THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY YUGUR DANCE LANGUAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTI-ETHNIC CULTURAL INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT
The objective is to study the characteristics of contemporary Yugur dance language in the context of multi-ethnic cultural integration. Focusing on contemporary Yugur dance in Gansu's Yugur communities, it analyzes movement forms, rhythm, costumes and props, historical evolution, cultural connotations and value, and five representative works. Methodologically, it combines literature research, one-month ethnographic fieldwork in July-August 2023, semi-structured interviews with 20 folk artists and inheritors, observation of 12 performances, and choreographic analysis of five works. Findings show upright, expansive, fluid body posture with Uyghur influence; upper-limb wave-like swings and circular hands draw on Mongolian vocabularies; lower-limb horse-stance, jumping, kicking, and foot-tapping patterns blend Mongolian and Tibetan elements, reinterpreted within Yugur aesthetics. Rhythm is diverse, drawing on traditional Yugur, other ethnic, and modern music; costumes and props hybridize Yugur, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Han features, adjusted to local phrasing. Dance evolved through ancient, modern, and contemporary stages, with innovation in themes, movement, and stage presentation. It carries production-life, historical-memory, religious, and integration meanings and cultural-artistic value. Challenges include talent shortage, insufficient innovation, imperfect protection, and limited publicity, requiring talent cultivation, creative innovation, protection mechanisms, and promotion. The study benefits Yugur dance inheritance and innovation, enrichs ethnic dance research, and promotes cultural exchange.
Keywords: Yugur Ethnic Group, Yugur Dance, Multi-Ethnic Integration, Dance Language, Characteristic

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INTRODUCTION

The Yugur people, whose ancestral origins are linked to ancient Uighur communities, mainly inhabit the Hexi Corridor and the northern foothills of the Qilian Mountains in Gansu Province (Yuan Qing et al., 2018). This unique geographical location has made them a key hub for cultural exchanges among multiple ethnic groups, facilitating long-term interactions and integration with Mongolian, Tibetan, and Han cultures. As an important part of Yugur culture, dance has inevitably been influenced by this multi-ethnic cultural interaction, gradually forming a distinctive artistic style. Yugur dance not only incorporates movements simulating labor and animal behaviors but also absorbs rich elements from Mongolian and Tibetan dance forms, reflecting the unique cultural connotation and life emotions of the Yugur people.

Previous studies on Yugur dance have mostly focused on single dimensions such as historical origins, religious influences, or traditional movement descriptions. For example, some scholars have explored the historical evolution of Yugur folk dance from a historical perspective, while others have analyzed the artistic characteristics of Yugur dance from a religious perspective (Pan Yang Hongyi, 2015). However, these studies have paid insufficient attention to the contemporary evolution of Yugur dance under the background of multi-ethnic integration, and there is a lack of systematic analysis of the overall characteristics of contemporary Yugur dance language. With the deepening of globalization and the enhancement of cultural diversity, the interaction and integration among various ethnic groups have become more frequent, which has brought profound changes to the development of Yugur dance. Contemporary Yugur dance not only inherits traditional cultural elements but also continuously absorbs modern artistic concepts and expression techniques, showing a new development trend.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

As a unique and precious minority group in northwest China, the Yugur ethnic group has nurtured rich and diverse folk cultures in the long-term historical evolution and unique geographical living environment. Among various traditional folk arts, Yugur dance stands out as one of the most intuitive and vivid cultural carriers, which fully records the living customs, aesthetic concepts, spiritual emotions and historical inheritance of the Yugur people. Different from the dance styles of other grassland ethnic groups in China, Yugur dance possesses distinctive artistic characteristics formed by long-term living, labor and cultural accumulation. Its unique charm is not only derived from the inherent nomadic culture of the Yugur ethnic group, but also deeply shaped by the trend of multi-ethnic integration in the northwest frontier regions. In the process of cultural communication and ethnic blending with Han, Tibetan, Mongolian and other surrounding ethnic groups, Yugur dance has continuously absorbed the essence of foreign dance arts while retaining its own cultural root, thus forming a diversified and inclusive dance system with strong national recognition (Li Mei, 2022).

Dance language is the core carrier that constructs the artistic temperament and cultural connotation of Yugur dance. The unique dance language of the Yugur people is rooted in their traditional nomadic production and daily life. Most of the basic movements of Yugur dance originate from the simulation of grassland animal postures, nomadic labor behaviors, sacrificial rituals and daily etiquette habits. The overall movements are gentle and steady, the rhythm is smooth and elegant, and the body coordination presents a simple, unrestrained and fresh artistic style. For instance, the shoulder shaking, arm swinging and step moving commonly used in Yugur traditional dances fully reflect the flexible and free living state of the nomadic people on the grassland. Compared with the bold and vigorous movement characteristics of Mongolian dance and the gorgeous and exaggerated modeling characteristics of Tibetan dance, the dance language of Yugur dance is more implicit and delicate, focusing on the gentle expression of inner emotions and the subtle presentation of ethnic temperament (An Jiajie & Zhong Zhifeng, 2017). This unique dance language system not only distinguishes Yugur dance from other

ethnic dances in form, but also solidifies the unique cultural genes of the Yugur ethnic group in artistic expression.

Multi-ethnic integration plays a decisive role in the enrichment and evolution of Yugur dance art. Historically, the Yugur ethnic group has long lived in the multi-ethnic gathering area of the Hexi Corridor, where ethnic exchanges and cultural collisions have been extremely frequent. In the long-term cultural interaction, Yugur dance has continuously learned and borrowed the rhythm characteristics, movement forms and performance styles of neighboring ethnic dances. It absorbs the bold rhythm of Mongolian grassland dance, the solemn ritual sense of Tibetan religious dance, and the gentle and delicate aesthetic of Han traditional folk dance (He Chengrong & Zhu Qianyun, 2017). Through continuous digestion, reconstruction and innovation, these external artistic elements have been perfectly integrated into the local dance system of the Yugur people, rather than simply copied. This kind of inclusive artistic development mode enables Yugur dance to break through the limitations of single ethnic culture and form richer and more diverse artistic characteristics. Therefore, the development history of Yugur dance is essentially a microcosm of multi-ethnic cultural integration in northwest China, which fully reflects the openness, compatibility and inclusiveness of Chinese ethnic cultures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs three primary methods—literature research, field investigation, and case analysis—supplemented by documentary learning. It reviews nearly 30 years of relevant literature and authoritative works to form a theoretical basis.

Documentary learning was used as a supplementary source of evidence. Relevant documentaries and recorded performance materials on Yugur dance, folk rituals, and cultural inheritance were systematically viewed. Viewing notes documented movement sequences, body posture, rhythmic accompaniment, costume and prop usage, ritual and performance contexts, and inheritors' narratives. These notes were thematically coded and used to cross-check and contextualize interview and observation data, especially for understanding historical evolution, ritual scenes, and contemporary stage presentation. Documentary materials did not replace fieldwork; rather, they provided comparative visual evidence for identifying multi-ethnic stylistic influences and local reinterpretation in Yugur dance.

A one-month fieldwork was carried out in Gansu's Yugur communities from July to August 2023. The fieldwork material corpus includes:

1) Semi-structured interviews with 20 folk artists and inheritors, covering questions about movement inheritance, cross-ethnic artistic borrowing, and contemporary creation challenges; verbatim excerpts and thematic coding were produced from interview recordings and field notes.

2) Participant observation of 12 live dance performances, including folk ritual dances, community stage performances and official gala shows; observational notes documented movement sequences, musical accompaniment, costume-prop usage and audience response.

3) Case analysis of five representative contemporary Yugur dance works: Eagle Dance, Harvest Dance, dance drama Suile Youyou, Yugur Children's Hearts Toward the Party, and Yugur Splendor. Each case received fine-grained choreographic breakdown focusing on posture, limb vocabulary, rhythmic setting, costume-prop design, and identifiable Mongolian-Tibetan-Han stylistic influences.

Primary field data (interview transcripts, performance observation logs) are triangulated against published literature and documentary learning materials to examine dance language features and the influence mechanism of multi-ethnic integration.

RESEARCH RESULTS

1) Overview of the Yugur Ethnic Group and the Background of Multi-Cultural Integration

1.1 Historical Origin and Development of the Yugur Ethnic Group

The Yugur people have a long documented history, with their ancestors tracing back to ancient Uighur communities (Yuan Qing et al., 2018). In the 8th century AD, the Uighur Khanate was established, and its influence spread across the Mongolian Plateau. After the decline of the Uighur Khanate in the 9th century, some Uighurs moved westward and southward, and one branch settled in the Hexi Corridor and the northern foothills of the Qilian Mountains, gradually integrating with local ethnic groups and forming the Yugur ethnic group (Northwest Minzu University, 2008). During the long historical process, the Yugur people experienced multiple migrations and integrations, and their social structure, lifestyle, and cultural arts were continuously shaped by the political, economic, and cultural changes of different periods. They have maintained frequent economic and cultural exchanges with neighboring Mongolian, Tibetan, and Han ethnic groups, which has laid a solid foundation for the formation of their unique multi-cultural characteristics.

1.2 Geographical Environment of Yugur Settlements and Surrounding Ethnic Distribution

The Yugur people are mainly distributed in the central part of the Hexi Corridor in Gansu Province and the northern foothills of the Qilian Mountains. This area is a key passage connecting the Central Plains and the Western Regions, and also a hub for cultural exchanges between the grassland culture and the agricultural culture (Weng Binbin, 2013). The surrounding areas are inhabited by Mongolian, Tibetan, Han, and other ethnic groups. The Mongolian people live in the grassland areas to the north of the Yugur settlements, engaging in nomadic production; the Tibetan people are mainly distributed in the southern Qilian Mountain area, with animal husbandry and agriculture as their main production methods; the Han people are widely distributed in the Hexi Corridor, engaging in agricultural production. The long-term coexistence and mutual interaction of these ethnic groups in production and life have created a favorable external environment for the multi-cultural development of the Yugur people.

1.3 The Impact of Multi-Cultural Integration on the Yugur Ethnic Culture

Under the background of long-term multi-ethnic cultural integration, the Yugur ethnic group has extensively absorbed excellent cultural elements from other ethnic groups in various fields such as language, religion, clothing, diet, and art, forming a distinctive cultural system (Xiao Dengjuan & Zhou Qing, 2012). In terms of language, the Yugur language integrates components of Mongolian, Turkic, and other languages, and there are two dialects: East Yugur and West Yugur. In terms of religious beliefs, the Yugur people mainly believe in Tibetan Buddhism, and at the same time retain some shamanistic and animistic beliefs, which is the result of the integration of Tibetan culture and their own traditional beliefs (Pan Yang Hongyi, 2015). In terms of clothing culture, Yugur costumes not only have their own unique style but also absorb the characteristics of Mongolian robes and Tibetan costumes, such as wide sleeves, long hem, and rich decorations (Zhang Zhipeng & He Xia, 2010). In terms of diet, they combine the characteristics of nomadic ethnic groups' meat-and-dairy-based diet with the Han people's grain-based diet, forming a diverse diet structure. This multicultural integration phenomenon is also fully reflected in the dance art of the Yugur people, which has become an important feature of contemporary Yugur dance language.

2) The Movement Characteristics of Yugur Dance under the Context of Multi-ethnic Integration

Influenced by Tibetan, Mongolian, Uyghur, and other cultures, contemporary Yugur dance shows obvious composite characteristics in movement forms. Its movement characteristics are

mainly reflected in body posture, upper limb movements, and lower limb movements, integrating the style elements of multiple ethnic groups, forming a unique artistic expression.
Performance Observation Excerpt: Dancers hold upright torso; wave-type arm swings flow sequentially from shoulder through elbow to fingertips. Horse-stance trotting steps appear in climactic segments. Movements draw upon Mongolian nomadic gesture vocabularies yet maintain restrained, soft transitions distinct from the more forceful quality of Mongolian folk dance. (Community Stage Performance of Eagle Dance, July 28, 2023)

2.1 Body Posture

The body posture of contemporary Yugur dance is mainly characterized by uprightness, expansiveness, and fluidity. When dancers perform, they usually hold their heads high and chest out, with their backs straight and waists upright, showing the confidence and dignity of the grassland people (An Jiajie & Zhong Zhifeng, 2017). This upright body posture is mainly absorbed from the Uyghur dance, which emphasizes the straightness of the back and the uprightness of the waist, giving people an elegant and noble feeling. In some opening and appearance movements, dancers often stand with their feet apart at shoulder-width or in a T-shape, with their upper bodies slightly tilted back, further highlighting the expansive sense of the body. During the dance, the transfer of body weight is flexible and changeable, and it is often combined with the swinging and rotation of upper limb movements, making the entire body present a graceful curve and dynamic balance. For example, in the dance *Eagle Dance*, when simulating the soaring of an eagle, the dancer's body sways gently with the movement of the arms, showing the flexibility and elegance of the eagle in the air.

2.2 Upper Limb Movements

The upper limb movements of Yugur dance are rich and diverse, with strong expressiveness, integrating the movement characteristics of Mongolian and other ethnic groups (He Chengrong & Zhu Qianyun, 2017). Common upper limb movements include wave-like arm swings, circular hand movements, and arm extensions and flappings. The wave-like arm swing starts from the shoulder, and the force is sequentially transmitted to the elbow, wrist, and fingers, just like the silk fluttering in the wind on the grassland, showing softness and elegance. This movement is similar to the arm swing movement in Mongolian *Andai* dance, which is bold and unrestrained. The circular hand movement is usually performed by circling and crossing the hands in front of the chest, expressing reverence and yearning for nature. When simulating the soaring of an eagle, the arm extension and flapping movements are adopted. The dancer stretches his arms to both sides and flaps them up and down, showing the brave and unrestrained personality of the Yugur people. In addition, the upper limb movements also incorporate Mongolian nomadic life movements, such as simulating production actions such as shearing sheep and rolling felt, making the dance more life-like and vivid.

Table 1 Comparison of Movement Elements of Yugur Dance and Other Ethnic Dances

Movement Type	**Yugur Dance Characteristics**	**Influenced Ethnic Groups**	**Corresponding Ethnic Dance Movements**
Body Posture	Upright, expansive, fluid	Uyghur	Upright back, upright waist, lifted back
Upper Limb Movements	Wave-like arm swings, circular hands, arm extensions and flappings	Mongolian	Mongolian *Andai* dance's arm swing movements, nomadic production simulation movements
Lower Limb Movements	Horse stance (trotting, fast galloping), jumping, kicking, foot-tapping circular dance	Mongolian, Tibetan	Mongolian stable horse stance steps, Tibetan *Gouxie* circular dance foot-tapping movements

Source: Lu Yang (2026)

Case analysis note for Harvest Dance (one of five core case works, field video analysis 2023) Lower-limb circular foot-tapping patterns adapt Tibetan circular dance logic; yet tempo and knee amplitude are moderated to match Yugur local aesthetic rather than direct replication.

3) Rhythm Characteristics of Contemporary Yugur Dance

The rhythm of contemporary Yugur dance is an important part of its dance language, which is influenced by the music of Mongolian, Tibetan, Han, and other ethnic groups, showing a diverse and rich characteristics (Zhang Zhipeng & He Xia, 2010). The rhythm of Yugur dance is closely combined with the music, and the dance movements change with the rhythm of the music, forming a unique artistic style.

3.1 Rhythm Types

The rhythm of Yugur dance can be divided into slow rhythm, medium rhythm, and fast rhythm according to the speed. Slow rhythm is usually used in the beginning and transition parts of the dance, with gentle and graceful movements, expressing a calm and serene emotional state. For example, in the opening part of the dance drama *Suile Youyou*, the slow rhythm is used to show the peaceful life scene of the Yugur people. The medium rhythm is the most commonly used rhythm in Yugur dance, with stable and powerful movements, suitable for expressing cheerful and lively emotions. For example, in the folk dance *Harvest Dance*, the medium rhythm is used to show the joy of the Yugur people's harvest. The fast rhythm is used in the climax part of the dance, with rapid and intense movements, expressing passionate and unrestrained emotions. For example, in the *Eagle Dance*, the fast rhythm is used to simulate the rapid soaring of the eagle, showing the brave and unrestrained spirit of the Yugur people.

3.2 Rhythm Sources

The rhythm of Yugur dance mainly comes from three aspects: traditional Yugur music, music of other ethnic groups, and modern music elements. Traditional Yugur music is mainly played by musical instruments such as the *Maoerhu* and *Kouxian*, with simple and lively melodies and distinct rhythms, which is the foundation of the rhythm of Yugur dance. The music of other ethnic groups, such as Mongolian long tune, Tibetan folk songs, and Han folk music, has also been absorbed and integrated into the rhythm of Yugur dance.

Interview Excerpt: "When we compose for new Yugur stage dance, we borrow the long-phrase breathing quality from Mongolian long-tune, but we keep the short rhythmic motifs inherited from local Yugur oral music; we do not simply transplant Mongolian melody as it is." (Composer-choreographer, August 2, 2023)

For example, the rhythm of some Yugur dances absorbs the free and unrestrained characteristics of Mongolian long tune, making the dance more expansive. In addition, contemporary Yugur dance also absorbs modern music elements, such as pop music rhythms and electronic music sounds, enriching the expression of dance rhythms.

Table 2 Rhythm Types and Characteristics of Contemporary Yugur Dance

Rhythm Type	Speed	Movement Characteristics	Emotional Expression	Application Scenarios
Slow Rhythm	60-80 beats/min	Gentle, graceful, slow	Calm, serene, distant	Dance opening, transition parts
Medium Rhythm	80-120 beats/min	Stable, powerful, rhythmic	Cheerful, lively, warm	Daily folk dances, dance main parts
Fast Rhythm	120-160 beats/min	Rapid, intense, dynamic	Passionate, unrestrained, exciting	Dance climax parts, celebration dances

Source: Lu Yang (2026)

4) Costume and Prop Characteristics of Contemporary Yugur Dance

Costumes and props are important components of contemporary Yugur dance language, which not only have practical functions such as decorating the stage and enhancing the visual effect but also carry rich cultural connotations, reflecting the characteristics of multi-ethnic cultural integration (Weng Binbin, 2013).

4.1 Costume Characteristics

Yugur dance costumes are based on traditional Yugur costumes and absorb the characteristics of Mongolian, Tibetan, and Han costumes, forming a unique style. The materials of the costumes are mainly wool, silk, and cotton, which are suitable for the cold climate in the Yugur residential areas and the needs of dance movements. The colors of the costumes are bright and rich, mainly red, blue, green, yellow, and other colors, which symbolize auspiciousness, happiness, and vitality. For example, red symbolizes enthusiasm and courage, blue symbolizes the sky and rivers, and green symbolizes grasslands and life. The styles of the costumes are mainly long robes, with wide sleeves and long hems, which are convenient for dancers to perform various movements. At the same time, the costumes are decorated with rich patterns and accessories, such as embroidery, beads, and silver ornaments. The embroidery patterns are mostly animals, plants, and geometric figures, which reflect the Yugur people's love for nature and their understanding of life. The beads and silver ornaments not only enhance the beauty of the costumes but also make a crisp sound with the dance movements, adding to the artistic effect of the dance.



Figure 1 Yugur Ethnic Group's Clothing in China
Source: Lu Yang (2026)

4.2 Prop Characteristics

Common props in Yugur dance include colorful silk, hats, whips, and musical instruments. Colorful silk is one of the most commonly used props, which is usually held in the dancer's hand and waved with the dance movements, showing the beauty of flowing lines. The use of colorful silk borrows from the Mongolian *Andai* dance, which is used to express emotions and enhance the sense of movement of the dance. Hats are also important props in Yugur dance. The styles of hats are various, such as fur hats and felt hats, which not only have the function of keeping warm but also reflect the characteristics of the Yugur people's production and life. Whips are mostly used in dances simulating nomadic life, such as *Horse Herding Dance*, which is used to simulate the action of herding horses, making the dance more realistic. Musical instruments such as the *Maoerhu* and *Kouxian* are often used as accompanying props in the dance, and the performers play while dancing, integrating music and dance, enhancing the artistic appeal of the dance.



Figure 2 A girl of the Yugur ethnic group holding a whip
Source: Lu Yang (2026)

Field Observation: Stage costumes combine Yugur traditional felt-hat silhouettes, silver ornament conventions from Tibetan dress, and wide-sleeve robe cuts reminiscent of Mongolian garment styles; colourful silk props from Andai are deployed yet shortened, adjusted to fit local choreographic phrasing rather than Mongolian performance conventions. (Gala performance Yugur Splendor, one of five case works, August 5, 2023)

Table 3 Cultural Connotations of Costumes and Props in Contemporary Yugur Dance

Type	Specific Forms	Cultural Connotations	Influenced Ethnic Groups
Costumes	Long robes with wide sleeves, bright colors, embroidery, beads, silver ornaments	Reflection of traditional production and life, pursuit of auspiciousness and happiness	Yugur, Mongolian, Tibetan, Han
Props	Colorful silk, fur hats, felt hats, whips, *Maoerhu*, *Kouxian*	Expression of emotions, simulation of production and life scenes, enhancement of artistic effect	Mongolian, Yugur

Source: Lu Yang (2026)

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

1) Discussion

This study takes multi-ethnic cultural integration as its research background and adopts literature research, field investigation, and case analysis to systematically explore the characteristics of contemporary Yugur dance language. Unlike prior desk-based research, it grounds its arguments in 2023 field-generated primary data: 20 artist interviews, 12 performance observations, and fine-grained choreographic analysis of five contemporary dance works. The results show that contemporary Yugur dance is a dynamic art form integrating traditional heritage and contemporary innovation, with its language characteristics comprehensively reflected in movement forms, rhythm, costumes, props, historical evolution, cultural connotations, and inheritance challenges.

In movement forms, contemporary Yugur dance integrates Mongolian, Tibetan, Uyghur, and other ethnic style elements, showing unique characteristics in body posture, upper limb movements, and lower limb movements: the body posture is upright, expansive, and fluid; upper limb movements are rich, diverse, and expressive; lower limb movements are steady, powerful, and vital. Field observation and artist testimony demonstrate that these borrowed

movement vocabularies are not direct copies but are culturally reinterpreted and reshaped within Yugur local aesthetic frameworks. In rhythm, influenced by multiple ethnic musics, it shows diversity and richness, including slow, medium, and fast rhythms closely combined with dance movements to express different emotional states. In costumes and props, it is based on traditional Yugur costumes and props, absorbs characteristics of other ethnic groups, and carries rich cultural connotations, enhancing artistic expression.

Historically, Yugur dance evolved through ancient, modern, and contemporary stages (Yuan Qing et al., 2018): before the 20th century, it was simple and primitive, rooted in shamanistic and animistic rituals and imitating nature and labor to pray for harvest and peace; from the 20th century to the late 20th century, it was artistically processed and integrated with Mongolian and Tibetan elements, gradually becoming popular folk art beyond religious ritual amid increased multi-ethnic exchanges and socio-economic development; and from the late 20th century to the present, under globalization, cultural diversity, and modern artistic concepts and technologies, it has pursued inheritance and innovation, retaining traditional movements and cultural connotations while absorbing modern artistic concepts and stage techniques. Contemporary innovation is mainly reflected in three aspects: themes and content have expanded from traditional history, culture, and life to contemporary social issues such as environmental protection and national unity; movement forms have integrated modern dance and street dance elements, enriching vocabulary and suiting contemporary aesthetics, as in Yugur Children's Hearts Toward the Party; and stage presentation has used modern sound, lighting, and projection technologies to create immersive effects, as in Yugur Splendor, which reproduces the Yugur people's eastward migration.

Culturally, the language characteristics of contemporary Yugur dance are closely linked to the Yugur people's production and life, historical memory, and religious beliefs, and embody the process and achievements of multi-ethnic cultural integration (Li Mei, 2022). Yugur dance simulates production and life scenes such as herding, farming, and spinning yarn; records historical events and development processes such as the eastward migration; absorbs Tibetan Buddhist and traditional shamanistic elements, as in the Guardian Spirit Dance evolved from Qam (Pan Yang Hongyi, 2015); and integrates Mongolian, Tibetan, Han, and other cultural elements, reflecting harmonious coexistence among ethnic cultures. In cultural value, it is a living carrier of Yugur culture that records cultural traditions, values, and ways of thinking, promotes multi-ethnic cultural exchange and integration, and enhances national unity and cultural identity. In artistic value, it has a unique artistic style, rich movement forms, distinct rhythm, and vivid costume and prop expression; the integration of traditional and modern elements enriches dance art forms and provides new ideas for ethnic dance development (An Jiajie & Zhong Zhifeng, 2017).

Despite certain achievements, contemporary Yugur dance faces challenges in inheritance and development: urbanization and changing youth values have led to fewer young inheritors, aging transmission, and a lack of reserve talent—as one 56-year-old female folk inheritor noted, most young people leave for city work and few are willing to learn traditional gesture sets, risking their loss; some works remain tied to traditional forms and lack integration with contemporary life and artistic trends, limiting appeal to young audiences; protection relies mainly on government support and individual inheritors, lacking sound market operation and social participation mechanisms, resulting in insufficient funds and limited scope; and limited publicity and promotion, due to relatively backward economic and cultural development in Yugur areas, restricts influence and popularity. Countermeasures include strengthening multi-level talent cultivation through school education, folk inheritance, and professional training—incorporating Yugur dance into local primary and secondary school music and art courses, supporting folk artists and inheritors in transmission activities, and cooperating with art colleges to establish Yugur dance majors for performance, creation, and teaching—and

promoting creative innovation by encouraging creators to engage with contemporary social themes and integrate modern artistic elements and expression techniques to produce works rooted in tradition yet suited to contemporary aesthetics.

2) Conclusion

Contemporary Yugur dance has gone through a long historical evolution process, and has achieved remarkable results in contemporary innovation, including the innovation of theme and content, movement forms, and stage presentation. At the same time, it has important cultural and artistic value, which is not only a living carrier of Yugur culture but also promotes cultural exchanges and integration among various ethnic groups, enriching the expression forms of dance art. However, contemporary Yugur dance also faces challenges such as talent shortage, insufficient innovation, imperfect protection mechanism, and lack of publicity and promotion in inheritance and development. Drawing upon both secondary literature and firsthand field interview and performance data, corresponding countermeasures such as strengthening talent cultivation, promoting creative innovation, improving the protection mechanism, and strengthening publicity and promotion should be taken to promote the sustainable development of Yugur dance.

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