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Music Art Empowering Rural Revitalization: A Case Study of Tanhong Township, Wuyi County, Zhejiang Province

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Abstract: The Fifteenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of China designates the promotion of rural cultural prosperity as a pivotal objective for advancing rural spiritual civilization. Within this policy framework, music art emerges as a distinctive and powerful instrument for activating indigenous cultural resources and catalyzing integrated industrial development in rural communities. This study adopts Tanhong Township in Wuyi County, Zhejiang Province, as its primary research site and employs a mixed-methods approach combining extensive field investigation with reflective teaching practice. The research systematically examines the current state of inheritance and the potential empowerment pathways of local musical resources, with particular emphasis on She ethnic folk songs, which have been officially recognized as a national-level intangible cultural heritage. The findings reveal that while Tanhong Township is endowed with abundant and culturally significant musical resources, it simultaneously confronts a series of pressing practical challenges, including the progressive aging of traditional inheritors, sustained out-migration of rural youth, and an insufficient capacity for transforming cultural assets into sustainable economic value. To address these dilemmas, this paper proposes a comprehensive music empowerment strategy structured along four interrelated dimensions: systematic resource excavation, innovative curriculum development, deep industrial integration, and participatory community co-construction. Furthermore, the study presents a detailed pedagogical design case titled *Where Do the Shanha Folk Songs Come From* to illustrate concrete practical pathways through which music education can facilitate the living transmission of intangible cultural heritage. The research ultimately contributes actionable insights for leveraging music art as a sustainable driver of rural revitalization in contemporary China.

Keywords: music art; rural revitalization; she folk songs; intangible cultural heritage; cultural transmission; music education

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The year 2026 initiates a new phase of national development planning, during which cultural vitality and rural renewal are positioned as integral components of holistic social advancement. Policy frameworks emphasize the enhancement of spiritual civilization in rural communities, with particular attention to sustaining and revitalizing indigenous cultural expressions through participatory, community-centered artistic practices. Institutional mechanisms supporting this objective include nationally coordinated agricultural modernization initiatives and targeted programs designed to integrate arts-based interventions into rural development strategies. These frameworks collectively affirm the strategic role of music—not merely as aesthetic practice but as a vehicle for intergenerational transmission, identity reinforcement, and localized knowledge preservation—within broader socioeconomic transformation processes. Music art is thus recognized not only for its expressive value but also for its functional capacity in fostering social cohesion, enhancing educational engagement, and stimulating creative economies in under-resourced regions. The integration of musical traditions into rural revitalization

efforts reflects an evolving understanding of culture as both heritage and living infrastructure, requiring adaptive pedagogical models, digital documentation systems, and cross-sectoral collaboration among education, cultural administration, and grassroots organizations [1]. Sustained investment in such integrative approaches is essential to ensure that cultural assets contribute meaningfully to long-term community resilience and inclusive growth.

Tanhong Township is situated within a region historically inhabited by the She ethnic group, whose intangible cultural heritage includes a rich repertoire of orally transmitted folk songs. These vocal traditions were formally acknowledged as part of the national intangible cultural heritage system in 2006, underscoring their significance within China's diverse ethnocultural landscape. The area also hosts distinctive local cultural resources collectively referred to as the 'Three Pan'—a designation reflecting layered historical, literary, and artistic legacies associated with prominent regional figures. Among these are poetic works rooted in revolutionary-era themes and a body of visual art characterized by refined compositional techniques and traditional Chinese aesthetic principles. However, demographic shifts have significantly impacted cultural continuity: sustained out-migration of working-age residents has resulted in an aging population structure, diminishing opportunities for informal apprenticeship and reducing the number of potential practitioners capable of sustaining performance-based traditions. Consequently, She folk songs confront acute challenges related to transmission viability, repertoire retention, and contextual relevance in contemporary daily life. This situation highlights a broader tension between heritage conservation imperatives and dynamic sociocultural change. Addressing this requires reimagining music art not as static artifact but as adaptable, co-created practice—capable of integrating digital archiving, school-based curriculum innovation, intergenerational performance workshops, and community-led curation models. Such approaches aim to restore agency to local stakeholders while ensuring that musical traditions remain socially embedded, pedagogically accessible, and culturally resonant across generations [2].

1.2. Research Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes meaningfully to scholarly discourse at the intersection of music education, cultural sustainability, and rural development. It advances conceptual frameworks by integrating ethnographic fieldwork with pedagogical implementation in linguistically and culturally distinct rural communities, thereby bridging a persistent gap between theoretical models and localized practice [3]. Unlike prior studies that often treat rural cultural resources as static heritage objects, this research positions music-making as a dynamic, participatory process capable of fostering intergenerational knowledge transmission, community agency, and place-based identity reinforcement. Practically, the case of Tanhong Village offers empirically grounded insights applicable to other rural settlements in southwestern Zhejiang characterized by similar demographic structures, linguistic diversity, and socioeconomic conditions. The documented strategies—including curriculum co-design with local elders, adaptive use of indigenous musical repertoires in school instruction, and community-led performance initiatives—demonstrate scalable pathways for leveraging intangible cultural assets in holistic revitalization efforts. These approaches emphasize capacity building over external intervention, prioritize endogenous knowledge systems, and align with broader national goals of balanced regional development and cultural confidence rooted in local authenticity.

1.3. Literature Review

Contemporary scholarly inquiry into rural music education and cultural revitalization has coalesced around three interrelated thematic axes. First, sustained attention has been directed toward the intrinsic cultural value of traditional music art forms—not merely as aesthetic expressions but as dynamic instruments for moral cultivation, psychological upliftment, and collective identity reinforcement among rural populations. Second, research increasingly explores how ethnic musical traditions can be

meaningfully empowered through context-sensitive innovation—such as digital archiving, curriculum integration, or cross-genre collaboration—without compromising their historical integrity, linguistic specificity, or ritual significance. Third, institutional engagement, particularly through university-based music education programs, has been examined for its capacity to foster sustainable talent development via structured school–community partnerships, teacher training initiatives, and participatory action research grounded in local epistemologies. Despite these advances, a pronounced methodological and pedagogical lacuna persists: there remains insufficient systematic documentation, contextual analysis, and curricular translation of indigenous musical resources within discrete ethnic villages. Existing studies often generalize across regions or prioritize performance over pedagogy, neglecting village-level linguistic nuances, intergenerational transmission mechanisms, and locally defined learning outcomes. This paper addresses that gap by conducting an in-depth, ethnographically informed case study of musical resource mapping, pedagogical adaptation, and community co-design in a representative Miao village in Guizhou Province, with emphasis on scalability and culturally grounded assessment frameworks [1].

1.4. Research Methods

This study adopts a tripartite methodological framework grounded in empirical engagement, documentary synthesis, and pedagogical application to comprehensively examine the transmission, contextualization, and educational integration of She ethnic folk songs. The approach prioritizes methodological triangulation to enhance validity, reliability, and cultural responsiveness, ensuring findings reflect both lived practice and institutional discourse [1]. Each component is deliberately sequenced to move from ground-level observation to interpretive analysis and finally to practical implementation, thereby bridging ethnographic insight with curriculum-oriented outcomes.

Field investigation was conducted across two representative She-inhabited villages—Shangtan and Huangganshan—during July 2026, employing ethnographic techniques including semi-structured interviews with community elders, cultural practitioners, and local educators, alongside systematic participant observation of daily musical practices, seasonal rituals, and intergenerational knowledge exchange. Field notes were recorded in real time, supplemented by audio recordings (with informed consent) and photographic documentation of performance contexts, instruments, and spatial settings [4]. Special attention was paid to linguistic features, melodic contours, and socio-historical narratives embedded within song repertoires, enabling thick description and contextual fidelity.

A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to situate the study within broader scholarly and policy discourses, encompassing official documents issued by provincial and municipal cultural authorities concerning intangible cultural heritage protection, as well as academic publications on She musicology, ethnomusicological fieldwork reports, and archival materials related to regional folk song collection initiatives spanning the past four decades. This review facilitated identification of conceptual gaps, terminological inconsistencies, and evolving frameworks for safeguarding oral traditions, while also informing the development of culturally appropriate analytical categories and ethical guidelines for community-based research [5].

A detailed case analysis was performed on the teaching design titled *Where Do the Shanha's Folk Songs Come From*, examining its curricular structure, learning objectives, instructional strategies, assessment methods, and alignment with national curriculum standards for compulsory education [6]. The analysis included classroom implementation feedback from pilot teachers, student response patterns, and comparative evaluation against alternative pedagogical models for integrating ethnic musical heritage into general music education. Particular emphasis was placed on how the design negotiates authenticity, accessibility, and didactic scaffolding without compromising cultural integrity or reinforcing stereotypical representations.

2. Current Status of Musical Cultural Resources and Inheritance in Tanhong Township

2.1. *She Folk Song Resources*

The She ethnic group possesses a rich oral linguistic tradition but historically lacked a standardized written script; as a result, folk songs have functioned as indispensable vehicles for intergenerational transmission of historical memory, social values, and collective identity—often described metaphorically as "wordless history books." In Tanhong Township, particularly within Huangganshan Village—a recognized representative settlement of She cultural continuity—these songs remain actively performed in both ritual and everyday contexts. Stylistically, She folk songs exhibit distinctive musical features: fluid melodic contours with frequent use of portamento, rhythmic flexibility accommodating narrative pacing, and a high density of vocables and exclamatory syllables (e.g., "ya," "lei," "ho") that serve expressive, structural, and participatory functions. Thematic content spans courtship, agricultural labor, ancestral veneration, and seasonal celebrations, most notably the March 3rd Song Festival, which integrates competitive singing, costume display, and communal feasting. Wedding-related song cycles further demonstrate sophisticated poetic devices such as parallelism, repetition, and symbolic metaphor. From an educational perspective, these materials offer pedagogically robust resources for cultivating auditory discrimination, cultural empathy, and creative musical expression in school curricula [7]. Moreover, the local "Three Pan" cultural heritage—including the poetic legacy associated with Pan Mohua—presents viable pathways for contemporary musical reinterpretation, such as through choral recitation, narrative song-drama, or cross-genre composition. Crucially, the coexistence and mutual reinforcement of indigenous She musical practices with regionally resonant revolutionary poetic traditions have given rise to a layered, integrative musical ecosystem—one that reflects both ethnic distinctiveness and broader historical currents without privileging either dimension.

2.2. *Inheritance Dilemmas*

Field investigations conducted across multiple She ethnic communities in southeastern China have identified three interrelated and structurally entrenched challenges impeding the sustainable transmission of intangible cultural heritage, particularly She folk songs. These dilemmas reflect broader patterns observed in rural cultural preservation efforts nationwide and demand coordinated policy, educational, and community-based interventions to ensure continuity and vitality [8].

First, demographic imbalance severely constrains intergenerational transmission: the majority of recognized inheritors are aged sixty years or older, while younger residents—especially those between fifteen and thirty-five—have migrated en masse to urban centers for education and employment opportunities. This exodus has resulted in a pronounced generational discontinuity, where knowledge transfer occurs almost exclusively through informal, intrafamilial channels without standardized pedagogical frameworks, certified training programs, or documented curricula. Consequently, performance techniques, lyrical nuances, historical context, and ritual significance risk irreversible erosion as elder practitioners pass away without formally trained successors [9].

Second, underutilization of cultural resources limits socioeconomic revitalization potential: although She folk songs possess rich aesthetic, linguistic, and ethnographic value, their performance remains largely confined to seasonal festivals and ceremonial occasions [7]. There is minimal integration with regional cultural tourism strategies, insufficient development of derivative creative products—such as digital audio archives, animated storytelling apps, or artisanal merchandise incorporating melodic motifs—and negligible collaboration with local cultural enterprises or design incubators. As a result, the repertoire functions primarily as symbolic heritage rather than a dynamic, economically viable cultural asset contributing to rural revitalization goals.

Third, systemic exclusion from formal education perpetuates cultural disconnection among youth: She folk songs remain absent from compulsory school curricula at both

primary and secondary levels, and teacher training institutions offer no specialized instruction in indigenous musical traditions. Consequently, students grow up with limited exposure to their ancestral sonic heritage, lacking foundational literacy in local tonal systems, poetic structures, and performative conventions. Without institutional scaffolding—such as curriculum-aligned modules, extracurricular folk music clubs, or partnerships with inheritor-educators—the transmission process remains fragile, informal, and vulnerable to long-term attrition [10].

3. Practical Strategies for Empowering Rural Revitalization through Music Art

Four interrelated, context-sensitive strategies are proposed to harness the transformative potential of music art in advancing rural revitalization, grounded specifically in the unique geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions of Tanhong. First, a community-based participatory music education initiative is designed to cultivate local musical literacy, strengthen intergenerational transmission of intangible cultural heritage, and foster inclusive civic engagement among villagers of all ages. Second, an integrated cultural-creative industry incubation model leverages traditional folk melodies, local dialects, and indigenous instrumentation to develop distinctive audio-visual products, digital content, and experiential tourism offerings. Third, infrastructure upgrading includes the establishment of multipurpose village performance spaces equipped with sustainable acoustic design and digital recording capabilities, ensuring long-term accessibility and technical viability [1]. Fourth, cross-sectoral governance mechanisms—linking education bureaus, cultural departments, and agricultural cooperatives—are institutionalized to coordinate resource allocation, monitor impact metrics, and ensure policy coherence across developmental domains. Each strategy emphasizes endogenous capacity building, ecological sustainability, and culturally rooted innovation.

3.1. Systematic Excavation of Musical Cultural Resources

First, systematic audio-visual documentation of living practitioners is essential to preserve intangible musical heritage in its authentic form; this includes high-fidelity recordings of vocal performances, instrumental accompaniments, regional dialect pronunciation, breath control and ornamentation techniques unique to traditional singing styles, as well as contextual interviews explicating the semantic, historical, and ritual significance embedded in lyrical content—ensuring that both technical execution and cultural meaning are captured with scholarly rigor and long-term archival integrity [11].

Second, orally transmitted folk songs—many of which lack standardized written forms—must be meticulously transcribed into Western staff notation alongside phonetic and semantic renderings in both the She language and Mandarin Chinese; such bilingual musical transcription not only safeguards linguistic specificity and tonal accuracy but also facilitates pedagogical accessibility for diverse learners, including non-native speakers, music educators, and curriculum developers seeking to integrate indigenous musical knowledge into formal and informal educational settings.

Third, the literary corpus of Pan Mohua—comprising lyrically rich, rhythmically distinctive, and culturally resonant poetic works—warrants comprehensive philological and musical analysis to assess structural suitability for adaptation into spoken-word recitations, choral arrangements, or interdisciplinary performance pieces; attention must be paid to metrical patterns, tonal contours, thematic coherence, and performative conventions to ensure artistic fidelity while enabling creative reinterpretation within contemporary cultural frameworks.

Collectively, these methodologically grounded activities generate a robust, multimodal repository of musical-cultural data—including annotated audiovisual assets, bilingual notated scores, and analytically indexed textual materials—that serves as foundational infrastructure for designing culturally responsive music curricula, supporting community-based transmission initiatives, informing policy on intangible

cultural heritage safeguarding, and catalyzing sustainable creative industries rooted in authentic local traditions [3].

3.2. Bringing She Folk Songs into the Classroom

The national '15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development' explicitly prioritizes the enhancement of aesthetic education, particularly in rural educational settings, recognizing its vital role in holistic student development [12]. Curriculum design for integrating intangible cultural heritage—such as She ethnic folk songs—must therefore be grounded in a comprehensive pedagogical framework comprising four interrelated dimensions: cultural understanding, aesthetic perception, artistic expression, and creative practice. This integrative approach ensures that learning extends beyond technical skill acquisition to encompass historical consciousness, sensory engagement, embodied performance, and culturally situated innovation. Each dimension is scaffolded progressively to align with students' cognitive, emotional, and social developmental stages, thereby supporting inclusive and context-responsive music education.

At the cultural understanding level, instruction centers on deepening students' awareness of core She cultural concepts, including the significance of the term 'Shanha'—a traditional designation reflecting communal identity and ancestral continuity—and the longstanding She practice of 'expressing through song,' wherein oral lyricism serves as a primary vehicle for transmitting history, ethics, seasonal knowledge, and interpersonal values across generations. Teachers facilitate this understanding through guided listening, intergenerational storytelling, archival audio excerpts, and collaborative mapping of song themes to local ecological and social contexts, fostering respectful, non-extractive engagement with living cultural traditions [13].

At the aesthetic perception level, learners engage in structured auditory analysis to recognize expressive musical elements characteristic of She vocal traditions, such as subtle pitch glides (portamento) that emulate natural contours of mountain terrain, and exclamatory syllables—often drawn from She language phonetics—that punctuate emotional emphasis or communal call-and-response patterns [14]. These features are explored through comparative listening exercises, spectrographic visualization tools, and reflective journaling, enabling students to articulate how sonic qualities shape affective response and cultural resonance without relying on subjective or value-laden interpretations.

At the artistic expression level, foundational vocal techniques—including breath support, resonant placement, and phrase shaping—are developed through carefully sequenced, game-based learning activities designed to reduce performance anxiety and promote joyful participation. Activities include rhythmic echo games using She linguistic patterns, melodic contour tracing with body movement, and small-group vocal imitation supported by peer feedback protocols. Emphasis is placed on process-oriented growth rather than technical perfection, ensuring accessibility for learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds and prior musical experience.

At the creative practice level, students are invited to compose original lyrics rooted in authentic local experiences—such as agricultural cycles, village festivals, family narratives, or environmental observations—while maintaining fidelity to She poetic structures, tonal sensibilities, and thematic conventions. Guided co-creation workshops, facilitated by community elders and music educators, ensure intergenerational dialogue and ethical authorship practices. Outputs may include bilingual lyric drafts, simple notated melodies, or digital audio recordings, all assessed through rubrics emphasizing cultural responsiveness, personal voice, and collaborative integrity rather than stylistic conformity.

In teaching strategies, abstract musical concepts are rendered concrete and memorable through culturally grounded metaphors: weak-beat entry is introduced as evoking the gradual emergence of 'mountain mist'—a familiar natural phenomenon in She-dwelling regions—highlighting subtlety and atmospheric texture; dotted rhythms are

associated with the percussive sounds of 'bamboo-cutting' during harvest season and the irregular patter of 'raindrop' impacts on tiled roofs, linking rhythmic articulation to embodied, place-based knowledge. Such analogies strengthen conceptual retention while affirming the epistemic validity of local ecological and occupational wisdom within formal music instruction.

3.3. Creating a "Music + Cultural Tourism" Integration Format

The agricultural modernization strategy emphasizes the development of distinctive, high-quality rural cultural tourism enterprises characterized by compact scale and refined cultural expression. A comprehensive, experiential study-tour route—centered on immersive participation in She ethnic intangible cultural heritage—can be systematically designed to enhance visitor engagement and deepen cultural understanding. This integrated itinerary includes structured learning modules for performing traditional She folk songs, hands-on workshops for weaving intricate colorful belts using authentic techniques and natural dyes, and guided culinary experiences featuring regionally sourced ingredients prepared according to time-honored She gastronomic practices [14]. To strengthen brand identity and broaden appeal, traditional She melodies undergo professional musical adaptation—retaining core modal structures and lyrical themes while incorporating contemporary instrumentation, harmonic progressions, and rhythmic patterns—resulting in original compositions that function as dynamic, memorable 'audible business cards' for destination promotion. Complementing these offerings, recurring brand events such as the 'She Song Festival' are strategically aligned with the lunar calendar and local agrarian festivals, transforming seasonal cultural observances into multifaceted platforms for community participation, intergenerational transmission, artistic innovation, and sustainable local economic activation through hospitality, handicraft sales, and service-sector employment.

3.4. Building a Community Music Culture Ecosystem

The ultimate goal is to build a sustainable, self-reinforcing community music culture ecosystem in which villagers actively participate as creators, transmitters, and beneficiaries of intangible cultural heritage. This requires moving beyond short-term interventions toward long-term structural capacity-building, where local agency, intergenerational transmission, and institutional continuity are systematically strengthened. Such an ecosystem integrates formal and informal learning pathways, leverages existing social networks, and aligns with community values and daily life rhythms [15]. It emphasizes participatory design—ensuring that musical practices remain rooted in local meaning rather than external aesthetic or pedagogical impositions. Sustainability is measured not only by the persistence of performance but also by the emergence of locally initiated initiatives, peer-led teaching, and adaptive innovation within traditional frameworks. Crucially, this model resists dependency on external actors by cultivating internal leadership, documentation capacity, and reflective practice among community members themselves.

First, university-based expertise should be strategically mobilized to deliver comprehensive, context-sensitive training for local music educators, equipping them with both technical proficiency in She folk song repertoire and culturally grounded pedagogical strategies. Training must extend beyond vocal technique to include ethnomusicological awareness, oral transmission methodologies, community engagement protocols, and basic digital documentation skills. Curriculum development should involve co-design with village elders and youth representatives to ensure relevance and ownership. Follow-up mentoring, resource kits—including annotated audio recordings, lyric glossaries, and contextual background materials—and periodic refresher workshops are essential to consolidate learning and address evolving needs. The objective is full pedagogical autonomy: local teachers confidently designing, delivering, and evaluating She song instruction without sustained external supervision [16].

Second, establishing a dedicated She folk song choir for elderly residents serves multiple interlocking functions: it affirms their cultural authority, mitigates social

isolation through collective artistic practice, and transforms lived experience into active cultural stewardship. Choir activities should be structured around intergenerational knowledge exchange—such as joint rehearsals with school students or storytelling sessions embedded in musical preparation—to reinforce transmission pathways. Repertoire selection prioritizes songs with strong local provenance and narrative significance, while arrangements respect stylistic conventions yet allow for subtle contemporary adaptation. Regular public performances in village squares, temple festivals, and regional cultural fairs enhance visibility and community pride. Importantly, choir members receive recognition as cultural mentors—not merely performers—through formal acknowledgment mechanisms, skill certification, and inclusion in local cultural advisory structures, thereby reinforcing their valued social role.

Third, a formalized, multi-year partnership between university music departments and Tanhong Township must be institutionalized through a jointly governed framework that includes shared governance committees, co-developed work plans, mutual accountability metrics, and embedded academic service-learning components. This partnership extends beyond guest lectures or one-off fieldwork to encompass curriculum integration—where university courses incorporate township-based research projects—and reciprocal capacity building—such as faculty exchanges, community-based action research fellowships, and joint publication of vernacular music archives [17]. Infrastructure support includes establishing a township-based digital repository for She song recordings, transcriptions, and contextual metadata, maintained collaboratively with trained local archivists. Funding mechanisms prioritize multi-year commitments over project-based grants to ensure stability, while evaluation emphasizes qualitative outcomes—such as growth in local initiative leadership, increased youth participation rates, and documented shifts in community attitudes toward cultural inheritance—rather than solely quantitative outputs.

4. Teaching Practice Case: Where Do the Shanha's Folk Songs Come From

4.1. Case Overview

Where Do the Shanha's Folk Songs Come From is an original pedagogical composition rooted in the authentic melodic contours, rhythmic patterns, and lyrical motifs characteristic of She ethnic folk music traditions [18]. Designed specifically for elementary-level music education, the piece serves as both an artistic expression and a culturally grounded learning tool that introduces young learners to the expressive richness of China's intangible cultural heritage. The central rhetorical device—the recurring question “Where do the folk songs come from?”—functions not merely as a lyrical motif but as a conceptual framework inviting students to explore the deep interconnection between music and lived environment. Poetic responses such as “from bamboo groves,” “from terraced fields,” and “from mountain mist” reflect the She people's agrarian ethos, ecological awareness, and spiritual relationship with natural landscapes. Structurally, the work adheres to a refined three-part ‘question-answer-echo’ design: the opening section unfolds in a contemplative, lyrical tempo evoking quiet reflection; the middle segment accelerates into a buoyant, dance-like character mirroring communal celebration; and the final echo returns to the initial mood, reinforcing thematic unity and cyclical worldview. This deliberate tempo modulation supports embodied learning, enabling students to internalize stylistic nuance through physical engagement, vocal inflection, and rhythmic responsiveness—all essential components of holistic music pedagogy aligned with national curriculum standards for aesthetic education.

4.2. Teaching Objectives

The teaching objectives are systematically structured across four interrelated dimensions to foster holistic musical and cultural development. At the cultural understanding level, students engage with the distinctive stylistic features of She folk songs—characterized by pentatonic modal frameworks, call-and-response structures, and regionally specific vocal timbres—while exploring the historical and social contexts

surrounding the 'Shanha' tradition as a living intangible cultural heritage [6, 10]. In aesthetic perception, learners develop refined listening skills to discern nuanced emotional shifts across phrases, analyze expressive devices such as portamento (the smooth gliding between pitches) and exclamatory syllables (e.g., 'hei!', 'ya!') that convey vitality and communal identity. For artistic expression, instruction emphasizes precise rhythmic execution—including weak-beat entrances and dotted rhythmic patterns—as well as accurate vocal imitation of portamento to internalize stylistic authenticity. Within creative practice, students participate in collaborative rhythm-based games that strengthen temporal awareness and ensemble responsiveness; additionally, guided lyric composition activities encourage personal reflection while cultivating appreciation for the linguistic richness, worldview, and collective values embedded in traditional song forms from diverse regional communities across China.

4.3. Teaching Process

The lesson introduction initiates an interactive auditory discrimination activity titled 'Blind Listening to Identify the Ethnic Group', designed to cultivate students' cross-cultural listening awareness and sharpen their ability to distinguish stylistic features of folk music from different ethnic communities. The teacher presents three carefully selected, culturally authentic folk song excerpts—representing Han, Tibetan, and She musical traditions—and guides learners to identify the She folk melody based on distinctive vocal timbre, melodic contour, modal inflection, and rhythmic phrasing. Following identification, the term 'Shanha'—a traditional She self-designation meaning 'mountain guest'—is introduced with contextual explanation, emphasizing its historical and geographical significance in She cultural identity and settlement patterns. To deepen understanding of the dialogic and call-and-response nature characteristic of many Chinese ethnic folk songs, students participate in the 'Echo Valley' game, wherein they physically embody antiphonal singing through spatialized vocal imitation, reinforcing both aural memory and embodied musical cognition.

In the rhythm development segment, pedagogical scaffolding is implemented through two structured kinesthetic activities: the 'Mist Creeps In' game, which trains students to internalize weak-beat entrances by synchronizing vocal onset with gradual, atmospheric gesture cues, thereby enhancing metric flexibility and offbeat sensitivity; and the 'Three Treasures of the Forest' activity, which employs multisensory association—linking dotted rhythmic patterns to naturalistic sound imagery such as bamboo-cutting percussive strikes and irregular raindrop impacts—to anchor abstract rhythmic concepts in tangible, culturally resonant sonic metaphors. These strategies collectively support rhythmic literacy while honoring the ecological and artisanal dimensions embedded in traditional She musical expression [9].

During the song learning phase, the 'Echo Valley' strategy is systematically applied for phrase-by-phrase vocal modeling, ensuring accurate pitch matching, tonal nuance, and expressive phrasing. For particularly challenging melodic passages—such as those involving wide intervallic leaps, microtonal inflections, or rapid ornamentation—Curwen hand signs are integrated as a visual-motor scaffold, enabling students to connect pitch height, direction, and relative interval size with coordinated hand movement, thus strengthening audiomotor integration and reducing cognitive load during acquisition.

To foster nuanced emotional interpretation and structural awareness, two collaborative games are employed: the 'Emotion Remote Control' gesture protocol, where students use standardized hand signals to modulate dynamics, tempo, and articulation in real time, cultivating collective expressive agency; and the 'Folk Song Messenger' question-and-answer relay, which reinforces formal analysis by prompting students to articulate verse-chorus relationships, repetition patterns, and narrative progression through peer-mediated inquiry and responsive musical demonstration.

In the extension phase, creative application is emphasized through lyric composition guided by the syntactic template 'from... come', encouraging students to generate original verses that reflect personal or regional connections while preserving the underlying

melodic and metrical framework of the source song [17]. Compositions are then performed in the 'Folk Song Launch' format—a structured peer presentation platform—where classmates engage in constructive listening and democratic evaluation via anonymous voting, promoting reflective practice, aesthetic judgment, and respectful appreciation of diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives within the classroom community.

4.4. Teaching Reflections

This case illustrates three interrelated pedagogical values that collectively enhance the effectiveness and cultural resonance of language and literature instruction in contemporary educational settings. These values are not isolated principles but mutually reinforcing dimensions of a holistic, student-centered approach grounded in experiential learning theory and sociocultural frameworks of knowledge acquisition.

First, the strategic integration of gamified elements significantly lowers cognitive and affective barriers to learning by converting abstract linguistic structures, literary devices, and conceptual frameworks into concrete, interactive, and visually anchored representations. Through carefully designed challenges, feedback loops, and reward mechanisms, students engage more readily with complex textual analysis, rhetorical patterns, and historical contextualization—transforming passive reception into active sense-making and sustained motivation without compromising academic rigor or disciplinary integrity.

Second, deliberate contextualization anchors instruction within immersive, culturally coherent environments—such as the sustained evocation of the 'mountain' motif—which functions as both a symbolic and experiential scaffold. This atmospheric continuity supports deeper interpretive engagement, fosters associative thinking across literary periods and genres, and cultivates nuanced awareness of how landscape, memory, and identity intersect in Chinese literary tradition, thereby strengthening students' capacity for empathetic and historically informed reading.

Third, structured opportunities for creative composition empower learners to move beyond receptive understanding toward generative participation, enabling them to internalize cultural forms not merely as objects of study but as living resources for expression. By co-authoring poems, reimagining classical motifs, or adapting narrative conventions in collaborative projects, students develop a grounded sense of cultural agency and continuity—shifting their role from external observers of heritage to active contributors in the ongoing evolution of shared cultural discourse and aesthetic practice [13].

5. Conclusion

The integration of music-based cultural practices into rural revitalization strategies represents a multifaceted, culturally grounded approach to sustainable development. This process hinges upon three interdependent and mutually reinforcing actions—each designed to bridge historical continuity with contemporary socio-economic needs while safeguarding intangible heritage.

First, a rigorous, community-engaged system for documenting and digitizing oral musical traditions is essential. Such efforts must go beyond simple audio recording to include contextual metadata—such as performer biographies, performance settings, linguistic annotations, seasonal or ritual associations, and transmission lineages—ensuring that digital archives serve not only as repositories but also as pedagogical and research tools accessible to both local practitioners and broader academic audiences. Ethical protocols—including informed consent, co-curation frameworks, and data sovereignty agreements—must be embedded throughout the collection process to uphold cultural agency and prevent extractive practices.

Second, pedagogical integration requires moving beyond episodic or ceremonial exposure to embed She folk songs within formal and informal learning environments. This entails developing adaptable, competency-aligned curricula that respect linguistic

diversity, accommodate multigenerational participation, and incorporate participatory methods—such as intergenerational song circles, notation-free transcription workshops, and embodied learning through dance and gesture. Teacher training, localized resource kits, and longitudinal assessment metrics are critical to sustaining classroom implementation and measuring cultural literacy outcomes over time.

Third, strategic cultural economy development involves designing place-based tourism experiences that foreground authenticity, community ownership, and equitable benefit-sharing. This includes co-developed itineraries featuring live performances, craft-music workshops, storytelling trails, and immersive soundscapes—all anchored in locally defined values and managed through cooperative governance models. Revenue streams should directly support cultural transmission initiatives, such as youth mentorship programs and archival maintenance, thereby establishing a self-sustaining feedback loop between economic viability and heritage vitality.

The current national development framework presents a timely opportunity to institutionalize these approaches across diverse rural contexts. Future inquiry may examine how emerging digital infrastructures—including spatial audio mapping, AI-assisted transcription of tonal dialects, and blockchain-enabled rights management—can enhance preservation fidelity and access equity. Equally important are longitudinal studies on university-community knowledge exchange models that prioritize reciprocity, capacity building, and shared authorship. Additionally, creative reinterpretation of traditional repertoire—through stylistic dialogue with contemporary genres, intercultural instrumentation, or thematic resonance with universal human experiences—offers pathways for intergenerational relevance without compromising structural or semantic integrity. Ultimately, the enduring value of ethnic music in rural transformation lies not in static conservation, but in its dynamic capacity to inspire collective identity, foster social cohesion, and catalyze context-sensitive innovation—making it a vital, living component of resilient rural futures.

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