

INTEGRATION OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE FOLK MUSIC CULTURE INTO MUSIC EDUCATION AT MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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Abstract: The integration of traditional Chinese folk music into music education at middle schools not only can improve learning effectiveness, but also raise awareness of national values and the importance of China's cultural heritage. The primary goal of this study is to examine the effectiveness of developed academic programs in integrating traditional Chinese folk music culture and to establish what impact the developed curriculum has on the awareness of national values among students. The study was conducted among 410 students ($n = 13.1$) from four middle schools in China. The study relied on a developed academic program, with assessment of academic achievements in music and two online surveys. Experimental groups B performed 13.7% better than the control groups, suggesting that the developed academic program is effective in the context of music learning. Also, after a six-month exposure to the training program that involved learning traditional Chinese folk music, Group B performed better compared to its performance in January. "Strongly agree" answers were given to statements that referred to the understanding that China's cultural heritage constitutes the treasure of the entire nation (an increase of 22.2%), and to patriotism, which manifested itself as a feeling of love for one's country (an increase of 20.7%). This study has practical value and is important for further research because it confirms the effectiveness of the integration of the developed academic program for increasing awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage among middle school students.

Keywords: learning, middle school, music, musical culture, music education

INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese folk music has unique features that are completely different from the musical cultures of other countries, both in the ways music is performed and in the way it is notated (Dong 2015), and it is the style of Chinese music that underlies its subjectivity (Hoene 2017). Since the early twentieth century, with the importation of Western music and the beginning of its era of dominance, Chinese music has been on the verge of losing its own national identity as Western cultural values became the dominant standard, while folk motifs started losing their popularity (Ho & Law 2012). However, in the context of globalization, and especially cultural interaction and integration, the development of traditional Chinese music these days has unprecedented chances and opportunities for its popularization among the local population, because traditional Chinese music has the national code of many generations of China (Li 2015). Available studies suggest that recently great importance has been attached to the innovation and reform of traditional musical culture (Adams 2013), and the need to support the development of traditional Chinese musical culture pursuant to the rapid advancement of cultural integration in a global context has been confirmed (Bai & Li 2017). It is believed that this will contribute to the advocacy and dissemination of traditional Chinese cultural capital in the country, which is especially relevant for the younger generation.

The introduction and promotion of Asian culture is becoming a trend in all countries (Zhang 2018). The problem of preserving and promoting the cultural, and particularly musical, heritage of China has increasingly attracted the attention of researchers around the world (Chen 2016; Clothey et al. 2016; Williams et al. 2020). Traditional Chinese music strongly reflects the cultural, intellectual, and artistic level of the nation. Consequently, the development and popularization options for Chinese music are widely sought-after and significant (Weng 2016). It is believed that fostering attachment to national culture among individuals and providing guidance to improve skills in revitalizing traditional national music might bring resources and inspiration to create musical compositions that contain unique national features that can be enjoyed by audiences around the world (Li 2015).

Traditional Chinese music has undergone a long historical evolution and has its own sound. If the aesthetic value of music is lost, there will be no point in its existence. Therefore, the need to practice performing and to entrench traditional pillars of Chinese culture arises (Zhou 2019). Being an important part of the musical heritage, traditional music, aside from taking on the legacy task of developing students' musical literacy, has implications for promoting national culture and cultural capital (Shi 2021).

Culture and creativity play an important role in every country (Bai & Li 2017). Audio content, visual content, music, literature, live performances, and other forms of cultural expression connect people and society (Dong 2015). The rich cultural heritage of China is recognized around the world: it improves lives, promotes values and strengthens mutual understanding. Involvement in creative and cultural activities can have a significant impact on schooling, contributing to overall well-being and reinforcing a sense of community (Eurostat 2022). Furthermore, available studies confirm that cultural traditions need to be instilled from an early age. As children get older, traditional features and values should be integrated into school education to an even greater extent, since children in their middle age begin to develop their understanding of national values and their commitment to tradition (Ho & Law 2020). On top of that, sound coordination of folk song resources and formal learning practices can be the key to effective instruction that motivates all participants in music education (Yang & Welch 2016).

Keeping in mind the need to popularize and promote traditional Chinese folk music culture (e.g., of the country's rich heritage) in academic programs, this article addresses the issues of developing a program to integrate traditional Chinese music into academic programs offered by middle schools. This article is an original study of the effect such integration has on national values in the context of increased patriotism and cultural awareness in a country. Evaluation of cultural knowledge in China and the level of relevant interest among students is important, because it can:

- improve the quality of music education in middle schools;
- popularize Chinese culture;
- improve knowledge about the people and culture in general.

This article has practical implications and may be relied upon in further research because it can contribute to the integration of traditional Chinese folk music culture into music education at middle schools as a way to promote the ideas of national values in China, which include:

- patriotism;
- sense of nationhood;
- the principles of the rule of law, democracy, equality, social justice and fairness.

The study of Chinese folk music can be seen as a way to develop the younger generation's national identity, which is extremely important for implementation of academic programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School education should include a range of academic program-based knowledge that might contain specific cultural and national values, such as language, ethnicity, race, cultural history and traditions, that are viewed as shared beliefs about what is good, absolute, and desirable in society. Chinese culture draws particularly on Confucian values concerning the cultivation of virtue and harmonious relationships. An important aspect of culture is that it brings together the shared knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals that guide human activity (Ho & Law 2020). By emphasizing the nation's development, cultural values in education fully meet the government's interests. Schools play an important role in legitimizing specific forms of knowledge, and dominant cultural capital is legitimized through the choice of specific beliefs and skills (Clothey et al. 2016).

Being a measure of the nation's power, an academic program is a major contributor to preserving national and cultural values (Ho & Law 2020). Teachers bring cultural capital to classrooms when they teach traditional folk music, as the goal of this process is to introduce students to the values and heritage of the entire society. Music education in China promotes awareness of national identity and national culture through traditional Chinese music. In patriotic education, national sentiments refer to emotional attachment, while national consciousness comes from shared traditions, values, and cultures of the past (Ho & Law 2020). Values refer to beliefs or ideas shared by members of the same community, the same culture, and the same nation. The concept of national values refers to morality and standards of what is good and what is bad, what is desirable or undesirable. Values have a great influence on human behavior and attitudes, and they serve as general guidelines for human behavior in all situations. The introduction of traditional Chinese music is a sign of how nationhood has begun to manifest itself in varying degrees in school music education. The concept of patriotism in music education has serious implications for the entire learning process (Lee 2014). There is a serious pedagogical issue in contemporary Chinese music education, as government policy expects that pieces of China's cultural and musical heritage will be incorporated into music programs, both in middle schools and higher education institutions (Yang & Welch 2016). Nevertheless, the teaching approaches applied in the programs have been heavily influenced by the formal study of Western and Chinese classical music, while Chinese folk music is largely described by the oral tradition (Yang & Welch 2016).

The existing system of academic programs in music designed from the perspective of Western and Chinese classical music may be less effective than the system that focuses on the study of authentic folk songs (Yang & Welch 2014).

This may be due to the fact that it is traditional folk music that is filled with the country's various special features that are extremely important for understanding China's musical culture. Recent evolution of cutting-edge technologies resulted in:

- upgraded approaches to music education;
- progress toward the industry's improvement and standardization;
- expected growth of integrated traditional Chinese folk music in middle schools (Zhang 2020).

So-called musical typicality is actually a national tradition of China's entire musical culture (Adams 2013). Chinese music is a unique system with its own national features, including musical notation, which is completely different from the music of other countries and peoples. The 5-note and equal temperament system is a typical musical feature that distinguishes Chinese national music. Such a valuable national heritage must receive the attention it deserves. Therefore, the national heritage of traditional Chinese folk music should be integrated into the existing education system. The preservation and development of the Chinese cultural capital can be the unbreakable foundation of any artistic creative process these days (Liu et al. 2016).

Folk song is the most common music genre in traditional Chinese culture (China Culture 2022). There are dozens of styles of folk music in China. Ethnic folk music, which includes Tibetan, Uyghur and Dong folk music, is popular along with Han folk music (China Culture 2022). Han folk music is the music of the people living in the countryside. Han Chinese have several languages and many dialects, as well as many regional styles of folk music (Jiang 2021). Instruments are divided into types depending on the materials of which they are made. They include bowed and plucked strings, woodwinds, as well as tuned and untuned percussion instruments (GCSE 2022). Gongs are also a part of Han folk music. Traditional Chinese folk music is described by several regional styles (Jiang 2021). The earliest known authentic Chinese folk music dates back to the twelfth century, when Chinese folk flute solos were written to tell the traditions and tales of various communities and regions (Music-Folk 2021). Guangdong music from the Guangzhou region, also known as Cantonese music, is a more recent popular form of Chinese folk music.

China has a unique perspective on the importance of music in the historical insight, without considering it an art form meant for entertainment, because traditional music is a receptacle of cultural and historical heritage, a way to preserve and convey heritage to future generations. Although traditional folk music forms exist in their own right and have been influenced by Western music

to a certain extent, Chinese folk music today still retains much of its former classical style (Music-Folk 2021).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This paper was motivated primarily by the desire to obtain new experimental data on the effects of integrating traditional Chinese folk music culture into music education at middle schools on students' understanding of their country's national values, as the findings might influence the introduction of such practices into traditional music programs. This may result in improved national identity development and disseminate the cultural heritage of China. On top of that, such events can be a response to the challenges posed by the loss of the younger generation's interest in traditional values and the dominance of Western music that Chinese society faces today. The primary goal of this study is to examine the effectiveness of using the developed academic program to evaluate the possibility of integrating traditional Chinese folk music culture into music education in middle schools in China. This paper also discusses the impact the developed academic program in traditional Chinese folk music had on the awareness of national values among students, compared with the control group, which took a regular music course, without an in-depth study of traditional folk music. The following research objectives were formulated before commencement of the research:

1. Analyze the effectiveness of the developed academic program in music by comparing the two groups: control Group A (music classes were conducted according to the educational institution's academic program); and experimental Group B (the developed program was used). Identify the impact of regular classes and classes including traditional Chinese folk music on the learning achievements.
2. Measure the impact of the developed program on the awareness of national values and the role of China's cultural heritage by comparing the findings of the survey among students, which was conducted before the study and after its completion.

METHODS AND SOURCES

An academic program, which was developed specially for this study, consisted of group workshops, viewing master classes in China's traditional folk music instruments, group activities, and improvisations. The teaching approach focused on revitalizing students, their self-expression, raising cultural and historical awareness, informing students about the cultural background and the special components of folk music. The authors developed all of the program's classes, trying to provide children with a wide variety of folk compositions. Attention was paid to the historical context of each episode of the academic program, its overall historical value, cultural and other features, artistic techniques, which are used in traditional Chinese folk music and constitute China's cultural heritage and treasure. All activities were prepared and planned by the music teacher for their own group based on professional expertise that enabled the students to study various pieces of folk music. Speakers and special musical instruments were used to add direct interaction with the instruments. Six types of Chinese folk music were included into the developed academic program assuming that one module is studied per month:

1. Tian'ge: Field songs. A typical form of performance is to be accompanied by gongs, drums, suona and other instruments. This module included trial lessons in these instruments. Gongs, drums, suonas, and plucked zithers (guzhengs) were set up during the classes. Students were told about the history of their creation and could try to play the instruments. The children also listened to Tian'ge songs that described rural lifestyles, local flavor, and work in the fields. In addition, traditional Chinese folk compositions were used, with a historical insight into the creation thereof. Tian'ge music is characterized by a large structure and many interconnected melodies, to the accompaniment of which the folk epic poetry was performed by children. Such compositions as Jiashan Field Song and Rice Seedling were used. The module addressed cultivating a sense of solidarity with nature and country, an understanding of its cultural value and musical diversity.
2. Shan'ge: Mountain songs. This type of traditional Chinese music is smooth and melodic, describing the beauty of nature as well as human courage and bravery. The music has free rhythms, a wide range, and a sublime melody. Children listened to music through the audio system and sang heroic epic poetry. Attention was also paid to the history of these

- pieces. The following compositions were used in this module: Xinrinue and Mountaineer's Song
3. Xiaodiao: Little Tunes. This type of traditional Chinese music describes nature and love for one's native land, fostering patriotism, pride, and human dignity. The music is known for its fixed melody and lyrics, orderly structure and pleasant tunes. Children were offered to perform the songs collectively and solo, and in class they were given texts that were analyzed in detail from a literary perspective, after which they performed the songs. The following compositions were used: Jasmine Melody and Meng Jiang's Melody.
 4. Historical storytelling songs. This type of traditional Chinese music includes heroic epic poetry, folk music and tales in the form of folk songs. This module was extremely important, pursuant to the goals of the developed program. The compositions focused on cultivating a sense of love, loyalty, devotion to one's country and the opportunity to experience a state of solidarity, shared values and aspirations with one's country. Attention was also paid to compositions devoted to the rule of law and equality, the principles of impartiality and justice. Patriotic poems were performed to the accompaniment of traditional music from this module. The following compositions were used: Brother Mavu and Sister Gadu, Erip and Senam, Gesar.
 5. Haozi: Work songs. The musical forms of these pieces have strong melodic motifs. This type of traditional Chinese music includes the glorification of the working class, ideas of human dignity and noble labor for the country's prosperity, which evoke a sense of pride and gratitude. The module's profound purpose was to allow children to realize that the character is the country's citizen, who must follow virtuous moral and ethical principles such as honesty, consistency and diligence. Lyrics about the working class were sung to the tunes glorifying honest labor. The following compositions were used: Gong and Drum Song, Bull Pen Songs, Voyage to the South Sea, and Rice Grinding.
 6. Bu're: Dance songs. This type of traditional Chinese music describes a variety of fun and national identity aspects; the music is characterized by strong rhythms. The module was designed to support ideas about the national value of traditional Chinese music, which has its own identity and uniqueness. Dance songs are mostly performed during festivals, celebrations, or gatherings, and they are fast paced. The groups performed

the compositions, parsing the value and melody of the compositions. The following pieces were used: Lantern Song and Flower Drum Melody.

Furthermore, to determine the impact of the developed program on the awareness of China's national values and cultural heritage, an online survey was conducted among students. The questionnaire included ten questions that were designed to map the national values and cultural heritage as fully as possible.

DATA ANALYSIS

The factor analysis validation framework was used to control the data of this study. Fisher's exact test (p) was used to test the collected data to infer whether there was a significant difference between the two groups. The resulting data were considered satisfactory according to the benchmarks. When using Fisher's test, the adequacy and validity of the resulting data were ensured.

PARTICIPANTS

Students from the following four middle schools in Beijing (China) participated in the study, which ran from January to June during the 2020–2021 academic year: Beijing Chongwenmen, Beijing Yuyuantan, Beijing Tongwen, Beijing Dongzhimen. The developed program was to be implemented in the music course within six months. Each student received a verbal invitation to participate in the study through an announcement made in a music class. After students demonstrated interest in the study, written permissions to participate were sought and obtained from the parents (or guardians) of 412 children. Following the results, the sample included 410 respondents. Two participants could not complete the study, and their responses are not represented in the sample. Table 1 provides more details about the number of participants from each institution.

Table 1. Quantity of study participants from each institution.

Educational institution	Quantity	%
Beijing Chongwenmen Middle School	103	25.1
	Group A	53
	Group B	50
Beijing Yuyuantan Middle School	101	24.6
	Group A	51
	Group B	50
Beijing Tongwen Middle School	106	25.9
	Group A	56
	Group B	50
Beijing Dongzhimen Middle School	100	24.4
	Group A	56
	Group B	50
Gender		
Boys	189	46.1
Girls	221	53.9
Age		
12 years	104	25.4
13 years	137	33.4
14 years	169	41.2
Total students	410	100

Total number of respondents: 410 persons. Students ranged in age from 12 to 14 years, with an average age of 13.1 years. The participants were chosen voluntarily. Group B was set up based on the student's willingness to receive additional classes while using the developed program. The rest of the students, with their consent, were assigned to control group A. In Group B, there were 10 students per teacher. This means that 20 teachers participated and gave grades.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Eight groups were set up, two at each institution. The study was conducted over a six-month period. All students attended standard music classes according to the curriculum. Group B was additionally engaged in an elaborate program and in-depth study of traditional Chinese folk music. Its members had three extra 45 minute classes per week, which is 12 classes per month. At the end of the study, teachers at each school made monitoring and assessment by groups according to a common academic program. Scores were given based on a 100-point scale using the five-tier system: 100–90 = excellent, 89–80 = good, 79–70 = mediocre, 69–60 = satisfactory, below 60 = unsatisfactory. The assessment criteria were as follows:

- work in the classroom;
- independent study;
- modular control;
- teamwork;
- examination.

Furthermore, an online survey was conducted among students to assess the impact of the developed program on their awareness of China's national values and cultural heritage. The first survey was conducted at schools' computer labs before the beginning of the study (January 2021). The children were given 20 minutes to answer. The second survey had the same content but was conducted at the end of the study (June 2021). All questionnaires were filled out by the respondents completely; there were no irrelevant answers. The data input form contained ten questions to assess the effectiveness of the developed program to influence the awareness of national values and cultural heritage. Respondents were asked to specify how much they agreed with the statements on a 5-point Likert scale, where: 1 = strongly agree (SA); 2 = agree (A); 3 = neutral (N); 4 = disagree (D); 5 = strongly disagree (SD).

LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted in four middle schools in China. Therefore, its findings cannot reflect the impact of the developed program on the awareness of national values throughout the country. Study participants were randomly selected, and their overall performance in the music course was not taken into account when dividing them into groups. Although the assessment criteria were uniform across the study, the persons who conducted the assessment varied from institution to institution.

ETHICAL ISSUES

This study was professionally designed, appropriately implemented, and approved by the leadership of all participating institutions and the parents or guardians of all minor participants. Written approvals were obtained. Guarantees of anonymity and security of personal data were provided. Prior to commencement of the study, a research protocol was developed. The protocol was followed by all participants and administrators. Involvement in the study was carefully coordinated with all participants, their parents and instructors. The institutional review boards of all four middle schools also provided their approvals.

RESULTS

The following paragraphs present the results for each research question. Since research question No. 1 set a goal to analyze the effectiveness of using the developed academic program in music classes, comparing the two groups, it is essential to consider the results of the evaluation. Table 2 shows the averaged end-of-study performance of middle school students in music classes according to the selected assessment criteria, for specific small groups (June 2021). All p-values are below 0.05, which is the threshold. Therefore, the differences between the indicators are significant.

Table 2. Scores earned by students in the four middle schools according to selected assessment criteria, depending on the small group.

Evaluation criteria	School								Mean
	Beijing Chongwenmen		Beijing Yuyuantan		Beijing Tongwen		Beijing Dongzhimen		
	Scores on a 100-point scale								
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	
1. Work in the classroom	70	78	68	81	67	78	66	77	73.1
2. Independent study	66	82	70	78	66	80	65	80	73.4
3. Modular assessment	72	80	67	80	67	79	70	79	74.3
4. Team-work	68	82	65	81	71	76	67	80	73.8
5. Final exam	71	79	74	77	71	81	71	80	75.5
Mean	69.4	80.2	68.8	79.4	68.4	78.8	67.8	79.6	X
p-value	0.039	0.018	0.032	0.019	0.027	0.02	0.034	0.019	X

The lowest scores were earned by small group A students who received traditional music instruction without the traditional Chinese music curriculum in all educational institutions: 69.4, 68.8, 68.4 and 67.8, with the mean value being 68.6. In contrast, small groups B at each institution performed better. Students from small groups B, who also used the developed academic program, earned the following scores: 80.2, 79.4, 78.8, and 79.6, with the mean value being 79.5, which is 13.7% higher compared to the control group. These data suggest the effectiveness of the developed curriculum in the context of music education at schools. Such results can be explained by the fact that the children intensively learned new music genres and compositions of traditional folk music, which made learning more effective.

The second objective of this study was to determine the program’s impact on increased awareness of national values and the importance of China’s cultural heritage by comparing the findings of the online survey that was conducted among students in both groups before the initiation of the study and after its completion. Table 3 presents the survey’s findings regarding the initial level of awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage among students as of January 2021.

Table 3. Survey findings on the awareness of national values and the importance of China's cultural heritage (as of January 2021), %.

Statement	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1. I believe that China's cultural heritage constitutes the national treasure	9.1	9.6	14.5	16.9	30.9	28.1	40.3	41.9	6.1	2.6
2. I am convinced that the Chinese culture is authentic, and studying it in school is essential	10.4	11.6	12.6	10.7	60.8	59.6	11.9	9.8	4.3	8.3
3. I feel love, loyalty and devotion to my country	11.3	10.9	23.5	29.5	39.6	41.9	18.7	20.7	2.4	1.5
4. I experience a state of solidarity, shared values and aspirations with my country	8.6	9.8	21.3	20.9	44.3	42.1	21.3	24.3	2.1	5.3
5. I am aware that the rule of law prevails in my country	15.6	14.9	32.6	31.8	51.9	48.6	1.3	1.8	1.1	0.4
6. I believe that all citizens of my country enjoy the direct and equitable opportunity to contribute to its government	9.3	10.5	24.6	23.8	52.6	49.7	12.9	12.7	2.1	1.8
7. I believe that human dignity is something my nation should stand for	14.9	11.9	24.3	22.6	54.3	50.7	9.7	10.9	0.4	0.3

8. In my opinion, my country adheres to the principles of impartiality and justice	8.6	7.1	20.5	19.6	53.7	52.9	14.9	19.6	1.8	1.3
9. I see myself as a citizen of my country with specific rights enshrined in laws	9.7	9.3	24.9	23.8	59.2	60.9	5.2	5.7	0.6	0.7
10. I think that, being a citizen of my country, I should follow virtuous moral and ethical principles, such as honesty, consistency, diligence	9.7	12.9	23.6	24.8	51.6	52.3	11.6	11.4	0.9	1.2
MEAN	10.7	10.9	22.2	22.4	49.9	48.7	14.8	15.9	2.2	2.3

The data suggest that the respondents in both groups have similar awareness of national values and cultural heritage: the mean values demonstrate homogeneity in distribution. “Strongly agree” answers were given to statements that referred to the rule of law (No. 5), human dignity (No. 7) and patriotism (No. 4). The least support (i.e., “strongly disagree” answers) was given to the statements arguing that cultural heritage is the national treasure, and that culture should be a part of the school curriculum (No. 1 and No. 2). “Neutral” answers were the most frequent among middle school students (49.9% and 48.7% for groups A and B, respectively). These data suggest that a neutral and indifferent attitude toward such serious things as national values and the cultural heritage of their country is rather dominant among adolescents.

Table 4 describes the survey findings on the resulting awareness of national values and cultural heritage among students as of June 2021. The presented average data suggest that the performance of control group A was not subject to changes. Awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage remained at the same level. The neutral attitudes even increased, making it clear that the majority is indifferent.

Table 4. Survey findings on the awareness of national values and the importance of the cultural heritage of China (as of June 2021), %.

Statement	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1. I believe that China's cultural heritage constitutes the national treasure	11.4	31.8	12.8	43.5	57.6	19.6	12.9	4.8	5.3	0.3
2. I am convinced that the Chinese culture is authentic, and studying it in school is essential	8.9	29.8	14.9	41.6	36.8	18.1	36.4	8.7	3.9	0.9
3. I feel love, loyalty and devotion to my country	12.4	31.6	26.6	39.4	42.9	22.6	12.2	7.4	1.4	3.5
4. I experience a state of solidarity, shared values and aspirations with my country	8.4	15.9	22.9	29.8	42.7	43.8	21.2	8.3	2.4	4.6
5. I am aware that the rule of law prevails in my country	15.8	29.6	32.9	38.9	51.5	27.6	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.2
6. I believe that all citizens of my country enjoy the direct and equitable opportunity to contribute to its government	9.7	23.2	23.2	31.4	54.1	36.8	10.6	6.2	3.9	0.9
7. I believe that human dignity is something my nation should stand for	15.7	29.7	25.2	38.9	54.3	20.6	9.7	5.3	0.4	0.2
8. In my opinion, my country adheres to the principles of impartiality and justice	9.7	29.7	21.4	32.6	52.8	29.8	14.1	7.3	1.5	1.1

9. I see myself as a citizen of my country with specific rights enshrined in laws	10.3	28.1	25.8	31.2	58.1	35.8	5.2	4.7	0.2	0.6
10. I think that, being a citizen of my country, I should follow virtuous moral and ethical principles, such as honesty, consistency, diligence	9.9	23.8	22.8	31.2	53.7	36.7	10.6	9.8	0.4	1.1
MEAN	11.2	27.3	22.9	35.9	50.5	29.1	13.4	6.4	2.1	1.3

After a six-month exposure to the training program that involved learning traditional Chinese folk music, group B demonstrated rather unsteady performance compared to its performance in January. The mean scores on “strongly agree” and “agree” answers increased from 10.9% and 22.4% to 27.3% and 35.9%, respectively. “Neutral” answers fell from 48.7% to 29.1%, while the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” answers fell from 15.9% and 2.3% to 6.4% and 1.3%, respectively. “Strongly agree” answers were given to statements that referred to the understanding that China’s cultural heritage constitutes the treasure of the entire nation (an increase of 22.2%), and to patriotism, which manifested itself as a feeling of love for one’s country (an increase of 20.7%). Furthermore, statements about human dignity and equality, the rule of law, human rights, ethical principles and democracy have grown in importance. The lowest score on the “strongly agree” answer was received by the statement about the sense of nationhood, suggesting that in this category the developed practices were not effective (No. 4). These data suggested the effectiveness of the developed academic program in raising awareness of national values and the importance of China’s cultural heritage among middle school students.

DISCUSSION

These days, the general public has abandoned traditional music and believes that traditional music does not follow the trends because it is untimely and old-fashioned (Chen 2016). Such a negative opinion has implications for the

perception of traditional music and continues to influence many people's attitudes toward it (Shi 2021). In fact, traditional values, being lost with evolution, make people resist traditional, entrenched things with a heavy cultural legacy (Ibid.). However, traditional music constitutes the wealth and treasure of every nation and should be studied as part of music education at schools (Yang & Welch 2014). Such an idea was reinforced by the findings of this study.

Because of globalization, traditional folk music loses its cultural connotation over time and becomes a tool for generating profit, creating new interpretations thereof and changing the traditional folk music with cutting-edge technology. To a certain extent, however, this makes traditional music popular with the younger Internet users (Shi 2021). As case studies of music education in Finnish institutions of higher education suggest, folk traditions are not inherently incompatible with formal education in reviving folk music and can be incorporated into music education in middle schools (Ramnarine 2003). Studying folk music at educational institutions has been reported as an effective way to address cultural inclusion in society, as validated by research conducted in Australia (Southcott & Joseph 2010). One of the studies compares and discusses teaching methods that confirm the high effectiveness of contemporary teaching programs. Aside from recognized approaches, such methods also integrate folk music and epic poetry of each country, as relevant studies promote feelings of patriotism (Entwistle 2009). These findings directly validate the data (which were also obtained in the current study) on the developed program's effectiveness not only in the music learning context, but also in raising awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage.

Other research suggests the need to integrate traditional music into the learning process. For example, Yang and Welch (2016) compare two different approaches to teaching relying on folk songs, providing examples of teaching approaches that have been used in the observed context of folk culture and music school. The research findings revealed musical components and teaching strategies in the study of traditional folk music, suggesting the inclusion of folk music in the program in order to provide visionary diversity in the system of music education, challenging the monocultural ideology within the existing formal music practices based on colleges and middle schools. These findings resonate with this paper's suggestions to introduce traditional folk songs and music into music education.

Some writings focused on introducing popular music in music education at middle schools as part of adolescents' cultural patterns amidst the changing cultural and social trends of contemporary China (Hoene 2017). The survey conducted among students aged 12–17 years revealed the extent to which Chinese youth prefer different styles of popular music in their daily lives. However,

traditional folk songs do not enjoy any popularity, and such a fact validates this paper's suggestions to integrate traditional Chinese folk music into the education sector. This is due to the fact that globalization leads to a loss of understanding of folk music's national importance among the younger generation.

Exploring major issues in music education from the perspective of music teachers, Ho and Law (2020) highlighted the contradictions and dilemmas that music cultures face in reproducing knowledge and cultures in the respective music programs when it comes to engineering cultural and national values in music education at middle schools. The findings of this study pertaining to Taiwan and Hong Kong suggested two different ways of delineating and defining political culture as applied to music education and also shed light on understanding national and cultural education in music classes at middle schools outside of Chinese communities and East Asia (Ho & Law 2020). Although the study focuses on the controversy observed between the inclusion of patriotic songs in schools' music programs and the teachers' attitudes toward this issue, the authors confirm that traditional folk music can provide an enabling environment for national and cultural development of music education at middle schools, which is confirmed in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

The lowest final scores (68.6 on average) were obtained by small group A, with traditional music instruction without the developed program. In contrast, small group B performed better by 13.7% than the control group. These data suggest the effectiveness of the developed academic program in music education at schools. The findings of the January 2021 survey on the initial awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage suggested that a neutral and indifferent attitude toward such serious things as national values and cultural heritage dominates among adolescents. Findings of the second survey (held at the end of the study) made it clear that awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage among control group A students remained at the same level. The neutral attitudes even increased, making it clear that the majority is indifferent. After a six-month exposure to the training program that involved learning traditional Chinese folk music, group B demonstrated rather unsteady performance compared to its performance in January. "Strongly agree" answers were given to statements that referred to the understanding that China's cultural heritage constitutes the treasure of the entire nation (an increase of 22.2%), and to patriotism, which manifested itself as a feeling of love for one's country (an increase of 20.7%). Furthermore, statements about

human dignity and equality, the rule of law, human rights, ethical principles and democracy have grown in importance. These data suggested the effectiveness of the developed academic program in raising awareness of national values and the importance of China's cultural heritage among middle school students. The practical significance of the obtained results lies in the possibility of using the developed methodology for the analysis of the traditional folklore of China and other countries, the specifics of the implementation of the study of folklore music in music educational institutions of various types. The curriculum proposed in the study can be used in music education, based on which to analyze the impact not only on achievements in learning music, but also on the awareness of national values among students. The prospects for further research are that such academic programs in music, history and culture can be the focus of future studies, with the prospect of their inclusion in school curricula. It is important to explore other ways of integrating traditional Chinese folk music into the education sector. The study of folk music of different countries in the aspect of multiculturalism is promising.

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