

Cultural Heritage and Educational Innovation: A Study on the Integration of Traditional Music Culture in Vocal Music Education

Xuan He*

Henan Open University, Zhengzhou Information Technology College, Zhengzhou, Henan, 450046, China

*Corresponding author: Xuan He, hexuan19831001@gmail.com

Copyright: 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY-NC 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited, and explicitly prohibiting its use for commercial purposes.

Abstract: Considering the current processes of globalization along with the fast development of information technologies, music education faces certain difficulties and challenges as well as opportunities. In this regard, this article studies the problem of the use of the traditional musical culture for the purposes of vocal music education by considering the relation between the vocal music art and culture through systematizing this relationship. At the same time, the research considers the problem of semiotic approach in vocal music education and reveals the features of cultural features of traditional vocal music art. The present work proposes a new model of the development of vocal music education based on the following key approaches such as the return to its cultural origin, traditional humanistic spirit, and consideration of multicultural views on life. Furthermore, the use of modern technologies in vocal music education is also discussed. Among other things, the integration of computer and multimedia technologies in vocal music teaching is considered. Consequently, the results of the research show that the use of the traditional musical culture in the field of vocal music art leads to greater success in vocal music education in terms of cultural and professional progress.

Keywords: Traditional Music Culture; Vocal Music Education; Cultural Heritage; Curriculum Reform; Educational Technology; Multicultural Education; ComputerAssisted Instruction

Published: May 13, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62177/jetp.v3i2.1352>

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Importance

The present trend of human civilization is marked by swift developments in science and technology, which have fastened the process of evolution in the world's economy. It becomes imperative to adopt a broader perspective on talent nurturing in comparison to what existed in the past, hence necessitating a new orientation in higher education^[1]. The development of talent development in music has undergone a transformation from focusing too much on vocational education to nurturing holistic traits^[2]. In other words, the existing paradigm of music education is no longer compatible with the demands for development in the music education sector^[3].

Recently, in connection with the emergence of the quality education system, the reforms concerning vocal music education have been deepened at different levels. Various universities of higher education and institutions of pedagogical training have tried to implement vocal music reforms in their syllabi and pedagogic methodology^[4]. At the same time, there is an

increasing scientific attention to different areas of study related to vocal music: art psychology of vocal music, vocal music aesthetics, and vocal music linguistics^[5]. However, modern vocal music education theory, based on one scientific approach involving the use of general educational principles, which are based on the summation of individual features of the art of vocal music, cannot create interconnections between various subjects^[6].

In modern science of education on vocal music, research applies the approach which consists in analyzing separate aspects of the art of vocal music in order to formulate universal educational rules, thus neglecting the relationship between the art of vocal music and other areas of knowledge and unable to provide scientific theory results possible due to scientific advancements in the appropriate branches of sciences, including humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences^[7]. The scope of theoretical consideration and viewpoint is quite limited in terms of philosophy of education^[8].

Moreover, the contemporary research framework regarding vocal music learning is monolithic, whereby the training process has no clear connection with the cultural aspects of the program curriculum. The same technique has been used in both content and methods; too much focus has been put on technical skills while little attention is devoted to fostering creativity. Such an imbalance limits the development of the cognitive and creative potential of the students in the field of vocal music^[9]. As a result, there is very little achievement in balancing technical skills and cognitive skills necessary for vocal music, such as understanding metaphorical meaning in poems used in vocal music pieces^[10].

1.2 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore how traditional music culture has been incorporated into vocal music education by examining its correlation with vocal music, both as an art form and culture, and evaluating its incorporation using modern research methods for education^[11]. Despite the uniqueness that exists between traditional and modern music education, the current study will focus on their comparison mainly in relation to cultural context, curricula design, teaching practices, and educational technology.

The present research is expected to meet the following objectives of research: To conduct a systematic study of the connection between vocal music art and culture using semiotics and cultural anthropology^[12]; To explore the cultural aspects of traditional vocal music art and their educational value in modern society^[13]; To develop new approaches and methods for curriculum reform in the field of vocal music education^[14]; To study the influence of modern pedagogical technologies on vocal music teaching^[15]; And to provide theoretical and practical grounds for nurturing versatile music talents^[16].

1.3 Data Source Description

Sources of literature and databases used for this paper were selected from several reliable academic databases focused on education. The time period of this literature review extends from 2020 to 2025, which makes this research relevant and current. Sources used for the collection of data include Web of Science, Scopus, CNKI, and numerous journals dealing with issues related to music education and culture. The literature includes articles about music education reforms, culture, curriculums, and educational technology^[17].

2. The Relationship between Vocal Music Art and Culture

2.1 Semiotics and Vocal Music Art

2.1.1 Significance of Introducing Symbolic Philosophy

During the twentieth century, as part of Western analytical philosophy, linguistics, and natural science, semiotics made a considerable advance towards the form of scientific discipline. The idea of “the symbol” became more and more important, and semiotics turned into one of the key objects of scientific research. Therefore, semiotics acquired importance as an essential element of modern philosophy and its ideological concepts^[18]. Ernst Cassirer, who was famous for his symbolic philosophical ideas, can be found among other world-famous philosophers of our times like Einstein, Russell, and Dewey in the collection of World Philosophers Library, considered to be “one of the most esteemed contemporary philosophers” and “a scholar of encyclopedic erudition of today’s intellectual world.”

In contrast to the linguistics theory of Ferdinand de Saussure and the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce, which are the pioneers of semiotics, the works of Ernst Cassirer and his protégé Susanne Langer have shown that there are strong elements of philosophy and culture involved in “pan-symbolic epistemology,” which demonstrate the cultural aspects of art^[5]. First,

they combine research on human beings and culture and the study of the nature of the symbols created by artists. According to Cassirer, man is a symbolic being that creates culture, and symbol-making distinguishes man from animals and links him with culture.

2.1.2 Cultural Enlightenment of Semiotics for Vocal Music Art

As a result of semiotic analysis of vocal music art, it becomes clear that vocal music art is a cultural element which, as any other sister arts and sciences, can be called a part of culture. The medium of vocal music art consists of symbols and can be described as emotional vocal system ^[9]. Basically, creative act in the sphere of vocal music activity is connected with creation of an artistic symbol in auditory terms.

As singing music involves the integration of lyrics and operas with the literary and theatrical arts, it becomes necessary that knowledge of the systems of signs used in adjacent arts should be essential for the creation of symbols in the world of singing music ^[1]. Here is always an intimate association between singing music and its related arts within the same society. The strongest base for creating singing music symbols can be created by all the different kinds of signs found in the human world.

2.2 Cultural Characteristics of Traditional Vocal Music Art

2.2.1 Historical Development of Chinese Vocal Music Art

The Chinese civilization has a very old history of more than five thousand years, characterized by an exceptionally advanced musical tradition. A great artistic and cultural heritage in connection with Chinese music has led to the formation of a unique vocal music tradition ^[13]. With respect to vocal music, the creation of culture and arts is linked to the development of language itself, as from the very beginnings of humankind, singing was a companion to the birth of language. The oldest example of folklore songs is The Love Song of Tu Shan Woman.

The development of the political structure was marked from the Qin dynasty to the Han dynasty. China saw the emergence of a feudal society and the integration of various cultures across several nations, which made the cultural composition richer in Han culture ^[7]. The area of vocal music and its arts saw much development. The establishment of Yuefu, an important Chinese music school, during the Han Dynasty through the efforts of Emperor Wu saw to it that “local customs were collected and musical notes harmonized.”

It is worth noting that political centralization and increased interaction between different ethnic groups during the Sui-Tang Dynasty contributed significantly towards the blending of various musical traditions existing then. The Silk Road served as an avenue through which musical traditions were transmitted from the East to the West. Songs that were created during the Sui and Tang eras later became refined and known as “Quzi” (tunes). Musical traditions of the Tang era have been documented in Dunhuang texts where there are 590 lyrics belonging to 80 tunes.

2.2.2 Cultural Levels and Their Influence on Vocal Music

Culture is a systematic structure involving a number of levels and dimensions. Ideas make up the key level. As for ideology, it also involves several important dimensions, namely value ideas and modes of thinking ^[7]. As in the case of world view, both value ideas and modes of thinking crystallize and integrate during practical activities of culture-making and, at the same time, are basic guidelines directing and limiting such activities. Chinese traditional culture can be considered as a whole structure involving a great many substructures. Chinese traditional culture after the period of the Qin and Han dynasties was characterized by distinctions of explicit culture and implicit culture. In the spring and autumn period and the warring states period, there appeared many different schools of intellectual life in artistic thoughts, such as Confucianism, Mohism, Legalism, School of Logicians (Dialecticians), and Yin-Yang thoughts. Later on, Confucianism became dominant due to Emperor Wu of Han’s decision to “exclude all other teachings and maintain Confucianism alone.” Thus, Confucian value idea “harmony” has been the prevailing value idea among many other value ideas in Chinese traditional culture.

3. Conceptions of New Vocal Music Education Models

3.1 New Concepts of Contemporary Music Education

3.1.1 Contemporary Music Anthropology Perspectives

With the consistent creation of innovative concepts, culture, and discoveries, modern society experiences the weakening of old research approaches used in all spheres of knowledge. The formation of numerous subdisciplines and cross-disciplines

in the sphere of international social sciences took place starting from the 1990s^[19]. Most music educators believe that music should be seen as an element of culture but not art itself, which means that “music in culture” is the approach that needs to be applied to the process of studying and understanding music^[17]. The idea became a basis for developing a music education concept in Germany since the 1970s.

3.1.2 Goals for the 21st Century

The “Goals 2000: Educate America Act,” passed by the Clinton administration in 1994, gave the field of art education the best assistance until then in the country. The assistance included music, visual arts, theater, and dance. Art was officially included in the list of “core subjects,” being marked number three out of the total six national goals of education^[4]. The other five “core subjects” were English, math, science, history, and geography. That was the year when the first National Standards of Arts Education in U.S. history were developed by the federal government’s direct participation in national arts organizations.

3.2 Returning to Mother Tongue Music Culture

3.2.1 Language as the Foundation of Culture

Language serves as the medium that carries and embodies culture and can therefore be viewed as an essential condition of culture. By mother tongue we mean the native language which is learned in early childhood through contact with people who share the same language. This gives rise to various expressions of cultural activity^[4]. In addition, language is also considered to be “relational” according to Ferdinand de Saussure, a renowned linguist from Switzerland. In other words, language is an invention of man. The mother tongue, therefore, bestows unique aesthetic charm upon the national musical culture of a country. At the same time, one notes that countries with diverse mother tongues have adopted different approaches to their music education systems^[16]. As discussed above, in 1995, at the Sixth National Conference for Music Education Reform, the theme of discussion was set as “Chinese mother tongue music education.”

3.2.2 Curriculum System Reform

At present, educational institutions in China have continued the teaching programs on music, following the structure of an educational system adopted from the Western model introduced during the May Fourth Movement, where the Western style of voice lessons is taught using a mechanistic teaching technique in vocal music^[18]. Therefore, it is fitting for the teaching of vocal music to adhere to the need to convey music using the Chinese language and culture, leading to the formation of a teaching program for vocal music that challenges the existing curriculum and methodologies based on Western music ontology.

3.3 Integration of Modern Educational Technology

3.3.1 Computer-Assisted Instruction Applications

The developments in science and technology in the modern-day society have an attractive impact on the field of education, continuously developing the technological aspects of education in music education^[20]. Music education through computers and computerized learning has been set as effective means in learning. In specific areas such as music theory teaching and technologically-driven teaching of music composition, computer technology has been seen to excel. An instance of this would be the Housewright Declaration of the United States which is considered an important document in music education in the 21st century.

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) is defined as the application of computers to assist instructional procedures or act as a means of instruction. Computer Assisted Instruction is not only an actual practice of computer usage but also a new teaching approach and instructional strategy^[6]. By virtue of its interactive nature, varied capabilities, personalized and flexible qualities, CAI improves the dissemination of information and individualized education while considering the concepts of transmission, practice and competence. This means that through the use of CAI, subjectiveness and arbitrariness that are evident in the conventional vocal music teaching approach of verbal communication and personal instruction will be avoided

3.3.2 Multimedia and Digital Technologies

However, in the last few years, some professional associations have been employing CAI methods to teach vocals music under particular circumstances. In order to gain practical knowledge and achieve expected results, some experiments and researches are carried out^[15]. For example, there is one method of investigating sound spectrums, where tests of audio spectra

are carried out through multimedia computer that can analyze spectrum of the singing voice.

When it comes to vocal training and learning for music, computer-recorded singing voices can help both teachers and students to observe various acoustic properties through function diagrams shown on a computer screen, thus making it possible to conduct numerous experiments with sound waves^[21]. As is mentioned above, this approach combines a systematic and rational scientific approach to music teaching with a subjective approach used before. It is necessary to note that much research needs to be done in this sphere; however, this approach, at least, has changed the old paradigm in which students preferred practical skills to theory.

4. Implementation Strategies and Recommendations

4.1 Curriculum Development Strategies

Below is an outline of how the incorporation of the cultural aspect of traditional musical practices can be made into vocal music education based on the above discussion. One way is to include the concept of dialects in musical performance in the curriculum of vocal music lessons to form a link between the two^[16]. Since China is characterized by large territory size, there is a great dialect variation within the country, and the impact of the dialect on vocal stylistics must not be overlooked. The second is to include a historical section in Chinese vocal music performance.

The third element would be to include an introduction to the history of global music cultures in the curriculum so as to give students a wider international perspective and to counter the fallacy of “world music being synonymous with Western music”^[18]. The fourth important aspect is to introduce music lessons that cater specifically to Chinese audiences, which is vital in aiding in the understanding of the unique melodic modes used in Chinese music. The fifth element is to include training in opera within vocal music lessons since the methods used in opera coincide with Chinese aesthetics.

4.2 Teacher Training and Professional Development

However, the successful incorporation of musical tradition in the vocal music teaching process largely depends upon the competence of the teacher. The preparation and further professional growth of teachers in this regard are therefore paramount^[17]. Training programs for vocal music teachers should be implemented by universities, including traditional vocal techniques classes, cultural studies seminars, and master performers’ workshops.

In addition to that, interdisciplinary cooperation is important in order to supplement the knowledge of the instructor. It should be noted that within the realm of teaching vocal music, it is important for the instructors to work together with specialists from various fields including musicology, anthropology, and linguistics.

4.3 Assessment and Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods should be modified based on how well traditional music is incorporated into the learning process for singing lessons. It is important not only to assess the technical competence of learners but also to consider their knowledge about the culture, analysis of traditional music, and cultural awareness^[19]. Portfolio evaluation, performance evaluation, and reflective journals are suitable approaches for assessing the development of learners.

5. Conclusion

In addition, there are new challenges brought about by the potential paths to which the process of education reform will take around the world. Specifically, there are new demands for Chinese vocal music education that need to be addressed through the quick creation of an educational system possessing unique characteristics^[13]. This can be achieved through the incorporation of the cultural background of vocal music education by exploring human cultures and incorporating different disciplines from the fields of humanities and natural sciences into interdisciplinary teaching programs.

The combination of modern and innovative approaches to vocal music along with traditional music culture inherited by singers should be considered. There are obvious signs showing that if one gets involved into cultural heritage, he should make use of the idea of developing modern music Art culture which is distinguished by particular national characteristics and is quite alive^[22]. On the basis of practical knowledge, one can state that such a combination can open new ways to create talented vocalists. Cultural heritage along with innovations allows us to achieve the goal of vocal music education.

In summary, introducing the aspect of tradition into vocal music education is not simply about preserving cultural heritage but

provides an avenue for connecting the past with the future and also the local with the global aspects. It is the duty of music teachers to pass on the cultural heritage through new forms of teaching methodology.

Funding

No

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Reference

- [1] Kayyali, M. (2025). Curriculum Reform in Higher Education, pages 145–168. IGI Global.
- [2] Du, Q. (2024). A systematic approach to innovative strategies for vocal instruction in higher education: Enhancing student performance. *Pacific International Journal*.
- [3] Yang, Y. (2025). Innovative approaches and reformation strategies for vocal pedagogy in higher vocational music education. *Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science*.
- [4] Tang, F. (2022). Study on the strategy of integrating traditional music culture into vocal music teaching in universities. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Contemporary Education and Social Sciences*, pages 125–129. Atlantis Press.
- [5] Wang, Q. (2022). Research on the strategy of integrating traditional music culture in vocal music teaching in high schools. *Contemporary Education and Teaching Research*, 3(4):155–158.
- [6] Xiao, N. (2021). Analysis on how to integrate traditional music culture into vocal music teaching in colleges and universities. *Learning & Education*, 10(2):46–52.
- [7] Sun, L. (2021). A probe into the integration of traditional music culture in vocal music teaching in colleges and universities. *Region–Educational Research and Reviews*, 3(1):15–22.
- [8] Ho, W. and Law, W. (2020). Music education and cultural and national values. *International Journal of Comparative Education and Development*, 22(3):219–238.
- [9] Lu, D. (2022). Inheritance and promotion of chinese traditional music culture in college piano education. *Heritage Science*, 10(1):1–15.
- [10] Mingxiao, N. and Xiaoliang, X. (2024). Analysis of the integration strategies of traditional culture in vocal music teaching in colleges and universities. *Higher Education and Practice*, 1(5):48–52.
- [11] Chen, Y. (2024). Exploring multiculturalism through vocal teaching in the context of digital society. In *IAFOR Conference Proceedings*, pages 1–12.
- [12] Campbell, P. (2020). At the nexus of ethnomusicology and music education: Pathways to diversity, equity, and inclusion. *Arts Education Policy Review*.
- [13] Li, Y. (2024a). The formation and future direction of chinese vocal music in 100 years of development history. *Pakistan Journal of Life & Social Sciences*, pages 1062–1072.
- [14] Branscome, E. (2012). The impact of education reform on music education: Paradigm shifts in music education curriculum, advocacy, and philosophy from sputnik to race to the top. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 113(3):112–118.
- [15] Li, Y. (2024b). The possibility of the application of modern vocal music technology in vocal music education. *Culture and Education: Cultura y Educacion*, 36(3):660–685.
- [16] Gunarto, M. and Hurriyati, R. (2020). Creating experience value to build student satisfaction in higher education. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 12(4):523–538.
- [17] von Germeten, G. (2022). We are also music lovers: Testing vocal tastes in higher musical theater education. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 44(3):554–569.
- [18] Xia, Y. (2025). Revealing pedagogical insights: National elements in the vocal education of contemporary chinese popular and classical music performers. *Música Hodie*.
- [19] Nikolai, H., Kisiel, M., and Peng, Y. (2023). Vocal education in the context of intercultural communication: Experience

of teaching chinese students. *International Journal of Chinese Education*.

- [20] Kaleli, Y. (2020). The effect of computer-assisted instruction on piano education: An experimental study with pre-service music teachers. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science*, 4(3):235–246.
- [21] Zhang, X. (2024). Inheritance and innovation of chinese folk song vocal music: Tradition and integration in modern vocal perform. *Philosophy and Social Science*.
- [22] Clark, T. (2024). *Harmonizing Voices: Vocal Pedagogy in 21st Century Music Education*. PhD thesis, Liberty University.