary School, Ningxia, China in the 2023 academic year. The instruments of this quantitative and qualitative research were the interviews and a questionnaire. The number of valid sampling size was 140, for which the stratified

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sampling was combined with simple random sampling to collect data which were analyzed through frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

The results of the study were as follows:

1) Basic characterization of interest in Chanting Learning showed a differentiated development, and 2) Attitudes toward learning ancient poetry chanting were strongly influenced by different demographic characteristics, including gender, family economic status, and parents' education level. They reflected in three aspects: gender difference, family situation characteristics and family chanting environment.

Through this systematic empirical study, the meaningful evidence and insights to facilitate the promotion of ancient poetry education were generated. Meanwhile, the comprehensive development of students' language skills, humanistic literacy, thinking abilities and aesthetic abilities was promoted.

Keywords: Primary School Students, Chanting Learning, Situational Interest, Individual Interest, Humanistic Literacy, Chinese Ancient Poetry

1. Introduction

As an integral and highlighted component of Chinese language and literature education, the chanting and appreciation of Chinese ancient poetry have been emphasized in primary schools across China. In addition, the Chinese language curriculum guidelines by the Ministry of Education have also continually reinforced poetry as one of the key elements to improved humanities accomplishment from elementary education onward. Over 90% of primary schools nationwide have implemented poetry chanting as standard classroom activities or assessments for Chinese language and literacy development (MOE, 2020).

The teaching of ancient poetry occupies a vital position in primary school language teaching. According to the “Chinese National Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2023 Edition)”, students in grades 1-6 are required to “recite 160 excellent classical poems and classical Chinese passages”. The learning objective for Grade 1 of primary school is “Read the poem, pay attention to the process of reading to experience the emotion and understand the content”.

Recent pedagogical studies have revealed that while many primary schools still employ relatively traditional teaching models for poetry education, depending heavily on rote memorization and chanting, more innovative student-centered and interactive methods tailored for contemporary youths are needed to stimulate greater engagement and learning interest (Cheng, 2021).

Currently, with the renewal of educational concepts, poetry chanting pedagogy is also undergoing reforms and innovations, using more interactive teaching methods to stimulate students’ learning interest and enabling them to actively participate in poetry chanting instruction driven by interest. However, the exploration and practice of new types of poetry chanting teaching methods are still not systematic and standardized across different schools and teachers.

Though Chinese ancient poetry is valued for enhancing Chinese cultural heritage, there still remains a lack of empirical research on examining the implementation effects and evaluating the cognitive-affective outcomes of different pedagogical

strategies for poetry chanting and chanting exercises (Lao, 2020). The rich potential of leveraging Chinese ancient poetry education to boost humanities literacy, it is necessary to further explore language mastery, and whole-person development among primary students.

Shizuishan No.11 Primary School is a provincial model primary school located in the Dawukou District of Shizuishan City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Founded in 2023, the school has 1,257 students from Grades 1 to 6 taught by totally 71 faculty members.

As a model school, it has developed a comprehensive Chinese language curriculum integrating poetry chanting components starting from Grade 1. Recently, the school has implemented curriculum reforms, aiming to adopt innovative and interactive approaches to poetry teaching, aiming to stimulate greater learning interest and continued improvement of educational outcomes (Shizuishan No.11 Primary School, 2021).

However, according to principal surveys across Ningxia province, considerable variations exist in how different schools and educators approach poetry teaching, and there is no consensus on a standardized pedagogy balancing tradition and innovation. The qualitative and quantitative outcome of chant teaching also require more empirical inspection. As a leading primary institution in Ningxia, Shizuishan No.11 Primary School has the opportunity to contribute towards formulating enhanced pedagogical models for poetry education that can provide empirical practices at other schools in the region and nationwide.

2. Literature Review

Based on the review of literature and research objectives, the study will use the following conceptual framework to examine the impact of chanting teaching on first graders' poetry chanting interest at Shizuishan No.11 Primary School.

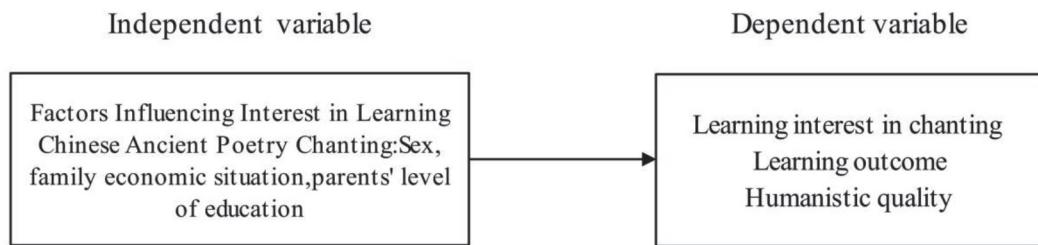


Figure 1 Conceptual Research Framework.

The theoretical framework for the study of interest in chanting is explored from two perspectives: the teaching of chanting and the theory of interest in learning.

2.1 Teaching chanting:

1) The essence of chanting: chanting is a traditional way of deep literary experience, which closely combines sound, emotion and meaning, and conveys the emotion and mood of the poem through the intonation of the voice. 2) Chanting and Memory: Through repeated chanting, students can better memorize the content of the poems and texts because chanting combines multiple senses, such as visual, auditory and kinesthetic senses, which enhances the effect of memorization. 3) Chanting and Humanistic Literacy: Teaching chanting deepens the understanding and recognition of the poems and other traditional cultures, while helping students to enhance their confidence in their culture (Qing Chen, 2012).

2.2 Theory of interest in learning:

1) Interest: interest in learning refers to a student's psychological disposition toward a particular subject or activity, which includes curiosity, exploration, and a desire to participate. 2) Interest and Motivation: When students are interested in a particular subject or activity, they are more likely to invest time and energy in learning, resulting in better learning outcomes. This study will explore the interest in chanting in terms of interest motivation - individual interest and situational interest. 3) Interest Influencing Factors: Based on the socio-ecological model, the influencing factors on the learning of ancient Chinese poetry were analyzed at the individual level, family level, school level, community level, and policy level.

Qing Chen investigated that language achievement is an important factor in learning ancient poetry, such as family education level, economy, teachers' professionalism, school environment, community, values and media influence the direction in which students' interest in ancient poetry develops (Xiaohong Su, 2014).

Family situation is an important aspect that influences the interest in learning chants. Feiyu Wang investigated the development of adolescents' academic emotions, who found that the positive academic emotions of only-child students were higher than those of non-only-child students in junior high school and elementary school, and that the dimension of immediate pleasure, which is a positive emotional affective experience gained by students in classroom learning, belongs to the positive aspect of academic emotions (Feiyu Wang, 2018).

3. Methodology

Research on Characteristics of Learning Interests and Mechanisms about Chinese Ancient Poetry Chanting in Chinese Teaching in Grade 1 in Shizuishan No.11 Primary School in Ningxia, China, was qualitative and quantitative research. The population of the students in Shizuishan No.11 Primary School, Ningxia Province in China is two hundred and ten (210) of the Grade 1 students studying in the academic year 2023. The sample consists of one hundred and forty (140) students in Shizuishan No.11 Primary School, Ningxia Province in China. The sample size is determined by the Krejcie and Morgan tables (Krejcie & Morgan, 2023). Simple random sampling is used.

Review concepts, theories and literature are related to ancient poetry chanting learning to inform questionnaire design. These include the Basic Information of the Respondents, Chanting Learning Interest Scale, Achievement Goal Scale, and Student Interview of Humanistic Quality.

1) Adapting the questionnaire based on existing questionnaires. Creating a questionnaire and inviting 3 experts to review and modify inappropriate items. After that, the content validity was examined in line with the principles of conformity and comprehensiveness of the content by using the Index of Item Objective Congruence

(IOC). And IOC of all questions in this paper is greater than 0.5.

- 2) The instrument was a try out by 30 students while not a sample to find reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula, (Cronbach, 1990).
- 3) Finalizing the questionnaire structure and layout before distribution to the study sample.

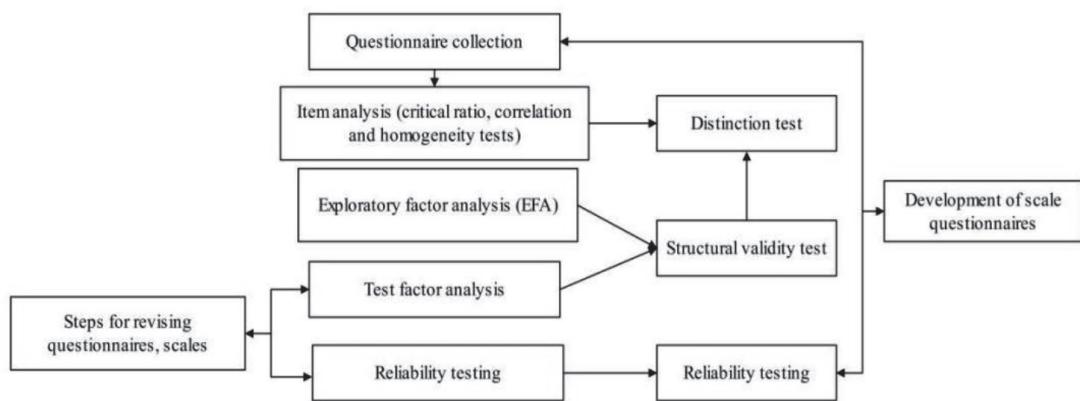


Figure 2 Flowchart of questionnaire and scale development and revision of reliability and validity tests.

The researcher has conducted data collection as follows: Requesting permission letter to collect data from the College of Educational Innovation, Saint John's University to the students in Shizuishan No.11 Primary School, Ningxia Province, the People's Republic of China. In addition, the researcher also sent the questionnaires to the samples. This study also checked the completeness of the questionnaire collected by the research and used for next collected research data.

The data are analyzed by statistical SPSS software packages. All scales in this study were analyzed for reliability and validity. The general data of the respondents classified by education level and study experience are explored by frequency and percentage statistics. Level of the interest in chanting of the students in Shizuishan No.11 Primary School, Ningxia Province in China, Ningxia Province was analyzed by mean, and standard deviations. The analysis results are interpreted.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic Variables

Table 1 lists the basic information of the students who participated in this formal distribution of questionnaires, mainly including gender, only child, parents' education level and other information. Concerning gender, there are 68 male students, accounting for 48.5% of the total number, and 72 female students, occupying 51.5%; in terms of only child, there are 78 only children, accounting for 56%, and 62 non-only children, occupying 44%; the educational level of the father is in senior high school and below, accounting for 33.4%; the educational level of the father is in junior high school or undergraduate school, accounting for 88 students, and occupying 63.4%; and the education level of the mother is in senior high school or undergraduate school, accounting for 43 students, and occupying 31.4%; and the education level of the mother is in senior high school or undergraduate school, accounting for 31.4%. In terms of economic conditions, 43 students (31.0%), 91 students (63.4%), and 6 students (3.2%) with master's degree or doctoral degree had their mothers' education level at high school or below. Regarding economic conditions, the number of students from economically disadvantaged families was 16 (11.8%), the number of students from economically average families was 71 (50.7%), and the number of students from economically well-off families was 53 (37.5%).

Table 1 List of basic information of participants in the formal distribution of questionnaires.

variant	form	n	percentage	n=140
genders	Male	68	48.5%	
	female	72	51.5%	
Only child or not	Yes	78	56.0%	
	No	62	44.0%	
Father's education level	High school and below	46	33.4%	
	College and undergraduate degrees	88	63.4%	
	Masters and PhD	6	3.2%	
Mother's education level	High school and below	43	31.0%	
	College and undergraduate degrees	91	65.8%	
	Masters and PhD	6	3.2%	
Family economic situation	Poor (less than 3000yuan)	16	11.8%	
	Average(3000~4000yuan)	71	50.7%	
	Better (above 4000 yuan)	53	37.5%	

4.2 Overall Characterization of Interest in Chanting Learning

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation, median (P25, P75), and correlation between the dimensions of interest in chanting learning context. The results demonstrated that the highest mean score was found in the overall interest dimension, with a mean value of 3.60, followed by the intention to explore dimension, the need to pay attention to dimension, the novelty dimension, and the immediate pleasure dimension, with mean values of 3.59, 3.58, 3.55, and 3.46, respectively, as well as the challenging dimension, with a mean value of 2.67. The bivariate correlations between the novelty, the need to pay attention, the intention to explore, the immediate pleasure, and the overall interest dimension were in the range of 0.10 to 0.5, and the correlations among the two dimensions were in the range of 0.10 to 0.5. The correlations between novelty, need for attention,

intention to explore, immediate pleasure, and general interest ranged from 0.10 to 0.67, reaching the level of significance. The correlations between the challenge dimension and the dimensions of novelty, immediate pleasure, and general interest were all significant, while the correlations with the need to pay attention and the intention to explore failed to reach the level of significance.

Table 2 Results of Descriptive Analysis of Interest in Chanting Learning Situations.

	M	SD	Mdn (P25,P75)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Novelty	3.55	0.87	3.50 (3.00, 4.00)	1					
2 Challenging	2.67	0.94	2.75 (2.00, 3.25)	0.10**	1				
3 Attention to needs	3.58	0.91	3.50 (3.00, 4.25)	0.54**	-0.01	1			
4 Explore Intentions	3.59	0.97	3.50 (3.00, 4.25)	0.51**	0.01	0.67**	1		
5 Instant pleasure	3.46	0.86	3.50 (3.00, 4.00)	0.30**	-0.07**	0.37**	0.38**	1	
6 General interest	3.60	0.99	3.75 (3.00, 4.41)	0.56**	-0.10**	0.66**	0.67**	0.38**	1

Note: ** indicates $p<0.01$.

Table 3 presents the mean, standard deviation, median (P25, P75) and correlation between the dimensions of individual interest in chant learning. Based on the results, it can be observed that the students had the highest mean score of 3.83 for the emotional-emotional experience dimension, and a lower mean score of 3.05 for the willingness to participate dimension, respectively.

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis of Individual Interest in Chanting Learning.

	M	SD	Mdn (P25, P75)	1	2	3
1.Emotional Affective Experience	3.83	0.94	4.00 (3.00, 4.67)	1		
2.Willingness to participate	3.05	1.08	3.00 (2.33, 3.67)	0.60**	1	
3.Individual interest overall	3.31	0.86	3.33 (2.78, 3.89)	0.83**	0.89**	1

Note: ** indicates $p<0.01$.

4.3 Gender Characterization of Interest in Chanting Learning

By analyzing the differences in the interest of students of different genders in chanting learning situations, the results are shown in Table 4. Differences in attention demand, exploration intention and immediate pleasure between genders are of significance ($p<0.01$). Boys have higher scores than girls in the dimensions of attention demand, exploration intention and immediate pleasure, indicating that boys pay more attention to the learning process of chanting classroom, are more willing to explore, and have more enjoyable experiences than girls. The gender differences in novelty, challenge and overall interest did not reach the significant level ($p>0.05$), suggesting that there is no difference between male and female students in novelty, challenge and overall interest, i.e., gender differences do not influence the students' perception of the stimulation of the chanting classroom environment.

Table 4 Differential Analysis of Students' Interest in Chanting Learning Contexts by Gender.

n=140					
	genders	n	M	SD	p
Novelty	Male	68	3.53	0.90	0.196
	Female	72	3.57	0.84	
Challenging	Male	68	2.65	0.98	0.262
	Female	72	2.69	0.91	
Attention to needs	Male	68	3.63	0.91	0.001
	Female	72	3.53	0.90	
Explore Intentions	Male	68	3.64	0.96	0.003
	Female	72	3.55	0.98	
Instant pleasure	Male	68	3.53	0.85	0.000
	Female	72	3.40	0.87	
Overall interest	Male	68	3.63	1.02	0.126
	Female	72	3.58	0.98	

With gender as the independent variable, the results are shown in Table 5. In the overall and all dimensions of individual interest in chanting, the scores of male students are higher than those of female students, and the differences between the two have reached the level of significance ($p<0.01$). This indicates that gender differences have a vital impact on individual interest in chanting, and male students' individual interest in chanting is better than that of female students.

Table 5 Analysis of Gender Differences in Individual Interest in Chanting Learning.

	genders	n	M	SD	p	n=140
Emotional Affective Experience	Male	68	3.97	0.93		
	Female	72	3.70	0.94	0.000	
Willingness to participate	Male	68	3.22	1.10		
	Female	72	2.89	1.04	0.000	
Individual interest overall	Male	68	3.47	0.86		
	Female	72	3.17	0.83	0.000	

4.4 Characterization of Situational Interest in Chant Learning Across Parental Education Levels

The results were explored with the father's education level as the independent variable and the students' individual interest in chanting as the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 6. It can be observed from the results that in the dimensions of emotional experience, willingness to participate, value embodiment and overall individual interest in chanting learning, the students' scores tend to increase with the increase of the father's education level, but only in the dimension of willingness to participate, the difference reaches the level of significance ($p<0.05$), showing that the father's education level affects the willingness to participate in the chanting activities of the students, and the higher the father's education level is, the more the children are willing to. The more educated the father is, the more willing the child is to participate in chanting activities.

Table 6 Characterization of individual interest in chanting learning by father's education level.

	educational level	M	SD	p
Emotional Affective Experience	High school and below	3.80	0.95	
	College and undergraduate degrees	3.86	0.94	0.105
	Master's degree or above	3.91	1.03	
Willingness to participate	High school and below	3.00	1.07	
	College and undergraduate degrees	3.11	1.08	
	Master's degree or above	3.14	1.27	0.015
Total Interest	High school and below	3.29	0.84	
	College and undergraduate degrees	3.34	0.87	0.164
	Master's degree or above	3.38	0.98	

The results were analyzed with the mother's education level as the independent variable and the students' individual interest in chanting as the dependent variable. There are differences in the scores of students with different levels of education of their mothers in the dimensions of emotional-emotional experience, willingness to participate, and overall interest in chanting ($p<0.05$), indicating that the level of education of the mothers influences the emotional-emotional experience of chanting, the willingness to participate, and the overall interest in chanting. Further analysis based on post hoc tests indicated that in the emotional-emotional dimension and overall individual interest, the scores of students with mothers' education level in high school and below were lower than those of students with mothers' education level in specialties and bachelor's degree; in the dimension of willingness to participate, the scores of students with mothers' education level in high school and below were lower than those of students in specialties and bachelor's degree and master's degree and above, indicating that the higher the education level of mothers, the higher the level of individual interest of the students. It indicates the higher the mother's education level, the higher the individual interest level of the students.

4.5 Characterization of interest in chant learning across family economic status

The results are shown in Table 7, with students' family economic status as the independent variable and students' individual interest in chanting as the dependent variable. The differences in the scores of students with different family financial status reached the significance level ($p<0.01$) in the overall and various dimensions of individual interest in chanting, suggesting that family financial status influences students' individual interest in chanting. Further post-hoc tests demonstrated that the scores of students in the poor and average family economic status groups were significantly lower than those of students in the better family economic status group, while the difference between students in the average and poor family economic status groups did not reach the level of significance ($p>0.05$), indicating that there was no difference between the two. The suggests that better family economic status is more conducive to the development of students' individual interest in chanting.

Table 7 Characterization of individual interest in chanting learning of students with different family economic status

	Economic Situation	M	SD	p
Emotional Affective Experience	Mediocre	3.68	0.95	0.000
	Average	3.69	0.94	
	Better	4.04	0.91	
Willingness to participate	Mediocre	2.87	1.03	0.000
	Average	2.92	1.04	
	Better	3.27	1.12	
Total Interest	Mediocre	3.17	0.78	0.000
	Average	3.19	0.84	
	Better	3.51	0.86	

5. Conclusions and Discussions, Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Basic Characterization of Interest in Chanting Learning showed a differentiated development

This study investigated the characteristics of individual interest in chanting, generally showing that students' individual interest in chanting exhibited a differentiated development. This finding is consistent with Feiyu Wang when investigating the development of adolescents' academic emotions, who found that the dimension of immediate pleasure, which is a positive emotional affective experience gained by students in classroom learning, belongs to the positive aspect of academic emotions. Regarding gender variables, this study found that male students scored significantly higher than female students in all dimensions and overall interest in chanting. In terms of family variables, students who are only children have higher scores than students who are not only children on the overall and all dimensions of individual interest in chanting. Concerning parents' education, the results of this study demonstrate that the father's education only affects the students' willingness to participate, and the mother's education level affects the students' overall individual interest in chanting, positive emotional experience and willingness to participate. When it comes to family economic conditions, the results of this study show that students with better family economic conditions have a higher level of individual interest in chanting, while there is no difference between the average family economic conditions group and the poor group, proving that the level of family income makes a direct impact on the ability to pay for chanting exercises. In this study, we discovered that the mother's education level and family economic status positively affect the students' individual interest in chanting, and the father's education level stimulates the students' willingness to participate in chanting activities.

5.1.2 Ancient poetry chanting learning attitudes are greatly influenced by different demographic characteristic, such as age, family economic situation and parents' level of education.

The Chanting Classroom Situational Interest Scale is composed of the following six dimensions: novelty, challenge, need for attention, intention to explore, immediate pleasure, and overall interest, with good reliability and structural validity. The Individual Interest Scale for Chanting Learning is composed of two dimensions: emotional experience and willingness to participate, with good reliability and structural validity. Gender characteristics: there exist no gender differences in the dimensions of novelty, challenge and overall interest in contextual interest, and there are significant gender differences in the dimensions of need for attention, intention to explore and immediate pleasure, with higher scores for boys than for girls; in addition, there are gender differences in the overall and dimensions of individual interest, with higher scores for boys than for girls. Characteristics of family situation: The overall trend is that the higher the education level of parents and the better the financial situation of the family, the higher the interest level of students. After the first-grade ancient poetry test, chanting is conducive to improving language performance, especially in the ancient poetry section.

5.2 Discussions

For first graders, based on the social-ecological model, this study discussed why the home environment has a greater impact on students' interest in chant learning than the school environment for first graders.

Microsystem perspective: the better the parents' education and financial situation, the more they emphasize chanting learning, encourage their children's participation, and create a good atmosphere for chanting in the family, the easier it is for their children to become interested in chanting. In addition, parents' expectations and support for their children will also increase their confidence and motivation to learn chanting.

Mesosystemic perspective: the communication between parents and teachers, and the degree of parental involvement in school educational activities will affect students' learning of chanting. If parents can maintain good communication with school teachers and jointly focus on their children's chant learning, the children will be more likely to have a positive chant learning experience in school.

Exosystem perspective: chant learning has always been emphasized in traditional Chinese culture. At the first grade level, the influence of families tends to be more direct and significant.

Macrosystem perspective, with the development of social economy and people's emphasis on traditional culture, more and more families begin to pay attention to their children's chanting learning. As for the school environment, although the education department is also trying to promote traditional culture education, the resources and inputs in the teaching of bardic chanting in schools are still limited due to various factors.

In summary, based on the social ecology model, for children in the first grades, the family environment has a greater impact on students' interest in chanting learning than the school environment.

5.2.2 Generalization Limitations

The sample of this study was selected from only one primary school in Ningxia Province, which is geographically limited. It has some generalization limitations. However, this study has positive implications for the promotion of balanced regional education. It is discussed in the following aspects:

1) Optimize the distribution of educational resources. Ningxia Province is located in the west of China, and educational resources are relatively scarce. Through this study, it can explore the teaching methods of chanting that are suitable for the current education situation in Ningxia, and improve the utilization efficiency of educational resources.

2) Stimulate students' interest in learning. This study helps to stimulate students'

interest in ancient poems. Through the correlation study of the factors influencing the interest in chanting, teachers can develop teaching strategies that meet students' attention and improve their motivation to learn under the concept of home-school co-education. This will help narrow the gap between students in Ningxia Province and other regions in learning ancient poems and promote the balanced development of regional education. And it has a positive impact on policy making.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations for Enhancing Students' Interest in Chanting Learning

To actively participate in chanting activities and to persist in learning, students are required to have sufficient motivation, and the interest in chanting learning situations comes from the stimulation of the teaching environment.

5.3.2 Optimizing the chanting learning environment and creating a good atmosphere

Chanting learning environment accompanies students' learning and growth for a long time, and exerts a vital role in students' individual interest in chanting learning. Chanting learning environment mainly includes school chanting environment and family chanting environment in space, and this study has demonstrated the role of chanting learning environment in the generation of students' individual interest in chanting learning, among which, family chanting environment is the most important chanting environment in the generation of students' individual interest in chanting learning.

5.3.3 Increasing the teaching of traditional culture to enhance students' humanistic qualities

Through practice, this study proved that the contextual interest and individual interest in chanting learning have different cognitive bases, the contextual interest in chanting learning stems from the stimulation of different teaching environments, while the individual interest in chanting learning stems more from the individual's

acquired chanting knowledge, skills and humanistic literacy. As a result, the teaching of traditional culture is also a vital factor influencing students' individual interest in chanting learning.

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