

# An Implementation Path for Integrating Local Cultural Totems into General Education Literature Courses: A Case Study of Xilankapu Weaving Patterns

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**ABSTRACT** This study examines Xilankapu brocade, a traditional woven textile of the Tujia ethnic group, with emphasis on its material structure, weaving process, and information-bearing totemic patterns. The research analyzes the structural characteristics of this woven textile, traditionally produced from natural fibers such as cotton and silk yarns, and interprets its patterned motifs as a complex cultural information system. These motifs, generated through specific weaving techniques, function as a structured carrier of traditional knowledge and symbolic meaning. The paper proposes a systematic framework for decoding the information embedded in Xilankapu weaving patterns and integrating it into general education literature courses. By linking woven pattern structures with cultural interpretation and curriculum design, the study provides an interdisciplinary pathway for the contemporary utilization of heritage textiles. The findings offer a case reference for the sustainable development of natural-fiber textile systems and for the digital interpretation of patterned material surfaces in cultural heritage applications.

**INDEX TERMS** xilankapu brocade, weaving patterns, natural fibers, cultural information encoding, textile sustainability

## I. INTRODUCTION

IN an era of increasing globalization, the preservation and transmission of local cultures have emerged as a significant challenge and a paramount responsibility for educational institutions [1]. Higher education, in particular, bears the mission of not only disseminating knowledge but also cultivating a deep-rooted understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage among the next generation [2]. General education literature courses, which are fundamental to the humanities curriculum in universities, offer a fertile ground for this endeavor [3]. These courses aim to enhance students' literary appreciation, critical thinking, and humanistic qualities. However, traditional literature curricula often gravitate towards canonical texts, sometimes overlooking the rich, diverse narratives embedded in local and indigenous cultural forms [4]. This oversight can create a disconnect between students' academic learning and their own cultural identities, diminishing the relevance and impact of their educational experience [5]. Therefore, exploring innovative pedagogical paths to integrate local cultural elements into these courses is of profound academic and practical significance [6].

This study focuses on the integration of local cultural

totems, a potent form of cultural expression, into the fabric of general education literature courses. A cultural totem is more than a mere decorative symbol; it is a complex signifier that encapsulates a community's worldview, cosmology, history, and collective memory [7,8]. These totems, often found in traditional crafts, rituals, and oral traditions, function as a unique "language" that tells stories and conveys meaning [9]. Among the myriad forms of cultural totems in China, the weaving patterns of Xilankapu, a traditional brocade of the Tujia ethnic group, present an exceptionally rich and compelling case [10]. Recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage item in China, Xilankapu is not simply a textile; it is a meticulously crafted historical archive and a vibrant literary tapestry [11,12]. Its intricate patterns, from abstract geometric designs to vivid representations of animals, plants, and legends, are an unwritten "text" that documents the Tujia people's migration, beliefs, and daily life [13]. The name itself, meaning "floral cloth cover" in the Tujia language, belies the profound narratives woven into each thread.

This paper interprets Xilankapu weaving patterns as a form of literature and proposes a practical path for integrating them into university general education courses.

By treating these textile totems as primary sources for literary analysis, we can expand the definition of “text” and create a more inclusive, dynamic, and engaging learning environment. The research aims to construct a “Three-Dimensional, Five-Stage” pedagogical model that synergizes the study of conventional literary works with the visual and tactile exploration of Xilankapu. This approach seeks to demonstrate how the “reading” of textile patterns can illuminate literary themes, narrative structures, and symbolic meanings, thereby enriching students’ understanding of both the specific cultural heritage and the universal nature of human storytelling. Through this case study, the paper intends to provide a scientifically grounded, reasonable, and reliable theoretical framework that can be adapted for integrating other forms of intangible cultural heritage. It must be emphasized that this study is conceptual in nature, designed to lay the necessary groundwork for future empirical research. While the proposed model is robustly supported by pedagogical theory, its practical effectiveness has not yet been tested. Ultimately, the goal is to provide a blueprint for future pilot studies aimed at fostering a deeper connection between students and their cultural roots.

## II. THE LITERARY AND TOTEMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF XILANKAPU

To establish a solid foundation for its integration into a literature curriculum, it is essential to first understand Xilankapu not merely as a craft but as a profound cultural and literary system. With a history stretching back over two millennia, Xilankapu serves as the primary vehicle for the transmission of Tujia culture, functioning as a “living fossil” in the absence of a written script for much of the Tujia people’s history. The patterns woven into the brocade are the Tujia people’s encyclopedia, their epic poems, and their collective diary. These patterns can be broadly categorized, each category bearing significant narrative weight.

The first category includes patterns derived from nature and animal totems, such as the tiger, the phoenix, and the butterfly. The tiger pattern, for instance, is not just a depiction of a fearsome beast but a powerful totem representing the ancestors of the Tujia people, embodying strength, protection, and a foundational creation myth. Analyzing this pattern in a literature class can be paired with readings of classic texts on human-animal relationships or creation stories from other cultures, allowing students to explore universal themes of ancestry and identity through a unique cultural lens.

The second category comprises geometric patterns, which, far from being purely ornamental, represent ABSTRACT concepts and philosophical ideas. Patterns like the “herringbone” or “wan (卐)” motif carry meanings related to the cosmic order, the cyclical nature of life, and communal harmony. These abstract “texts” challenge students to move beyond literal interpretation and engage with symbolic thinking, a core skill in literary analysis. For example, the recurring geometric motifs can be studied

in parallel with the formal structures of poetry or the narrative symmetry in a novel. This comparison allows students to understand “form” and “structure” as carriers of meaning across different media, whether it is the metrical pattern of a sonnet or the woven geometry of Xilankapu. The patterns thus become a tangible metaphor for abstract literary concepts, making complex theories more accessible and relatable.

The third, and perhaps most overtly literary, category consists of patterns depicting scenes from daily life, legends, and historical events. Motifs such as “wedding procession,” “dragon boat race,” or “farming scene” are narrative vignettes woven in thread. These are stories that can be “read” and deconstructed. For example, the “wedding procession” pattern encapsulates an entire social ritual, its associated emotions, and the communal values placed on family and continuity. There are even traditional Tujia songs and ballads that correspond directly to these patterns, creating a rich, multimedia text. A literature course could involve students listening to these songs while analyzing the corresponding woven imagery, exploring how narrative is constructed and transmitted through both oral and visual-vestimentary traditions.

This intertextual approach, linking the woven pattern to oral literature, highlights the sophisticated ways in which cultures without a long history of written language preserve and celebrate their literary heritage. By decoding these patterns, students engage in a form of literary criticism that is simultaneously an act of cultural preservation, recognizing that a loom can be as powerful a tool for storytelling as a pen. To systematically illustrate this concept of “reading” the textile, the symbolic meanings and associated literary themes of several key Xilankapu patterns are analyzed and summarized in Table 1.

**TABLE 1.** Analysis of Key Xilankapu Patterns as Literary and Cultural Texts

| Pattern Name       | Visual Description                                                                                                                  | Symbolic/Totemic Meaning                                                                                                        | Associated Literary Themes & Concepts                                                     |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tiger Pattern      | A highly stylized, powerful feline form, often rendered with bold geometric lines.                                                  | Represents the ancestor of the Tujia people (Ba Wuluo). A totem of strength, courage, and protection from evil.                 | Ancestry, Identity, Myth and Creation, The Sublime, Human-Nature Relationship, Symbolism. |
| Phoenix Pattern    | Typically, a pair of ornate, long-tailed birds facing a central motif (e.g., the sun). Characterized by grace and intricate detail. | Symbol of marital bliss, good fortune, harmony (yin-yang), and cosmic balance. Represents ultimate beauty and virtue.           | Love, Partnership, Duality, The Sacred, Harmony and Order, Allegory.                      |
| Geometric Motifs   | Recurring patterns such as herringbone, wan (卐), and interlocking squares.                                                          | Represents the cosmic order, the cyclical nature of life and seasons, communal solidarity, and abstract philosophical concepts. | Structure and Form, Formalism, Rhythm and Meter, Narrative Symmetry, Universal Order.     |
| Wedding Procession | A narrative scene depicting figures in a celebratory procession, often with musicians and a bridal sedan.                           | Captures a key social ritual, community values, family continuity, and rites of passage.                                        | Union, Passage, Legacy.                                                                   |

**III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTEGRATION**

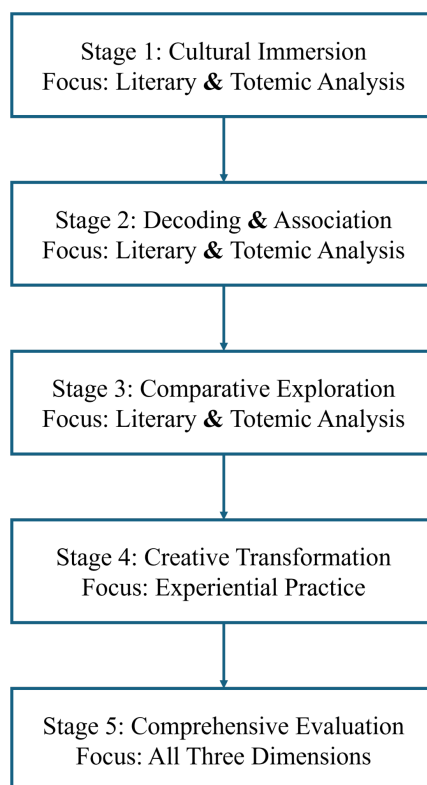
The successful integration of Xilankapu patterns into literature courses requires a robust theoretical framework that justifies its pedagogical value and guides its practical application. This study draws upon two primary pedagogical theories: culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and intertextuality. CRP, as conceptualized by scholars like Gloria Ladson-Billings, posits that education should be empowering for students by leveraging their cultural backgrounds as a vehicle for learning [14]. It insists on connecting the curriculum to the students’ lived experiences and cultural heritage, thereby making learning more meaningful and effective. In this context, Xilankapu is not an exotic artifact to be passively observed but a relevant cultural asset that can activate students’ prior knowledge and sense of identity, particularly for students from the Tujia region or those with an interest in minority cultures. By centering the curriculum around a local cultural totem, the course validates students’ cultural capital and encourages them to see their own heritage as a valuable source of knowledge and academic inquiry. This approach fosters an inclusive classroom environment where diverse cultural perspectives are not only welcomed but are integral to the learning process.

The theory of intertextuality, famously articulated by Julia Kristeva, argues that no text is an isolated entity; every text is a “mosaic of quotations,” absorbing and transforming other texts [15]. This concept can be expanded beyond written works to include cultural artifacts like Xilankapu. The woven patterns of Xilankapu can be seen as intertextual fields, referencing oral histories, religious beliefs, social rituals, and the natural environment. An intertextual approach in the classroom would involve placing Xilankapu patterns in dialogue with traditional written literary texts. For instance, a lesson might pair the analysis of a Xilankapu tiger totem with a reading of a canonical literary work featuring a symbolic animal, such as the whale in Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick* or the tiger in William Blake’s “The Tyger.” This juxtaposition encourages students to perform a comparative analysis of how different cultures use sym-

bolism to explore profound themes of nature, humanity, and the divine. It prompts them to ask critical questions: How does the meaning of the tiger totem in Tujia culture differ from or resonate with Blake’s poetic vision? What do these different representations reveal about their respective cultural contexts and worldviews? Crucially, this process is not merely about “decoding” for a single, fixed meaning. The term “interpretation” is perhaps more accurate, as cultural symbols are inherently polysemic—capable of holding multiple meanings. The pedagogical goal is therefore to guide students in navigating this semantic richness. We encourage them to explore a spectrum of possible interpretations, while learning to distinguish between analyses grounded in cultural context and historical evidence, and those that are purely subjective. This approach teaches students to appreciate ambiguity and complexity, which is a core tenet of advanced literary and cultural analysis. By employing these two theoretical pillars, the integration of Xilankapu ceases to be a mere addition of “cultural content” and becomes a transformative pedagogical strategy that deepens critical analysis, promotes cultural understanding, and redefines the boundaries of literary study.

**IV. THE IMPLEMENTATION PATH: A THREE-DIMENSIONAL, FIVE-STAGE MODEL**

Based on the aforementioned theoretical framework, this study proposes a practical and systematic Three-Dimensional, Five-Stage model for integrating Xilankapu weaving patterns into general education literature courses. The “Three-Dimensional” aspect refers to the core components of the learning experience: 1. Literary text analysis, the traditional focus on analyzing genres such as poetry, fiction, and drama; 2. Totemic visual analysis, the “reading” and interpretation of Xilankapu patterns; and 3. Experiential creative practice, hands-on engagement with the cultural form. The flow and interaction of these components across the five stages are visually represented in Figure 1. These three dimensions are interwoven throughout the five progressive stages of the model.



**FIGURE 1.** Flowchart of the Three-Dimensional, Five-Stage Pedagogical Model

### **A. STAGE 1: CULTURAL IMMERSION AND INTRODUCTION**

This initial stage sets the context. The objective is to immerse students in the world of Tujia culture and Xilankapu. Activities would include lectures and guest talks by cultural experts or Xilankapu inheritors, documentary screenings about the Tujia people, and virtual or physical museum visits to see authentic Xilankapu textiles. The primary literary texts at this stage are foundational narratives like Tujia folk tales. These are not treated merely as historical documents, but are analyzed as literature for their narrative structure, character archetypes, and thematic content, establishing a baseline for understanding storytelling conventions that will later be identified in the woven patterns. The assessment here is formative, focusing on students' initial reflections and their ability to articulate the cultural significance of Xilankapu.

### **B. STAGE 2: TOTEMIC DECODING AND TEXTUAL ASSOCIATION**

This stage forms the core of the analytical process. Students learn to interpret the visual language of specific Xilankapu patterns, moving beyond surface-level observation to explore their rich symbolic layers. A single totem, such as the "Double Phoenix Facing the Sun," would be selected for in-depth study. Students would analyze its composition, color symbolism, and potential meanings. This visual analysis is then directly linked to a literary text that explores similar themes, such as love, partnership, or cosmic balance. For

example, the "Double Phoenix" pattern, a symbol of marital harmony, could be paired with an analysis of a classic poem from the Chinese Book of Odes, such as "Guan Ju" (关雎), which uses ospreys to symbolize a harmonious union. This pairing allows for a culturally resonant exploration of shared themes, directly connecting the textile's meaning to its own broader literary tradition before extending to cross-cultural comparisons. The task is for students to write a short comparative essay that bridges the two texts. This goes beyond thematic comparison to analyze specific craft elements: they might compare the use of metaphor and meter in the poem to the use of color symbolism and compositional symmetry in the pattern, arguing how each medium uses its unique formal properties to construct meaning.

### **C. STAGE 3: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND THEMATIC EXPLORATION**

Building on the previous stage, students now engage in more complex comparative studies. They might compare different Xilankapu patterns to each other or compare Xilankapu's symbolic system to that of another cultural artifact, such as Celtic knots or Navajo sand paintings, using literary theory as the analytical lens. This stage encourages a broader, more global perspective. The literary component would involve moving beyond universalist theories and engaging directly with other rich symbolic traditions. For example, students could compare the function of the Tujia tiger totem to the Anansi the Spider figure in West African oral traditions or the jaguar in Mayan mythology, reading translated stories

and epics from these cultures to understand how different societies construct meaning through animal symbolism. The goal is to move from single-pattern interpretation to sophisticated thematic exploration, understanding how symbolic systems function across different cultures as complex repositories of narrative and belief.

#### **D. STAGE 4: CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION AND PRACTICE**

This experiential stage shifts the focus from analysis to creation. It embodies the third dimension of the model. In collaboration with the university's art department or a local artisan workshop, students engage in a hands-on activity designed to make the creative process tangible. These activities are simplified to be accessible within a course framework:

- **Simplified weaving:** Students can work on small, pre-warped frame looms or even simple cardboard looms. The core weaving technique of Xilankapu to be taught is a simplified version of *tuanhua* (通经断纬), or discontinuous weft brocading. Instructors would guide students in manually picking specific warp threads to insert colored weft yarns, allowing them to build up a small geometric totem block by block. This directly teaches the pixel-like logic of woven pattern creation without requiring the complexity of a full backstrap loom.
- **Digital pattern design:** Using vector-based software like Adobe Illustrator or open-source alternatives like Inkscape, students can design their own modern totem inspired by Xilankapu's geometric principles. They would be tasked with creating a pattern that is visually balanced and symbolically meaningful, accompanied by a statement explaining their design choices. For a more advanced option, specialized weaving software like ProWeave could be used to simulate how their digital design would translate to a woven structure.
- **Structured creative writing:** Instead of a general prompt, students would be given a specific task, such as: "Write a short narrative from the perspective of one of the figures depicted in the 'wedding procession pattern,' or 'compose a poem that verbally enacts the symbolic power of the tiger totem, drawing on both its visual form and its creation myth.'"

This practical engagement solidifies their understanding of the craft's intricacy and its creative logic. The assessment is based on their creative output and a reflective statement explaining the connection between their creation and the cultural and literary concepts studied.

#### **E. STAGE 5: COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION AND REFLECTION**

The final stage is a summative evaluation that synthesizes all dimensions of learning. The final project could be a substantial research paper, a curated exhibition (physical or

digital) with analytical captions, or the development of a lesson plan for teaching a Xilankapu pattern to a younger audience. The key is that the final assessment must demonstrate the student's ability to move fluidly between literary analysis, visual interpretation, and cultural understanding. It should reflect a deep, integrated comprehension of how Xilankapu functions as a literary and cultural text. This stage would also include a final reflective essay where students evaluate how the course has impacted their understanding of literature, culture, and their own identity. This five-stage path provides a structured yet flexible roadmap for instructors, guiding students from initial exposure to deep, critical, and creative engagement with the cultural totem. To demonstrate how this model translates into a practical teaching schedule, a sample four-week curriculum module is detailed in Table 2.

#### **V. DISCUSSION**

The implementation of this pedagogical model, while promising, invites a discussion of its potential benefits and foreseeable challenges. The primary proposed benefit lies in its potential to revitalize the general education literature curriculum. By expanding the definition of "text" to include textile-based narratives, the course becomes more dynamic, interdisciplinary, and relevant to contemporary discussions about cultural diversity and representation. It challenges the traditional canon and empowers students to recognize literature in unconventional forms, fostering a more nuanced and less Eurocentric understanding of storytelling. For students, this approach can significantly enhance their learning experience. The multi-sensory engagement with Xilankapu—analyzing its visual patterns, understanding its tactile reality, and connecting it to oral and written stories—caters to diverse learning styles and can lead to a deeper, more lasting comprehension of complex literary concepts like symbolism, narrative structure, and intertextuality. Furthermore, it can foster a stronger sense of cultural identity in students who share this heritage while promoting cross-cultural empathy and respect among all students. It transforms the classroom into a space for cross-cultural dialogue, bridging the gap between academic theory and living cultural practice. However, the path to successful implementation is not without its challenges. The most significant hurdle is the need for qualified instructors. A teacher in this model must be a "dual expert," possessing a strong foundation in literary theory while also having substantial knowledge of Xilankapu and Tujia culture. Acknowledging that few instructors initially possess this combined expertise, a proactive faculty development plan is essential. Beyond simply suggesting collaboration, institutions could implement several concrete strategies:

- **Structured co-teaching:** Formally pair a literature professor with a faculty member from anthropology or art history—or even a community-based cultural bearer—to team-teach the course. This is the most direct path to integrating dual expertise.

TABLE 2. Sample Four-Week Curriculum Module Based on the Implementation Path

| Week | Course Topic and Stage        | Xilankapu Focus (Totemic Analysis)                                                                         | Literary Text Focus (Literary Analysis)                                                                                                  | Activity/Assignment (Experiential)                                                                                                                                  |
|------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Intro to Totemism and Culture | Introduction to Tujia history and the function of Xilankapu.                                               | Reading of Tujia creation myths and folk tales about the tiger ancestor.                                                                 | Lecture and film viewing. Reflective journal entry on cultural narratives.                                                                                          |
| 2    | Decoding Symbols              | In-depth analysis of the Xilankapu “tiger pattern” composition and symbolism.                              | Reading and analysis of William Blake’s “The Tyger” and/or a tiger creation story from Indian folklore (e.g., the <i>Panchatantra</i> ). | Class discussion and debate. Short paper comparing the symbolic function of the tiger in two of the three traditions (Tujia, English Romanticism, Indian Folklore). |
| 3    | Comparative Mythologies       | Comparing the Tujia tiger totem to other powerful animal symbols (e.g., the dragon in Chinese literature). | Reading excerpts from texts on comparative mythology (e.g., works by Joseph Campbell).                                                   | Group presentation on a chosen animal symbol across two cultures.                                                                                                   |
| 4    | Creative Response             | Workshop on designing a personal, symbolic pattern inspired by Xilankapu techniques.                       | Review of previously studied texts for creative inspiration.                                                                             | Creative writing (poem/story) or digital design of a personal totem with an artist’s statement.                                                                     |

- Faculty development institutes: Create a funded summer institute where a cohort of humanities faculty can participate in intensive workshops on Tujia culture and simplified weaving techniques, led by cultural experts and artisans.
- Digital resource development: Invest in creating a comprehensive digital archive, including high-resolution pattern libraries, video interviews with weavers, and virtual 3D models of textiles. This would provide a rich, accessible resource to support an instructor who is not a primary subject matter expert.

Addressing the “dual expert” challenge requires this level of deep institutional commitment to make such a curriculum sustainable and scalable. Another challenge lies in curriculum and resource development. Sourcing high-quality images, facilitating access to authentic textiles (whether physically or digitally), and connecting with cultural bearers require institutional support and funding. Without such resources, the course risks becoming a superficial survey rather than an in-depth, meaningful engagement.

Furthermore, assessment presents a complex but manageable issue. Evaluating creative and experiential work requires a flexible and well-articulated rubric that connects creative output to academic learning objectives. To address the question of “How does one grade a woven pattern?”, we propose a rubric framework centered on the following criteria:

- Conceptual connection (40%): This is the most heavily weighted criterion. The student’s accompanying reflective statement must clearly and deeply connect their creative choices (in color, form, and symbol) to the specific cultural concepts and literary theories studied in the course.
- Symbolic coherence (30%): The created work must demonstrate an intentional and consistent symbolic system. The design should not be arbitrary but should communicate a clear idea or narrative, as explained by the student.
- Technical effort (15%): The assessment here focuses

on the student’s care, effort, and engagement with the new skill, not on innate artistic talent. The goal is to reward the process of learning and hands-on practice.

- Creativity and originality (15%): This criterion evaluates the student’s personal and innovative response to the assignment, rewarding unique ideas that go beyond simple replication of traditional patterns.

Such a rubric ensures that the assessment remains academically rigorous and transparent, valuing the different forms of intelligence that students demonstrate through these varied tasks. There is also the inherent risk of cultural misrepresentation or appropriation. The course must be designed and taught with utmost sensitivity, ensuring that the cultural knowledge is presented respectfully and accurately, ideally in collaboration with members of the Tujia community. The goal is cultural appreciation and understanding, not exoticization or objectification. Addressing these challenges proactively through institutional investment in faculty development, strategic partnerships with cultural organizations, and thoughtful pedagogical design is crucial for the long-term success and integrity of this innovative educational model.

Beyond its pedagogical utility, this model also has significant theoretical implications for the humanities. It actively extends literary theory by treating the textile not just as a cultural artifact to be studied, but as a complex “material text” with its own grammar and rhetoric. This approach challenges traditional formalism, which is often linguistically biased, by proposing a form of “material formalism” where the physical properties of thread, dye, and weave structure are integral to interpretation. It also broadens Reader-Response Theory by suggesting a multi-sensory mode of “reading” that involves tactile and visual engagement, not just cognitive processing of written words. Furthermore, this work opens several new avenues for interdisciplinary research. Future studies could develop a “comparative material poetics,” analyzing the narrative structures of different global weaving traditions (e.g., Tujia brocade versus Peruvian quipus). It also invites inquiry in

the digital humanities, exploring how these textile “texts” can be computationally analyzed and annotated in digital archives. Finally, it provides a foundation for cognitive studies on how the human brain processes narrative information from complex visual patterns versus linear, written language.

Furthermore, the model’s flexibility is key to its successful implementation across the varied landscape of general education. For courses with shorter timelines or fewer credit hours, the five stages can be compressed into a single, intensive module rather than a full semester’s arc. For instance, the “Creative Transformation” stage could be a two-hour in-class workshop on digital pattern design rather than a semester-long collaboration. Adaptation for different student demographics is also critical. In a course with many STEM majors, an instructor might emphasize the Xilankapu patterns as a form of traditional data encoding and information systems. For art and design students, Stage 4 could become the central, most heavily weighted component of the course. Finally, the model can be tailored to departmental requirements. If a traditional research paper is mandatory, the five-stage process can serve as the scaffolding for this final project, with the textile analysis forming the core of the student’s primary source research. This inherent adaptability ensures the model can be a practical tool rather than a rigid prescription.

A primary and significant limitation of this study is its purely theoretical nature. The proposed Three-Dimensional, Five-Stage model is a conceptual framework constructed from pedagogical theory and a review of literature, not the result of an empirical study. As such, all claims regarding its potential benefits and effectiveness remain hypothetical and require rigorous validation through a pilot implementation. The current research should be viewed as a foundational and preparatory step that provides the rationale and detailed structure for the empirical work that must follow. In future research, field experiments or case studies need to be conducted to verify the effectiveness and applicability of this teaching model in different educational environments and student groups. Moreover, this study focuses on the Xilankapu weaving patterns of the Tujia culture. The applicability of this model to other ethnic or regional cultural heritages may vary, and this aspect also needs to be further explored. To verify the effectiveness of the teaching model proposed in this study, future research can conduct pilot implementations in different universities and cultural contexts, collect data such as student feedback, academic performance, and cultural understanding, and evaluate the impact of the model on students’ learning outcomes. Moreover, cross-cultural comparative studies can also help test the applicability of this teaching framework in other ethnic and regional settings, thereby providing broader theoretical support for the integration of cultural heritage into education.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study has proposed a comprehensive implementation path for integrating the local cultural totem of Xilankapu weaving patterns into general education literature courses. By conceptualizing these intricate textiles as a form of nonwritten literary text, this study aims to unlock a wealth of pedagogical opportunities to enrich the humanities curriculum. The Three-Dimensional, Five-Stage model provides a structured and theoretically grounded framework that moves students from passive reception to active, critical, and creative engagement. It synthesizes literary analysis, visual decoding, and experiential practice, fostering a holistic learning environment. The journey through cultural immersion, totemic analysis, comparative exploration, creative transformation, and reflective evaluation is designed to cultivate not only students’ analytical skills but also their cultural empathy, innovative thinking, and sense of identity.

The case of Xilankapu demonstrates that local cultural heritage is not a relic of the past to be confined to museums, but a vibrant, living resource that can breathe new life into university classrooms. Integrating such totems into literature courses helps to deconstruct the conventional boundaries of what constitutes a “text,” encouraging a more inclusive and globally aware perspective on human expression and storytelling. While the challenges related to faculty training, resource allocation, and authentic representation are significant, they are not insurmountable. With institutional commitment and interdisciplinary collaboration, the proposed model can serve as a robust and adaptable blueprint for other educational programs seeking to forge meaningful connections between academia and intangible cultural heritage. Ultimately, this research advocates for an educational philosophy that sees local culture not as a peripheral topic, but as a central pillar in the cultivation of well-rounded, culturally literate, and critically conscious global citizens. The loom of the Tujia people, with its threads of history, myth, and art, can indeed weave a richer and more profound future for literary education.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Xianfeng Mo and Ding Yuan designed the study; all authors conducted the study; Zhenzai Lan and Ding Yuan collected and analyzed the data. Zhenzai Lan and Xianfeng Mo participated in drafting the manuscript, and all authors contributed to critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content. All authors gave final approval of the version to be published. All authors participated fully in the work, took public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or completeness of any part of the work were appropriately investigated and resolved.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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## AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study were available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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