

Article

# Research on the Integration of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into College Music Education

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**Abstract:** China's outstanding traditional culture serves as a vital carrier of national spirit and historical continuity. Integrating it into university music education not only enhances students' musical literacy but also significantly strengthens their cultural identity, aesthetic appreciation, and innovative capabilities in a globalized era. This empirical study focuses specifically on the Fengyang Flower Drum, a nationally recognized intangible cultural heritage project, to explore effective pedagogical integration. The research examines a sample of 80 musicology majors from a provincial university's Class of 2023 cohort. Through rigorous 12-week controlled experiments, comprehensive questionnaire surveys, and in-depth qualitative interviews, we quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed the practical effects of this cultural integration in daily teaching methodologies. The empirical results demonstrate that instructional programs incorporating the Fengyang Flower Drum content increased students' traditional music cultural identification by a notable 37.2%, while simultaneously and significantly improving their technical performance skills and creative innovation abilities. Furthermore, the integration fostered a deeper understanding of regional folk arts among the participants. Based on these robust findings, the study proposes actionable implementation pathways across four critical dimensions: comprehensive curriculum system restructuring, teaching model innovation, practical platform development, and targeted faculty team building. These strategic recommendations provide highly replicable practical references for advancing higher music education innovation, fostering cultural confidence, and preserving invaluable intangible cultural heritage through dynamic, sustainable inheritance practices within modern academic institutions.

**Keywords:** traditional chinese culture; music education; cultural heritage; empirical study; cultural inheritance; teaching innovation

## 1. Introduction

With the progression of aesthetic education reform in the contemporary era, the goals of music education in higher institutions have evolved significantly. These objectives now extend beyond the traditional focus on skill acquisition to prioritize the development of cultural literacy and multifaceted competencies [1, 2]. As an essential aspect of the national spirit, China's rich traditional culture offers an abundance of musical resources, deep cultural meanings, and valuable conceptual frameworks. These elements serve as critical materials and educational objectives for university-level music education. Despite these advantages, practical teaching often encounters challenges in effectively integrating traditional cultural elements. These obstacles stem from limitations in curriculum design, faculty expertise, and instructional resources, which collectively hinder students from achieving a profound understanding of ethnic music. Consequently, many students exhibit a lack of motivation and engagement in learning about these cultural aspects.

Existing research primarily employs qualitative methodologies to explore broad strategies for incorporating traditional culture into education. However, there is a notable gap in empirical studies and quantitative analyses focusing on specific intangible cultural heritage (ICH) projects. This study addresses this gap by using the Fengyang Flower

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Drum, a nationally recognized ICH artifact, as a case study. Through controlled experimental methods, the research aims to validate the practical effectiveness of integration strategies. This approach not only aligns with the practical demands of music education reform in higher education but also introduces innovative scenarios for the dynamic preservation of ICH [1, 3]. The study seeks to answer two core questions: First, can the inclusion of local ICH elements, such as the Fengyang Flower Drum, in university music education significantly enhance students' cultural identity and professional skills? Second, what are the essential components of a replicable and scalable framework for integrating traditional culture into academic curricula?

The literature review and research status section will delve into the theoretical foundations and current advancements in the field. It will examine the methodologies employed in previous studies, the challenges faced in integrating traditional cultural elements, and the potential solutions proposed. This analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the existing academic discourse and identify gaps that this study seeks to address [4]. By focusing on the Fengyang Flower Drum as a case study, the research intends to bridge the divide between theoretical exploration and practical application, offering insights into effective strategies for cultural integration in music education.

### *1.1. Research on the Value of Integrating Intangible Cultural Heritage Music into Higher Education*

Current research consensus holds that intangible cultural heritage (ICH) music serves as a vital carrier of ethnic cultural genes. Integrating it into university music education offers three key values: Cultural preservation value is achieved through systematic teaching methods in higher education institutions, which can overcome the limitations of traditional oral transmission of ICH. These methods organize fragmented performance techniques and folk contexts into standardized curricula, ensuring the continuity of skills and knowledge that might otherwise be lost due to the aging of artisans [4, 5]. Educational reform value emerges as the incorporation of ICH music transforms the current Western-dominated music education landscape. This broadens students' cultural perspectives and shifts their focus from merely "performing skills" to deeply "understanding music," fostering a more comprehensive artistic literacy. Social dissemination value is realized as students act as mobile cultural ambassadors, bringing the knowledge and appreciation of ICH music to campuses, communities, and workplaces. This facilitates the integration of traditional music into modern social life, ensuring its relevance and accessibility to broader audiences. By embedding ICH music into higher education, institutions can play a pivotal role in preserving, reforming, and disseminating cultural heritage in meaningful ways.

### *1.2. Current Status and Limitations of Existing Practices*

From a practical perspective, numerous Chinese universities have actively pursued the integration of intangible cultural heritage into music education, yielding notable achievements. For instance, Quanzhou Normal University's Nanyin College developed the "Four Commons, Four Comprehensives, Four Positions" Nanyin teaching system, which has been recognized for its innovative approach to preserving and promoting traditional music education. Similarly, Chuzhou University has incorporated the Fengyang Flower Drum as a distinctive teaching component, establishing a dedicated base for the inheritance and dissemination of outstanding traditional Chinese culture [6]. Guangxi Arts University has undertaken the "Seven Mystical Music Treasury" project, systematically compiling ethnic music resources from across Guangxi and creating comprehensive school-based teaching materials to enrich its curriculum. These initiatives demonstrate the potential for integrating cultural heritage into educational frameworks to foster a deeper appreciation of traditional arts among students.

Despite these advancements, current practices reveal several significant limitations that hinder their broader impact. First, there is a notable absence of quantitative research to substantiate the effectiveness of these teaching methods, as most findings rely on

anecdotal evidence rather than rigorous empirical validation. Second, the integration of intangible cultural heritage elements into curricula remains fragmented, with many universities limiting their efforts to a few specialized lectures rather than developing systematic and cohesive programs. Third, the lack of concrete implementation mechanisms poses a challenge, as many studies vaguely reference "traditional music" or "ethnic instruments" without anchoring these concepts to specific regional cultural heritage projects, thereby reducing their practical applicability. This study seeks to address these deficiencies by conducting empirical research to provide robust quantitative evidence and proposing structured pathways for the effective integration of intangible cultural heritage into music education [7].

## **2. Research Methods**

### *2.1. Study Subjects*

This study involved the participation of 80 students from two parallel classes within the Musicology program (Class of 2023) at a provincial comprehensive university's music conservatory [8]. All participants were selected through the national college entrance examination process. At the time of enrollment, no significant differences were identified in their professional standardized test scores or foundational music skills, ensuring a comparable baseline for the study. The students were randomly divided into two groups, with 40 students assigned to the experimental group and 40 to the control group. Statistical analyses, including chi-square tests and t-tests, were conducted to confirm that there were no significant differences between the groups in terms of gender distribution, average admission scores, or prior knowledge of traditional music ( $P > 0.05$ ). These results validated the suitability of the grouping method and ensured compliance with the principles of a controlled experimental design, thereby enhancing the reliability of the study's findings.

### *2.2. Research Tools*

This study utilized three distinct research tools to collect data, each designed to ensure comprehensive and reliable measurement. The first tool was the Traditional Music Cultural Identity Scale, developed by the China Conservatory of Music in 2024. This scale evaluates cultural cognition, emotional identification, and behavioral intention, with an internal consistency reliability score of 0.87, indicating strong psychometric validity [9, 10]. The second tool involved professional competency assessments, which included evaluations of Fengyang Flower Drum performance skills and scoring of music composition innovation capabilities. These assessments were conducted by three associate professors or senior faculty members, with final scores determined by averaging their evaluations to ensure objectivity and accuracy. The third tool consisted of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 10 experimental group students following the intervention. These interviews provided qualitative insights into their learning experiences and offered constructive suggestions for further improvement in the study's methodology and outcomes.

### *2.3. Experimental Design*

The experimental program was conducted over a period of 12 weeks, with two sessions held each week, ensuring equal duration for all classes. The control group adhered to the conventional "Introduction to Ethnic Music" curriculum, which primarily utilized nationally standardized textbooks and did not include any specialized instruction on the Fengyang Flower Drum. In contrast, the experimental group implemented an enriched teaching methodology that incorporated elements of the Fengyang Flower Drum. Specifically, 30% of the theoretical sessions were dedicated to exploring the instrument's historical background, its cultural significance within folk traditions, and its unique artistic features. Practical sessions, which accounted for 50% of the total class hours, included lectures and demonstrations by provincial-level intangible cultural heritage inheritors of the Fengyang Flower Drum [2]. These sessions focused on teaching students

performance techniques and vocal skills associated with the instrument. The remaining 20% of the curriculum was allocated to creative practice, where students were guided to integrate melodic elements of the Fengyang Flower Drum into modern music composition, fostering innovation and creativity in their musical endeavors.

A pre-test was administered to both the control and experimental groups prior to the commencement of the program to establish baseline data. Following the 12-week intervention, a post-test was conducted to evaluate and compare the differences in scores between the two groups. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS 26.0 software. Measurement data were analyzed through independent samples t-tests to determine any significant differences in mean scores, while categorical data were assessed using chi-square tests to evaluate distribution patterns [11]. A P-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant, indicating a meaningful difference in the outcomes. This rigorous analytical approach ensured the reliability and validity of the results, providing a robust framework for evaluating the impact of the enhanced teaching methodology on student learning outcomes.

### 3. Results and Analysis

#### 3.1. Comparison of Pre-Test Scores between the Two Groups of Students

The results of the pre-experimental baseline test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in any of the measured indicators between the two groups of students. This finding confirms that the allocation of students into groups was balanced and unbiased, ensuring the validity of subsequent comparisons [8]. The detailed numerical data supporting this conclusion are presented in Table 1, which provides a comprehensive summary of the pre-test scores, including the mean values and standard deviations for each group. Such balance is critical for minimizing confounding variables in experimental research.

**Table 1.** Comparison of pre-test scores between the two groups of students (mean  $\pm$  standard deviation)

Evaluation Dimension	Experimental group (n=40)	Control group (n=40)	t price	P price	significance of difference
Traditional Music Cultural Identity Score	58.3 $\pm$ 7.2	57.9 $\pm$ 6.8	0.23	0.82	quiet
Basic Score for Ethnic Instrument Performance	62.1 $\pm$ 8.5	61.7 $\pm$ 7.9	0.19	0.85	quiet
Score for Musical Creation and Innovation Ability	56.4 $\pm$ 9.1	55.8 $\pm$ 8.7	0.27	0.79	quiet

#### 3.2. Post-Test Score Comparison between the Two Groups of Students

Post-test results obtained after the 12-week teaching experiment revealed that students in the experimental group achieved significantly higher scores compared to those in the control group across all assessment dimensions. The differences observed were statistically significant, with P-values less than 0.01, indicating a robust effect of the teaching intervention [5]. These findings underscore the effectiveness of the experimental teaching approach in enhancing student performance. Specific data illustrating these results are presented in Table 2, which provides a detailed comparison of post-test scores between the two groups.

**Table 2.** Comparison of post-test scores between the two groups of students (mean  $\pm$  standard deviation)

Evaluation Dimension	Experimental group (n=40)	Control group (n=40)	t price	P price	significance of difference
Traditional Music Cultural Identity Score	79.9 $\pm$ 6.4	61.2 $\pm$ 7.1	12.3	<0.01	significantly significant
Fengyang Flower Drum Performance Skill Score	82.3 $\pm$ 5.7	34.6 $\pm$ 8.9	28.7	<0.01	significantly significant
Score for Musical Creation and Innovation Ability	75.8 $\pm$ 7.2	60.3 $\pm$ 8.1	9.1	<0.01	significantly significant

The analysis of scores demonstrated that students in the experimental group experienced a remarkable 37.2% increase in cultural identity scores, improving from 58.3 to 79.9. Additionally, their performance skills scores rose by 32.5%, while innovation capabilities showed a substantial growth of 34.4%.

### 3.3. Analysis of Qualitative Interview Results

In-depth interviews conducted with ten students from the experimental group revealed significant insights into their perceptions and experiences. Nine participants expressed that learning Fengyang Huagu, a traditional Chinese flower-drum performance, allowed them to deeply understand the cultural significance embedded within traditional music. This marked a shift from their previous view of such art forms as outdated relics. Furthermore, eight students shared that they actively uploaded videos of their performances on short-video platforms, receiving substantial positive feedback and numerous likes from online audiences. Seven students suggested the need for more practical opportunities to conduct field research in Fengyang, emphasizing the importance of face-to-face interactions with veteran artists to gain firsthand knowledge and inspiration. The feedback from these students highlighted that integrating traditional cultural elements into their learning not only improved their professional skills but also ignited a strong enthusiasm for cultural preservation and appreciation, fostering a deeper connection to their heritage.

## 4. Discussion and Implementation Pathways

Empirical research results indicate that teaching methodologies rooted in specific intangible cultural heritage (ICH) projects, when systematically integrated into the curriculum, can substantially improve the effectiveness of educational practices. By synthesizing existing studies and practical applications, the integration of exemplary traditional Chinese culture into university-level music education can be achieved through a multidimensional approach. This approach emphasizes the importance of aligning cultural heritage with pedagogical strategies, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural values, and enhancing students' appreciation for traditional art forms. Such integration not only enriches the curriculum but also cultivates a sense of cultural identity and innovation among students.

### 4.1. Restructuring the Three-Dimensional Curriculum System to Achieve Systematic Integration of Content

Universities should eliminate curriculum barriers and design a comprehensive "three-dimensional" course module system that spans foundational to advanced levels and integrates general education with specialized disciplines. The first dimension focuses

on general aesthetic courses accessible to all students, such as "Appreciation of China's Musical Treasures" and "Overview of Ethnic Music Culture." These courses aim to ignite students' interest in traditional music, enhance their foundational understanding, and cultivate a sense of cultural pride. The second dimension involves core required courses for music majors, which integrate specialized content on local intangible cultural heritage into existing curricula, such as "China Traditional Music Theory" and "China Music History." For example, universities in Anhui can incorporate the Fengyang Flower Drum, while institutions in Fujian can include Nanyin music, thereby strengthening students' professional knowledge base. The third dimension emphasizes distinctive elective courses that leverage regional resource advantages, such as "Fengyang Flower Drum Performance Practice" and "Nanyin Singing Techniques," encouraging students to pursue personalized and in-depth exploration of these art forms. This structured approach ensures a systematic integration of content across various levels of education.

Course content design should transcend mere skill transmission and prioritize interdisciplinary integration and cultural immersion. For instance, in the Fengyang Flower Drum course, teaching materials should extend beyond technical training to include perspectives from history, folklore, and aesthetics. This approach involves providing detailed insights into the economic and cultural context that shaped the development of the Fengyang Flower Drum, as well as examining how the geographical environment and immigrant culture of northern Anhui contributed to its unique artistic style, characterized by a harmonious blend of strength and suppleness. By delving into these aspects, students can gain a deeper understanding of not only the technical elements but also the cultural and historical significance of the art form. This holistic approach aims to equip students with the ability to comprehend both the "what" and the "why" behind these cultural phenomena, fostering a more profound appreciation and critical analysis of traditional music and its broader implications.

#### *4.2. Innovating Experiential Teaching Models to Enhance Student Engagement*

The living inheritance nature of intangible cultural heritage music necessitates teaching approaches that go beyond traditional classroom lectures. Interactive methods such as experiential learning and project-based learning provide students with opportunities to engage directly with the essence of intangible cultural heritage music through active participation. Workshop-style instruction, for example, can be implemented by inviting heritage inheritors to conduct short-term training sessions. This approach allows students to learn techniques in small groups, fostering a more personalized and effective learning environment. A notable example is Chuzhou University's annual program, which invites Fengyang Flower Drum inheritors for intensive two-week training sessions. These sessions have demonstrated significant improvements in student learning outcomes, with mastery rates increasing by over 40% compared to conventional classroom teaching methods. Additionally, field research practices can be organized to immerse students in the cultural and geographical origins of intangible cultural heritage music. By visiting the birthplace of such music and engaging in face-to-face exchanges with local artisans in Fengyang, students gain a deeper understanding of the contexts in which these musical traditions were created and evolved. Furthermore, project-based learning initiatives can be introduced, encouraging students to collaborate on group projects such as "Digital Preservation of Fengyang Flower Drum," "Innovative Traditional Music Composition," and "Community Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage Music." These projects not only enhance technical skills but also cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork, thereby fostering comprehensive competencies.

Modern educational technologies should be actively utilized to enhance the effectiveness of teaching intangible cultural heritage music. For instance, the development of interactive animation courseware can vividly demonstrate the finger techniques and movement trajectories involved in Fengyang Huagu drum performances. This transforms static musical scores into dynamic, visually engaging animations, making it easier for

students to grasp complex techniques. Additionally, virtual reality (VR) technology can be employed to recreate traditional folk performance scenes of Fengyang Huagu. By immersing students in these authentic cultural settings, VR facilitates a profound shift from mere technical learning to a deeper cultural immersion [12]. This immersive experience allows students to connect more meaningfully with the historical and cultural significance of the music, fostering a holistic understanding that transcends technical proficiency. Such technological innovations not only make learning more engaging but also ensure that the rich heritage of traditional music is preserved and appreciated in a modern educational context.

#### *4.3. Establishing Diverse Practice Platforms to Expand the Boundaries of Heritage Transmission Scenarios*

The internalization of knowledge and cultural understanding cannot rely solely on classroom lectures; it must be realized through authentic practical settings, enabling students to engage in experiential learning. This approach allows them to "learn by doing," "gain insights through performance," and "reflect through field visits." To achieve this, it is essential to establish diversified and multidimensional campus practice platforms. Universities can integrate traditional music culture into campus life by regularly hosting traditional music festivals and art weeks of high quality. These events can serve as a bridge between students and cultural heritage, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of traditional arts. Inviting national and provincial-level intangible cultural heritage inheritors and folk art masters to campus can further enrich this experience. Through special concerts, masterclasses, and workshops, students can directly interact with experts, gaining firsthand insights into the nuances of traditional music [8, 13]. Additionally, organizing events such as the "Campus Fengyang Flower Drum Competition" and "Traditional Instrumental Performances" can transform students from passive observers into active participants. These activities not only enhance their practical skills but also cultivate a sense of cultural responsibility and pride. By engaging in such immersive experiences, students can develop a more profound connection to their cultural heritage, ensuring its preservation and transmission to future generations.

Practical training environments must also extend beyond the confines of the campus to include broader social and field-based contexts. Universities should actively collaborate with local intangible cultural heritage protection centers, cultural centers, and community organizations to create opportunities for students to participate in heritage performances, community charity shows, and rural cultural outreach programs. These initiatives enable students to transform theoretical classroom knowledge into tangible public cultural services. For example, the Fengyang Flower Drum student club at Chuzhou University has become a model for such efforts, performing in over 30 local events annually. These performances not only enhance students' practical skills but also bring traditional art forms into the daily lives of the public, fostering a shared cultural identity. By engaging with diverse audiences and real-world settings, students gain valuable experience in adapting traditional arts to contemporary contexts, ensuring their relevance and sustainability [14, 15]. Such initiatives also promote mutual learning between students and community members, creating a dynamic exchange of knowledge and cultural values. This holistic approach to education not only benefits students academically but also contributes to the broader goal of cultural preservation and community enrichment.

#### *4.4. Strengthening Faculty Development to Ensure Professional Teaching Quality*

Integrating traditional music into higher education necessitates the establishment of a faculty team that possesses a profound understanding of the essence of traditional music, mastery of modern teaching methodologies, and a strong commitment to cultural preservation. One effective strategy involves adopting an "external recruitment" approach to challenge the conventional emphasis on academic credentials. By creating streamlined recruitment channels, institutions can actively engage experienced intangible cultural heritage inheritors and distinguished performers from theater troupes and folk communities as adjunct or full-time instructors. This approach significantly enhances

academic resources and practical expertise. For example, some universities have successfully appointed provincial-level inheritors of traditional arts as full-time faculty members to lead practical course instruction, yielding notable educational outcomes. Such initiatives not only enrich the curriculum but also foster a deeper connection between students and cultural heritage, ensuring the sustainability of traditional music education.

Systematic training programs for in-service teachers are essential to elevate their proficiency in traditional music education. Regular fieldwork and academic research trips should be organized to immerse educators in authentic cultural environments, enabling them to refine their understanding of traditional music practices. Additionally, training programs should incorporate emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality to modernize teaching methods and enhance student engagement. Institutions should also support teachers in attending high-level academic conferences and performance exchange activities, which provide opportunities to expand their knowledge base and artistic perspectives. Furthermore, a robust incentive and evaluation system must be established to recognize and reward teachers' contributions to traditional music education. Practical achievements, such as the compilation and adaptation of traditional musical pieces, direction of musical productions, and development of specialized teaching materials, should be integrated into professional title evaluations and performance assessments. This approach not only motivates educators but also ensures the continuous evolution and enrichment of traditional music education within higher education institutions [6].

## **5. Conclusion**

This study examines the Fengyang Flower Drum, a nationally recognized intangible cultural heritage, as a focal point for research. By conducting a 12-week comparative experiment, the study confirms the practical benefits of integrating traditional Chinese cultural elements into university-level music education. The results reveal that a structured and systematic teaching methodology, which incorporates intangible cultural heritage, significantly enhances students' cultural identity, professional competencies, and creative abilities. This innovative approach not only addresses the need for reform in music education within higher institutions but also contributes to the sustainable preservation and dynamic transmission of intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, this dual-purpose strategy underscores the potential for educational institutions to serve as active agents in cultural preservation while simultaneously fostering a generation of students who are both culturally aware and professionally adept. The findings suggest that such integration can bridge the gap between traditional cultural practices and contemporary educational frameworks, offering a model for other disciplines to emulate.

The successful integration of traditional Chinese culture into university music education necessitates continuous progress through four essential strategies. First, a well-structured curriculum design is critical to prevent the fragmentation of content and ensure a cohesive learning experience. Second, innovative and experiential teaching models must be developed to actively engage students and deepen their understanding of cultural heritage. Third, the establishment of diverse practical platforms is vital to broaden the contexts in which cultural inheritance can occur, thereby enriching the learning environment. Fourth, the professional development of faculty members is indispensable to maintain high teaching standards and effectively convey the essence of intangible cultural heritage. Universities, as pivotal centers for cultural preservation and innovation, bear the responsibility of safeguarding and revitalizing intangible cultural heritage. By embracing this role, they can ensure that traditional cultural practices remain vibrant and relevant within modern educational settings. Moreover, this approach allows university music programs to highlight unique regional characteristics, fostering the development of new-era music professionals who possess both technical expertise and a profound sense of cultural confidence. This dual emphasis on professional skill-building and cultural preservation not only enriches the educational experience but also contributes to the

broader goal of sustaining and celebrating cultural diversity in an increasingly globalized world.

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