

Developing A Dual-Dimensional Model for the Transmission of Xiping Folk Music Education

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ABSTRACT: In response to the accelerating global crisis of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) extinction, this study examines the Xiping folk song a form of China's national ICH through a qualitative methodological lens to construct an innovative, education-oriented transmission model. Drawing on extensive fieldwork documenting folk performance practices, in-depth interviews with 18 cultural bearers, educators, and policy practitioners, as well as critical analysis of cultural and educational policy texts (2010–2025) and dialogic engagement with local communities, the research develops a dual-dimensional framework integrating both formal and informal educational strategies. The model comprises five interrelated modules themes: cultural tourism project design, master-apprentice craft transmission, localized curriculum development, pedagogical innovation in higher education, and digital learning ecosystems. At its core, the study engages in a dialectical analysis of key implementation challenges such as the risk of cultural commodification in tourism, intergenerational communication gaps in apprenticeship-based learning, and digital accessibility divides and offers a systematic feasibility assessment. By reconciling stakeholder interests with policy constraints, the model proposes a pragmatic path for sustaining orally transmitted art forms in contemporary educational contexts without compromising cultural authenticity. This framework demonstrates the capacity of qualitative inquiry to support the construction of culturally responsive heritage transmission models and contributes a methodological paradigm to the emerging field of heritage education worldwide.

KEYWORDS: Intangible Cultural Heritage; Xiping Folk Song; Dual-Dimensional Model; Culturally Responsive Education; Heritage Transmission

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the combined impact of globalization, urbanization, and the breakdown of intergenerational cultural practices, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is experiencing an accelerated global decline, posing a serious threat to cultural sustainability. Among the most vulnerable forms of ICH is traditional folk music, which, despite its rich aesthetic value and social function, is frequently marginalized within mainstream education systems (Jian, Chuangprakhon, & Santaveesuk, 2024). This has prompted international organizations such as UNESCO to promote education-driven approaches to heritage preservation (Duoblienè, Kaire, & Vaitekaitis, 2023). The disappearance of ICH entails more than cultural loss; it also signifies the erosion of embodied and orally transmitted knowledge systems, ultimately disrupting intergenerational memory and diminishing the diversity of human expression.

As a designated element of China's national-level intangible cultural heritage, Xiping folk song offers a representative case within the global dilemma of safeguarding cultural traditions. Deeply rooted in the agrarian society of southwestern Henan Province, traditional Xiping folk song performance integrates folk rituals, vocal traditions, and the use of ancient bronze instruments. The ritual components are diverse and historically grounded, the lyrical content is rich and melodically varied, and the instrumental

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accompaniment is austere yet distinctively local. The performance itself emphasizes collective participation and incorporates gesture, narrative, rhythm, and improvisation, making it a vital vehicle for orally transmitted, living cultural knowledge (Lin & Chai, 2024). However, with the passing of elder practitioners, the influence of popular culture, the erosion of traditional cultural environments, the outmigration of young people, the decline of rural performance spaces, and the marginalization of folk music in formal education, the intergenerational transmission of Xiping folk song faces severe challenges (Zhang, 2024).

In recent years, both the academic and policy communities have increasingly recognized the role of education in the safeguarding of intangible heritage. UNESCO (2015), as well as scholars such as Caingcoy (2023) and Howard (2021), have advocated for culturally responsive pedagogy—an approach that bridges traditional knowledge systems with contemporary educational models. However, these theories often lack practical and locally adaptable frameworks, particularly in rural areas of developing countries. In China, although national-level initiatives have advanced curriculum reform and cultural industry policies, they frequently fail to meaningfully engage local communities, educational institutions, informal transmission mechanisms, and oral traditions (Cui, 2025). This study addresses the central research question: How can a dual-dimensional educational model support the sustainable transmission of Xiping folk song performance? Drawing upon a qualitative ethnomusicological methodology, the research integrates field documentation of folk performances, in-depth interviews with 18 tradition bearers, educators, and cultural policymakers, critical analysis of cultural and educational policy texts from 2010 to 2025, and dialogic engagement with local communities. The resulting model proposes an integrated approach that merges formal and informal educational strategies across five interconnected modules: cultural tourism project design, master-apprentice knowledge transmission, localized curriculum development, pedagogical innovation in higher education, and digital learning ecosystems.

The novelty of this research lies in three key contributions:

- A. It grounds theoretical construction in localized folk practices, anchoring the model in the lived cultural context of Xiping.
- B. It emphasizes the coexistence of formal and informal education, moving beyond the binary opposition of “tradition versus modernity.”
- C. It offers a methodological pathway for building culturally responsive educational models, demonstrating the value of qualitative inquiry in the design of heritage-based learning frameworks.

Through this study, Xiping folk song is no longer treated solely as an object for preservation but as a dynamic educational resource. The proposed model presents a sustainable strategy that balances cultural authenticity with contemporary educational imperatives, thereby addressing both the theoretical and practical dimensions of global heritage education discourse.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Music Transmission*

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to the living traditions and expressive forms passed down across generations. UNESCO (2003) defines ICH as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage." The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage emphasizes that ICH relies on intergenerational cultural transmission and requires systematic safeguarding measures to ensure its continued vitality (Lee, 2020). Among these, musical traditions play a critical role. Folk songs, in particular, often encapsulate collective memory, regional identity, and cultural values, functioning as “repositories of history and collective memory” (Massing, 2018). Scholars have highlighted the risk of ICH loss in the face of modernization and globalization. For instance, studies indicate that urbanization processes in China have caused a rapid decline in rural folk song traditions, thereby underscoring the urgency of preserving them through educational means (Du, 2023; Li & Yang, 2025). Overall, the preservation of music-related intangible heritage is considered an essential component of cultural sustainability, with both education and community-based learning identified as critical pathways (Baocheng & Dun, 2014).

2.2 *Informal and Formal Education in Cultural Sustainability*

The transmission of ICH typically occurs through informal mechanisms—such as within families, clans, festivals, and master-apprentice relationships—rather than within formal institutions. UNESCO (2003) explicitly identifies intergenerational transmission of ICH as a traditional form of community-based informal education. However, the Convention also recommends the integration of ICH into both formal and non-formal educational systems as a key safeguarding strategy (Rogers, 2014). Formal education (e.g.,

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primary, secondary, and higher education) provides a structured platform for mass dissemination, while non-formal education (e.g., community workshops, folk music groups, and local training programs) helps bridge the gap between heritage bearers and institutional education. UNESCO has called for “educational programs to promote recognition, respect, and preservation of intangible heritage,” including both curricular and community-based activities (Likando, 2015).

In practice, however, indigenous and local culture is often underrepresented in formal curricula. As Ni et al. (2018) observed, while local folk songs are culturally rich and significant for heritage preservation, they are “rarely given attention” within the formal school system (Ni, 2018; Chen, 2023). This neglect has prompted scholars and practitioners to explore alternative pedagogical approaches within formal education settings. Meanwhile, folk song learning continues informally and, in some regions such as Northern Shaanxi, remains highly vibrant (Wu, 2025). Researchers emphasize that education for ICH should integrate both formal and informal approaches: community-based learning can enhance classroom relevance and meaning, while schools offer access to resources and structured knowledge dissemination (Ulbricht, 2005).

UNESCO and education scholars generally agree that combining both dimensions promotes cultural sustainability. For instance, UNESCO has noted that ICH can offer “context-specific content and pedagogical approaches” that benefit educational outcomes while reinforcing heritage transmission (Wu, 2025). Recent experimental models—such as the 2015 declaration of ICH integration in Chinese universities—have aimed to embed heritage elements within formal systems (Yan & Li, 2023). Nevertheless, challenges remain: many teachers are constrained by academically standardized content and often lack exposure to traditional arts. Policy support also requires strengthening. These gaps have led scholars to advocate for more culturally responsive pedagogy and closer collaboration between schools and local communities (Xu & Seekhunlio, 2025).

2.3 Educational Models in Folk Performance Preservation

Academic literature has begun to document and test various educational models for folk performance preservation, but fully developed frameworks remain scarce. Case studies reveal multiple instructional pathways. In formal education, some schools and universities have incorporated local folk songs into music curricula. For instance, Xu and Seekhunlio (2025) describe how a folk artist in Xiping introduced folk songs into local primary school curricula and community troupes, using ensemble-based training and performance events to inspire student engagement. Similarly, Orphanidou et al. (2024) describe the integration of Ziyang folk songs into school music courses as a “comprehensive educational model” that enhances students’ emotional development, cognitive capacity, and cultural identity (Yang, Chuangprakhon, & Seekhunlio, 2025). These examples suggest that dual-dimensional models—combining technical instruction with cultural immersion—can be particularly effective for preserving local folk songs.

Vocational and extracurricular education also play a role. For example, vocational colleges in Shaanxi Province have introduced Shaanbei folk songs into voice training classes, which researchers report not only enrich vocal pedagogy but also strengthen students’ understanding of regional music, and contribute to cultivating future teaching personnel (Xu, 2024). Additionally, various local governments and cultural organizations have hosted folk workshops, music festivals, and singing competitions to promote transmission outside formal school systems. Digital archiving and online learning platforms have also emerged as new transmission pathways (Zhang, 2024).

Despite these promising developments, a notable research gap persists: there is still no comprehensive educational framework specifically designed for the sustainable transmission of regional performance traditions such as Xiping folk song. Existing studies mostly focus on individual initiatives or case reports. For example, while Xu and Seekhunlio (2025) document personal heritage work, they also call for more systematic strategies to ensure long-term transmission. Likewise, other scholars emphasize that integrating folk traditions into curricula requires carefully designed courses and targeted teacher training (Yang, Chuangprakhon, & Seekhunlio, 2025). In sum, although diverse models—classroom teaching, apprenticeship systems, community-based learning, and cultural tourism projects—have been piloted, a unified dual-dimensional educational model connecting school-based education with informal community transmission remains underdeveloped. Addressing this gap is essential for supporting the sustainable continuity of regional performing arts like Xiping folk song.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to examine the transmission of Xiping folk songs through the dual lenses of tradition and education (Mills, 1957). Data were collected between 2023 and 2025 through three primary methods: (1) document

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analysis of cultural, educational, and tourism policy texts officially issued between 2010 and 2025; (2) in-depth semi-structured interviews with Xiping folk song inheritors, folk artists in Xiping Town, and cultural officials and music educators from both Xixia County and Xiping Town; and (3) participant observation conducted during the Spring Lantern Festival and in regular performances by Xiping folk song ensembles. These methods were selected to generate a deeper understanding of local folk cultural practices. Consistent with previous research, field observation and interviews are effective in capturing participants' authentic cultural experiences (Suanlian, 2022). All data collection was conducted solely by the researcher.

Policy documents such as the Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Implementation Guidelines for Textbook Management in Primary and Secondary Schools of Henan Province (Trial), and the 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural and Tourism Integration Development in Henan Province were collected from archives, official government websites, and local cultural bureaus. Following Bueger's (2023) recommendations, these documents were treated as valuable data sources; analyzing pre-existing official records can offer perspectives that are otherwise difficult to obtain directly. Each document was systematically reviewed, and relevant sections concerning folk song transmission, music education, and the integration of culture and tourism were extracted for detailed analysis.

Regarding participant observation, the researcher attended live performances of Xiping folk songs during the Spring Lantern Festival as an observer, documenting the events in detail. A comprehensive field diary was maintained, recording performance environments, interactions between performers and audiences, various performance formats, and the folk songs sung. The researcher collaborated closely with the Xiping Township Cultural Center and the "Dengtou" (event organizers) to gain immersive cultural experience (Hirokawa, 2019). Photographs and audio recordings (with consent) were taken as supplementary records. Observations provided rich contextual background for the interviews. For example, ritualistic performances and impromptu folk singing revealed how Xiping folk songs are practiced in authentic contexts and their social functions.

A total of 18 in-depth interviews were conducted, with participants selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation from diverse perspectives (Laura, Michaela, Eileen, & James, 2025). Interviewees included Xiping folk song inheritors, veteran folk artists, staff from the Xixia County Cultural Bureau and Xiping Township Cultural Center, and educators involved in the teaching and dissemination of Xiping folk music. Initial recruitment began with folk artists in Xiping and expanded using snowball sampling to involve other key individuals. All interviews were conducted face-to-face between 2023 and 2025, each lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes. A semi-structured interview guide was used to focus on key topics while encouraging participants to elaborate on their experiences and viewpoints. Topics included participants' personal learning trajectories, performance timelines, pedagogical practices (for educators), and their perceptions of specific phenomena related to the transmission of Xiping folk songs. All interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and fully transcribed. Prior to each session, the researcher verbally explained the study's objectives and procedures and obtained oral informed consent. Participants were assured of their voluntary participation and their right to decline or withdraw at any time, with strict confidentiality guaranteed (Freund, 2009).

Data analysis was conducted manually through hand coding, utilizing both content analysis and thematic analysis techniques. The researcher repeatedly reviewed each interview transcript, field note, observation record, and policy document to extract meaningful units of information and generate initial codes. An inductive logic guided the coding process, allowing themes to emerge organically—aligned with the methodology of Jin and Bridges (2020), who systematically coded and categorized interviews, observations, and archival records to identify thematic patterns. Subsequently, the initial codes were categorized into higher-order themes, and a coding book with clear definitions for each code and theme was developed to ensure consistency in analysis. No qualitative data analysis software was used; all coding was done manually using spreadsheets and handwritten notes. After coding, an "Applicability Assessment Framework" was applied to evaluate the significance and feasibility of each theme in the context of formal and informal educational practices and policy. This framework assessed each finding based on dimensions such as cultural relevance, educational alignment, and implementation feasibility (including advantages, priorities, and challenges), thereby informing how the findings could guide the design of educational models for Xiping folk song transmission.

To enhance transparency and replicability, the researcher maintained a comprehensive audit trail of all analytical decisions and interpretative processes (Brod, Tesler, & Christensen, 2009). Triangulation was also employed: findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis were cross-compared to ensure thematic consistency. Throughout the research process, the researcher engaged in reflexivity and documented potential sources of subjectivity. Member checking was conducted: two external

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experts (a music education scholar and a cultural studies researcher) and selected participants were invited to review the preliminary themes and provide feedback to validate interpretations and add detail (Janssen, 2014). These strategies—including audit trail maintenance, triangulation, and member checking—collectively enhanced the credibility and transparency of the findings.

In terms of ethical considerations, the study adhered to established academic standards. All participants were adults. Prior to interviews, the researcher verbally informed them of the study’s purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures and obtained their oral informed consent (Khan, Hussain, & Alam, 2021). Due to local customs and preferences, no written consent was requested. Participation was entirely voluntary, and interviewees were free to refuse to answer or withdraw without any negative consequences. All interview data were anonymized and securely stored. During observation, the researcher respected local customs, obtained permission before photographing or recording, and avoided disrupting the performance process. All data were stored on secure devices and used exclusively for academic purposes. This research was conducted independently by the author, without external funding or influence from any institutions or stakeholders.

To protect the privacy of interview participants, all names and identifying information have been anonymized. In this study, alphabetical codes combined with numerical identifiers were used in place of real names to ensure the confidentiality and safety of the participants. The main categories of interviewees are as follows: County Cultural Official A1, Town Cultural Official B1, Principal C1, Teacher D1, Bearer E1, Artist F1, Cultural Scholar G1, and Resident H1.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Overview of the Dual-Dimensional Framework

To ensure the sustainable transmission of Xiping folk song, this study proposes a dual-dimensional model encompassing formal education (schools and universities) and informal education (community and tourism). The model comprises five interrelated modules: cultural tourism venues, master–apprentice craft transmission, localized curriculum development, higher-education and teacher training, and digital media platforms. This framework delivers experiential learning within communities while providing systematic instruction in classroom settings. UNESCO emphasizes that safeguarding intangible cultural heritage requires integrating community transmission systems with both formal and non-formal education (UNESCO, n.d.). By embedding Xiping folk song into school curricula and local cultural-tourism sites, the model aims to preserve traditional forms, foster local identity, and broaden dissemination impact (County Cultural Official A1, personal communication, 2024).

Table 1 *The Dual-Dimensional Educational Model for the Transmission of Xiping Folk Song*

Module	Educational Content	Educational Form	Target Audience
Informal Education: Cultural Tourism	Immersive folk song performances; agricultural season-based reenactments; cultural folk performance interaction	Xiping Tea Mountain Folk Song Live-Action Theater; Xiping Agricultural Culture Experience Center; Folk Performance Street	Local residents, tourists, youth
Informal Education: Traditional Craft Transmission	Folk performance skills training (dry boat, bridal sedan, handcart, stilts); traditional prop-making techniques	Master–apprentice transmission; workshop-style experiential learning; ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) training programs	Young inheritors, folk art enthusiasts

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Formal Education:	Lyric interpretation (agricultural wisdom, ethics);	Primary-level ICH courses; secondary-level folk music workshops	Primary and secondary students, music teachers
Localized Curriculum Integration	melody and rhythm fundamentals; performance and accompaniment practice		
Formal Education:	ICH pedagogy and curriculum design;	ICH courses in teacher training institutions;	Pre-service teachers, music education
Higher Education	interdisciplinary research in folk music education	school–community collaborative performance programs	researchers
Digital Platform Development	Cloud-based resources; heritage interactive dissemination	museum audiovisual archiving; online engagement	Xiping Folk Song Digital Museum; Xiping Folk Song IP branding and digital engagement
			Internet users, ICH interes

4.2 Informal Education Pathway: Cultural Tourism

4.2.1 Xiping Tea Mountain Folk Song Live-Action Theater

Educational Overview:

The Xiping Tea Mountain Folk Song Live-Action Theater represents an informal educational setting that integrates traditional Xiping folk songs with the local tourism industry. Upgraded from earlier “Tea Mountain” cultural initiatives (Town Cultural Official B1, personal communication, 2024), this project presents scheduled daytime performances to allow visitors to experience the artistry of Xiping folk songs and related folk customs. Primarily managed by local cultural and tourism departments or partner organizations, this initiative aims to offer the public direct access to, and experiential engagement with, traditional folk performance, thereby promoting the transmission of folk arts.

Strengths:

This model transforms intangible folk culture into a visible and performative experience, creating a bridge between traditional culture and modern audiences. It aligns with national policies on rural revitalization and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) protection (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & State Council, 2022). The inclusion of creative and interactive stage designs contributes to making traditional culture “alive” and engaging. The design of new theatrical productions enhances the visitor experience and aligns with the goals of the Henan Provincial Cultural and Tourism Department’s (2023) stage arts development plan. Overall, this immersive performance platform responds to state policy, broadens the path for ICH education, and supports demonstrative and influential transmission of Xiping folk song (County Cultural Official A1, personal communication, 2024).

Challenges:

Major challenges include content creation and long-term operations. Developing compelling yet culturally authentic new productions requires a balance between tradition and modern aesthetics (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Maintaining a consistent, high-quality performance team also demands continuous training and resource input (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024). Furthermore, the model must navigate tensions between audience appeal and cultural authenticity to avoid excessive commercialization or entertainment-oriented dilution of tradition (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Practical difficulties include seasonal tourism fluctuations and weather-related disruptions (Bearer E1, personal communication, 2024), and long-term sustainability requires stable funding and professional management (Town Cultural Official B1, personal communication, 2024).

4.2.2 Xiping Agricultural Culture Experience Center

Educational Overview:

The Xiping Agricultural Culture Experience Center offers site-based cultural learning through hands-on interaction with agricultural

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life and traditional folk song practices (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Developed by local government or cultural institutions, this venue is oriented toward tourists and students, enabling them to participate in farming activities, folk performances, and craft-making. It translates abstract cultural knowledge into tangible experience, fostering public interest and identification with folk song heritage.

Strengths:

As an immersive cultural learning space, the center facilitates experiential engagement with traditional Xiping agrarian culture. It transforms intangible cultural elements into materialized, demonstrable content, enhancing participants' sensory memory and interpretive understanding of folk songs' historical and symbolic meanings. Moreover, this form of education integrates local resources with academic insights, offering a platform for regional cultural branding and a foundation for theoretical advancement in folk song education (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024).

Challenges:

The transformation of cultural theory into experiential formats requires significant creative innovation. One key issue is how to vividly represent traditional practices through secondary creation, which demands sophisticated design and scene construction (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024). Additionally, systematic theoretical support and resource investment are necessary. Practical implementation must address challenges such as defining core experience projects, training facilitators, and ensuring operational sustainability (Town Cultural Official B1, personal communication, 2024).

4.2.3 Xiping Folk Performance Street

Educational Overview:

Xiping Folk Performance Street aims to transmit Xiping folk songs by recreating traditional public performance settings. Managed by local cultural tourism departments, it features a continuous sequence of performances by folk artists. The street functions as a platform for the live display and teaching of authentic folk performance traditions, allowing tourists and learners to closely observe and engage with Xiping folk arts (Town Cultural Official B1, personal communication, 2024).

Strengths:

This initiative highlights "raw" and continuous cultural performance. Local folk artists are central to its operation, presenting iconic Xiping folk performance elements such as stilt-walking, dry-boat dancing, bridal sedan carrying, handcart pushing, qilin parading, and bamboo horse riding (Bearer E1, personal communication, 2024). The model effectively demonstrates the historical aesthetics of Xiping folk song and encourages public identification with local traditions. It also provides opportunities for master-apprentice transmission and the cultivation of new performers (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024).

Challenges:

The central difficulty lies in maintaining a balance between cultural authenticity and modern audience appeal. On the one hand, excessive modernization or commercialization risks eroding the cultural core (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024); on the other hand, attracting contemporary audiences requires content innovation and accessibility (Town Cultural Official B2, personal communication, 2024). Sustainability also depends on a stable performance troupe and effective site management. Ensuring that traditional performances remain vibrant and relevant within a modern tourism context, while maintaining regulatory and artistic integrity, remains a critical challenge (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024).

4.3 Informal Education Pathway: Traditional Craft and Performance Transmission

4.3.1 Master–Apprentice Transmission

Educational Overview:

The master–apprentice model is the most traditional form of skill transmission in Xiping folk performance. In this model, veteran folk artists (masters) train newcomers (apprentices) through oral instruction and hands-on practice. It exists outside the formal education system, taking place organically within traditional communities and families. Educationally, it emphasizes the "learning by performing, performing by learning" approach to pass down both folk songs and performance techniques across generations (Bearer E1, personal communication, 2024). The practice is largely individual-driven, shaped by the mentor's experience and the context of the training.

Strengths:

This model's strengths lie in personalized teaching and experiential learning. Free from institutional pressures, apprentices can

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develop intrinsic interest over time and pursue deep learning accordingly (Bearer E2, personal communication, 2024). As one bearer noted, “you learn these Xiping songs just by hearing them often” (Bearer E3, personal communication, 2024). This hands-on transmission reflects the oral tradition central to Xiping folk song and effectively preserves both technical skills and artistic sensibilities, making it a naturally sustainable form of cultural transmission.

Challenges:

However, the model also presents limitations. Transmission is highly individualized and non-scalable, making it vulnerable to discontinuity and the loss of intangible knowledge (Cultural Scholar G3, personal communication, 2024). The lack of formal recognition and standardization limits its ability to meet the growing demand for professional cultural talent in modern society (Town Cultural Official B2, personal communication, 2024). Its marginal role in education systems further complicates integration into curriculum frameworks and access to funding (Cultural Scholar G3, personal communication, 2024). Thus, while valuable, this model must be complemented by other educational strategies to broaden its impact.

4.3.2 Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Training Programs

Educational Overview:

ICH training programs are a relatively recent initiative designed to systematize the teaching and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. These programs are typically organized by government agencies, universities, cultural associations, or senior practitioners. They offer structured, formalized courses that emphasize the integrity and standardization of traditional techniques. Training is usually long-term and supplemented with documentation and curricular development (Cultural Scholar G4, personal communication, 2024).

Strengths:

These programs combine traditional mentorship with modern educational methods, allowing for deep knowledge transfer while facilitating assessment and record-keeping. For high-skill practices such as bronze percussion, stilt-walking, or improvisational singing—commonly seen in Xiping folk performance—fragmented, informal learning is often insufficient. Systematic instruction significantly enhances learners’ professional competence and performance readiness (Cultural Scholar G4, personal communication, 2024). Therefore, training programs serve as an effective complement to the master–apprentice model, enabling the large-scale cultivation of future heritage bearers.

Challenges:

Despite their strengths, these programs face several barriers. High entry requirements limit participation and hinder the broad dissemination of traditional culture. Long course durations lead to substantial operational costs and administrative challenges (Cultural Scholar G3, personal communication, 2024). Additionally, program sustainability depends heavily on government and societal support. Without consistent policy backing and adequate funding (Bearer E3, personal communication, 2024), the theoretical value of these programs may not translate into practical outcomes.

4.3.3 Workshop-Based Experiential Teaching

Educational Overview:

Workshop-based experiential teaching emphasizes hands-on participation and is aimed at promoting traditional crafts and folk practices among non-specialist audiences (Bearer E4, personal communication, 2024). Organized by cultural centers, tourist sites, or educational institutions, these short-term programs encourage learners to engage directly with folk crafts or performance practices. This model prioritizes interest cultivation and cultural awareness over professional skill development, targeting students, tourists, and cultural enthusiasts.

Strengths:

This approach provides high levels of immersion and interaction, helping learners internalize cultural concepts through personal experience (Cultural Scholar G3, personal communication, 2024). It translates abstract heritage knowledge into tangible actions, fostering stronger cultural identity and confidence. With its low threshold, short duration, and ease of implementation, the model is particularly suited for cultural festivals, community education, and heritage promotion events (Bearer E4, personal communication, 2024).

Challenges:

However, the model primarily offers surface-level engagement and is better suited for raising awareness than for in-depth training

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(Bearer E5, personal communication, 2024). Program quality depends heavily on the availability of expert instructors and well-designed activities. Without sufficient instructional support, workshop quality may be compromised. Furthermore, its simplicity can lead to over-entertainment, reducing cultural depth (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Without follow-up practice, participants may quickly forget what they have learned (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024).

4.4 Formal Education Pathway: Primary and Secondary School Curriculum

4.4.1 Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)–Themed Primary School Curriculum

Educational Overview:

The ICH-themed primary curriculum integrates Xiping folk songs and related traditional elements into school-based courses or extracurricular activities. Typically implemented by local education authorities or individual schools, the curriculum employs gamified and performative teaching methods, incorporating folk singing, cultural performances (e.g., bamboo horse riding, qilin dancing), and hands-on musical experiences (Teacher D1, personal communication, 2024). Its educational objective is to cultivate students' early cultural identity, artistic appreciation, and practical skills, while using the school system as a platform for transmitting ICH knowledge (Principal C1, personal communication, 2024).

Strengths:

Introducing folk culture at the primary level fosters a strong sense of local identity in children (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024). The curriculum relates to students' daily experiences, increasing engagement. The inclusion of local artists and parents enhances community participation and visibility (Teacher D1, personal communication, 2024). These courses simultaneously develop students' cultural literacy, aesthetic sensibility, and practical competencies, laying a solid emotional foundation for the long-term preservation of folk traditions.

Challenges:

Key challenges include a shortage of qualified teachers and educational resources. Most frontline teachers lack training in ICH education, and suitable teaching materials must be developed (Cultural Scholar G2, personal communication, 2024). The curriculum remains underdeveloped, requiring institutional support and structured teacher training. Moreover, limited policy support—such as funding and class time allocation—has hindered effective implementation (Principal C1, personal communication, 2024).

4.4.2 Music-Based Folk Practice in Secondary Schools

Educational Overview:

Secondary school music practice activities introduce Xiping folk songs through structured musical and performative experiences (Cultural Scholar G3, personal communication, 2024). Led by school music or moral education departments, activities such as folk music competitions, art festivals, and student interest groups encourage participation outside regular classes (Teacher D2, personal communication, 2024). The goal is to enrich students' musical understanding and cultural identity, incorporating traditional arts into holistic education.

Strengths:

This flexible, practice-oriented approach fits well with extracurricular learning and can be included in comprehensive quality assessments. It enhances student expressiveness, reinforces cultural memory, and fosters active engagement with ICH (Cultural Scholar G3, personal communication, 2024). Group activities promote peer learning and community building on campus, increasing awareness and appreciation of local culture among both students and faculty.

Challenges:

A balance must be struck between educational objectives and adolescents' preferences. Activities must be age-appropriate—neither outdated nor overly commercialized (Teacher D2, personal communication, 2024)—while also aligning with academic priorities to avoid resistance from students and parents. Organizational demands and administrative pressure within schools, particularly under the strain of standardized testing, often limit support for non-academic programming (Principal C2, personal communication, 2024).

4.5 Formal Education Pathway: Higher Education

4.5.1 ICH-Inclusive University Curriculum

Educational Overview:

Integrating Xiping folk songs into university curricula—particularly within music and teacher education—represents a systematic and professional approach to ICH transmission. Practices include inviting tradition bearers and folk artists to teach or co-teach

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courses and establishing dedicated ICH courses within academic programs. Managed by arts or teacher-training institutions, the initiative aims to equip future educators and researchers with solid grounding in heritage pedagogy while mainstreaming folk culture in higher education (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024).

Strengths:

Universities can bridge theory and practice. Inviting experts and tradition bearers into classrooms enriches content with localized and experiential insights (Teacher D3, personal communication, 2024). Simultaneously, folk artists benefit from academic recognition, enhancing their social status and cultural visibility. ICH courses can be designed to balance theoretical frameworks with practical training, preparing culturally competent teachers for rural education (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Overall, higher education contributes depth and sustainability to transmission efforts, offering long-term institutional support for regional cultural development.

Challenges:

Curriculum design and faculty development remain problematic. Challenges include recognizing non-academic instructors, aligning folk knowledge with academic standards, and adjusting pedagogical approaches (Teacher D3, personal communication, 2024). University courses are further constrained by limited resources, lack of faculty training, and misalignment with students' career goals (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Sustainable implementation requires policy support, standardized curricula, and teacher development programs.

4.5.2 School–Local Government Collaborative Performance Practice

Educational Overview:

School–local collaboration refers to partnerships between universities and local governments or cultural organizations to jointly promote the preservation and transmission of Xiping folk songs. These collaborations integrate talent development, stage performance, and cultural dissemination. The goal is to train students in performance, interpretation, and cultural advocacy, enabling them to contribute to local cultural tourism (e.g., Tea Mountain Folk Song Theater) while creatively reinterpreting Xiping folk culture for contemporary university audiences (Cultural Scholar G4, personal communication, 2024). These programs typically operate under formal agreements and combine the strengths of academic and community-based systems.

Strengths:

Such collaborations eliminate institutional silos and enable cross-sectoral educational synergy. Universities provide curriculum design, research support, and innovative interpretation, while local institutions offer performance venues, cultural bearers, and dissemination channels (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). These partnerships integrate “learning, performing, and communicating,” presenting folk arts through campus events, cultural festivals, and creative productions, expanding the cultural reach among youth (Teacher D4, personal communication, 2024). Students also gain field experience and develop cultural identity and social responsibility in authentic settings.

Challenges:

First, collaboration lacks institutional standardization. Differences in goals, pace, and resource allocation between partners can result in inefficiencies and instability (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Second, high operational costs—including personnel coordination, logistics, and accommodations—demand dedicated funding and management. Third, integrating these activities into academic schedules is difficult given students' workloads and credit requirements (Teacher D4, personal communication, 2024). Finally, conservative attitudes toward cultural adaptation in some communities may resist reinterpretation, requiring consensus-building to balance tradition and innovation (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024).

4.6 Digital Education Platform Construction

4.6.1 Xiping Folk Song Cloud-Based Museum

Educational Overview:

The Xiping Folk Song Cloud-Based Museum is a digital platform in the form of a website or mobile application that aggregates audio, video, musical scores, images, and fieldwork archives related to Xiping folk songs. It serves the dual purpose of cultural preservation and online dissemination. Initiated by local government in collaboration with universities, tech firms, and cultural institutions, the platform functions as a vital digital extension of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) education.

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Strengths:

The platform removes spatial and temporal limitations, ensuring long-term preservation and flexible integration of folk materials into formal education (Town Cultural Official B3, personal communication, 2024). Multi-device access enables interactive learning, enhancing the openness, adaptability, and sustainability of ICH education. As a supplementary resource for classroom instruction, the museum benefits not only local schools but also broader educational systems, extending the reach of heritage pedagogy (Teacher D4, personal communication, 2024).

Challenges:

Major challenges include the complexity of early-stage digitalization, such as high-quality data collection, metadata organization, and database construction (Cultural Scholar G5, personal communication, 2024). Long-term success depends on continuous platform maintenance, content updates, and user support—requiring skilled technical teams and stable funding. Without sustained investment, the platform risks becoming an underutilized tool, undermining its educational potential and public appeal (Town Cultural Official B3, personal communication, 2024).

4.6.2 Xiping Folk Song IP Development

Educational Overview:

The development of a Xiping Folk Song "intellectual property" (IP) refers to the creation of symbolic cultural assets and media content centered on the folk song tradition. Dissemination occurs across short video platforms, social media, and digital entertainment channels through initiatives such as the "Sound of Xiping" challenge, character-driven folk edits, and creative reinterpretations. The initiative is jointly implemented by cultural-tourism departments, content creators, university media teams, and digital platforms, with the aim of increasing digital visibility and cultural resonance.

Strengths:

IP development leverages lightweight, entertaining formats to engage younger audiences, fostering cultural immersion and emotional connection through participatory media (Cultural Scholar G5, personal communication, 2024). Algorithm-driven dissemination facilitates rapid spread, encouraging user-generated content, second-wave transmission, and creative reimagining. Furthermore, IP products can extend into cultural merchandise, virtual exhibitions, and online performances, enhancing the economic viability of cultural assets (Town Cultural Official B3, personal communication, 2024).

Challenges:

The primary challenge lies in balancing cultural depth with entertainment value. Excessive commercialization may dilute the cultural significance of the folk tradition and reduce its pedagogical efficacy. Additionally, without proper aesthetic guidance and professional curation, user-generated content can vary widely in quality (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Other obstacles include platform algorithm shifts and limited operational experience, which may hinder sustainable impact. Strategic planning and cultural stewardship are necessary to align educational objectives with media dissemination.

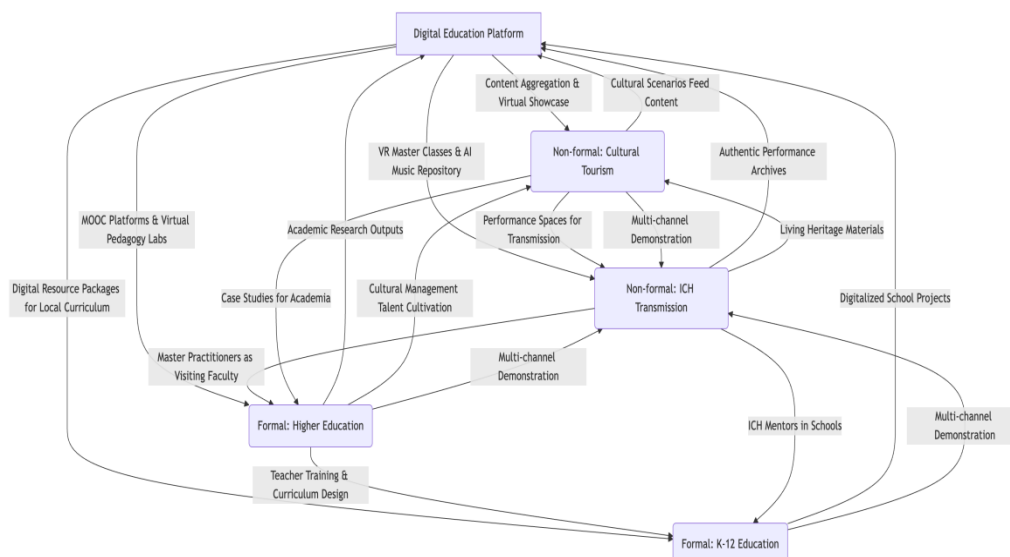
5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Constructing a Dual-Dimensional Educational Ecosystem

The five modules within the dual-dimensional educational model for Xiping folk song are not isolated; rather, they form an interconnected system in which the digital platform functions as the central hub, formal and informal education serve as the dual wings, and resource circulation acts as the bloodstream. See the diagram below for details, this relationship map positions the digital platform as the neural center of a dual-dimensional educational ecosystem for intangible cultural heritage (ICH) transmission. The core logic reflects the following dialectical relationships:

Figure 1 *Relationship Diagram of the Dual-Dimensional Educational Model for Xiping Folk Song*

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A. Symbiotic Structure of Dual Integration

Formal education (higher education → primary and secondary education) and informal education (craft-based transmission ↔ cultural tourism) do not exist in parallel silos; instead, they form a multi-layered network through flows of talent, knowledge, and learning scenarios. Higher education, functioning as an intellectual engine, delivers standardized curriculum resources to lower schools and nurtures performing and managerial talent for the cultural tourism sector. Meanwhile, informal craft-based transmission serves as a “living gene pool,” infusing formal education with authenticity through school-based residency programs for tradition bearers. This integrated model addresses the dichotomy between cultural authenticity and modern adaptability in educational practice (Ge, Gilardi, Whyke, & Yang, 2024).

B. Evolutionary Mechanism of Cross-Boundary Feedback

A key innovation of this model is its reverse empowerment pathway. First, cultural tourism serves not only as a platform for public display but also stimulates innovation among tradition bearers—e.g., blending traditional singing styles with contemporary stage design—thereby reinforcing motivation and forming a “performance-to-transmission” feedback loop (Cultural Scholar G1, personal communication, 2024). Second, when primary and secondary students participate in folk song performances, formal education becomes an incubator for informal cultural learning, reversing the traditional model of passive cultural reception in schools (Teacher D1, personal communication, 2024). Third, higher education scholars contribute to cultural tourism planning and school curriculum development—as academic advisors for folk theater productions or textbook authors—integrating theoretical research into practical applications.

C. Metabolic Circulation of the Digital Core

The digital platform serves as the cultural “heart” of the system. On one hand, technologies such as VR-based training libraries and AI-generated music archives empower each module—e.g., offering digital teaching kits for schools or immersive performance resources for tourism. On the other hand, the platform continuously absorbs “cultural nutrients” from across the system, including university research outputs, field recordings, tourist performance footage, and student-created content (Principal C1, personal communication, 2024). This bidirectional metabolic process enables dynamic self-renewal, aligning with the core principle of ICH as a “living heritage.”

D. Systemic Resilience of the Cultural Ecosystem

When external shocks—such as pandemics or economic disruptions—impede one module (e.g., cultural tourism), other modules can sustain cultural continuity through alternate activities. Tradition bearers can continue transmission via the master–apprentice model; universities can maintain teacher training and explore new transmission platforms through research initiatives (County Cultural Official A1, personal communication, 2024). This multi-node redundancy significantly enhances system resilience, offering

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a Chinese model of “resilient governance” in global heritage education.

In sum, this model transcends the traditional unidimensional approach of “bringing ICH into schools.” By building a triadic structure comprising (1) educational provision (formal/informal), (2) digital empowerment, and (3) scenario-based cultural feedback (tourism ecology), it achieves:

- A. A dialectical unity between cultural preservation (craft-based modules) and modern transformation (digital and tourism modules);
- B. Intergenerational continuity, with youth progressively engaging through the pathway of school → university → community; and
- C. Glocalized solutions, using digital technologies to overcome geographic limitations in transmission.

This transformation signals a paradigm shift from “cultural transfusion” to “cultural self-generation” in ICH education.

5.2 Significance of the Model in Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Education

The dual-dimensional educational model proposed in this study holds cultural, educational, and policy significance for ICH education. Culturally, by integrating both informal (community, tourism, apprenticeship) and formal (primary, secondary, and higher education) pathways, the model preserves the authenticity of oral traditions while fostering broad cultural identification with Xiping folk songs across diverse contexts (Lin & Chai, 2024). Educationally, it transcends the limitations of conventional classroom instruction by combining experiential learning with structured curricula, aligning with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy (UNESCO, 2015), and enhancing learners’ cultural agency and practical competence. From a policy perspective, the model aligns with China’s dual national strategies of “rural revitalization” and “ICH protection” (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & State Council, 2022), offering actionable pathways for integration into regional cultural, educational, and tourism policies (Cui, 2025).

5.3 Comparison with International Models

Globally, diverse approaches to ICH transmission have emerged. In Ireland, traditional music festivals function as key drivers of cultural tourism (Ní Chonail, 2023). In British Columbia, Canada, indigenous knowledge systems have been incorporated into community music education, fostering reconciliation between settler and Tla’amin communities (Prest, 2020). Gaunt et al. (2021) emphasized the role of higher music education institutions in developing musicians as community-engaged cultural creators, enabling meaningful practice and professional transition. In South Africa, researchers explored the feasibility of introducing digital music skills into primary school curricula from pedagogical, social, and cultural heritage perspectives (Yende, 2024). Compared to these models, the present study emphasizes bidirectional empowerment and a centralized digital hub. It prioritizes not only “community-to-school” pathways, but also “school-to-community” and “digital-to-physical” feedback loops, offering enhanced ecological resilience and scalability.

5.4 Potential for Model Replication and Adaptation

This model demonstrates strong regional adaptability and interdisciplinary potential. First, its modular design allows flexible selection and recombination of components to suit local ICH resources, facilitating “point-based replication and surface-level diffusion.” For example, other rural areas may combine the “live performance” and “digital museum” modules for localized dual-dimensional practice. Second, the model provides a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration across music, education, and digital humanities, supporting the integration of arts education, cultural studies, and information technology (Cultural Scholar G3, personal communication, 2024). Third, the framework offers practical value for policymakers, cultural tourism departments, schools, and communities, serving as an institutional reference for multisectoral cooperation.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its flexibility and replicability, the model has several limitations. First, the lack of standardized protocols for digital platforms—combined with uneven technical capacity and funding—affects the sustainability of the digital core (Town Cultural Official B1, personal communication, 2024). Second, a shortage of qualified teachers and transmission personnel persists. In particular, there is insufficient support for training frontline educators and community artists, necessitating the development of continuing education and heritage certification systems (Bearer E3, personal communication, 2024). Third, cross-regional promotion requires careful adaptation to local social structures, cultural attitudes, and policy environments to avoid disruptive “one-size-fits-all” approaches.

Future research may focus on the following areas:

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A. Standardization of Digital Technologies: Define functional and content standards for digital modules (e.g., cloud museums, virtual training, AI-assisted folk archives) aligned with national digital culture initiatives (Cultural Scholar G4, personal communication, 2024).

B. Multistakeholder Collaboration Mechanisms: Explore tri-sector coordination among government, universities, and communities, and design governance and evaluation systems for efficient project delivery.

C. Assessment of Social Impact: Conduct longitudinal studies to quantify the model's effects on students' cultural identity, local economic development, and ICH preservation outcomes.

D. Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Engage in empirical research across different countries and cultural contexts to evaluate the model's transferability and generate comparative insights.

6. CONCLUSION

This study takes the case of Xiping folk song—a nationally recognized form of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in China—to construct and validate a dual-dimensional transmission model that integrates both formal and informal education. The research makes three key contributions:

First, in terms of cultural value, the model preserves the oral authenticity of Xiping folk songs while simultaneously providing modern channels for their presentation and dissemination. By linking five interconnected modules—community, cultural tourism, master–apprentice transmission, school-based education, and digital platforms—the model achieves both cultural preservation and innovative regeneration (Lin & Chai, 2024).

Second, in terms of educational methodology, the model overcomes the limitations of conventional classroom instruction and singular transmission pathways by proposing a triadic framework of experiential learning, structured curriculum, and a digital core. This aligns with UNESCO's (2015) principles of culturally responsive pedagogy and enhances learner agency and practical competence.

Third, in the policy implementation dimension, the model responds to China's dual strategies of "rural revitalization" and "ICH safeguarding" and provides an operational blueprint for local governments and education sectors, helping to maximize policy effectiveness (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & State Council, 2022).

Beyond theoretical enrichment, the proposed model offers a replicable, scalable, and sustainable paradigm for cultural transmission in practice. It emphasizes modular design and multi-directional feedback, accommodating community-to-school, school-to-community, and digital-to-physical flows. This marks a strategic shift from passive cultural transfusion to active cultural self-regeneration. The transformation is particularly relevant to global challenges in ICH education, where theory often outweighs practice and schools operate largely isolated from community engagement.

Looking forward, further development of the model can proceed along the following lines:

A. Regional Pilot Programs: Conduct pilot implementations in diverse rural and urban settings to assess the model's adaptability under varied cultural and policy environments.

B. Cross-National Comparative Studies: Engage in international research comparing this model with heritage education practices in countries such as Ireland, Mexico, and regions in Africa, to evaluate its universal applicability and paths for localized adaptation.

C. Interdisciplinary Integration and Technical Standardization: Strengthen collaborations with fields such as digital humanities, educational technology, and management studies to standardize the functions and content of digital modules—including cloud museums, AI-based folk music archives, and virtual training platforms—enhancing accessibility and operational efficiency.

In conclusion, grounded in the specific cultural context of Xiping folk song, this research constructs a dual-dimensional model that contributes both theoretical insight and practical guidance to the global field of ICH education. With ongoing regional expansion and international validation, the model has the potential to support a virtuous cycle of "education-driven transmission and transmission-driven development" across diverse cultural contexts.

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