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CHUNLUO FOLK SONGS OF PINGXIANG: HISTORICAL EVOLUTION, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND CONTEMPORARY SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the historical development and cultural significance of Chunluo Folk Song in Pingxiang City, Jiangxi Province, China. Although Chunluo remains an important local folk tradition, its origins, transformation, and cultural functions have not been systematically clarified. This research traces its evolution from the ancient agricultural custom of “proclaiming spring” to its contemporary performance forms, highlighting its role in expressing social values, collective memory, and regional identity. A qualitative historical-cultural approach was employed, drawing on historical records, academic literature, local chronicles, and archival sources. The analysis explores Chunluo’s transformation across historical periods and interprets its social and cultural meanings. The findings reveal that Chunluo serves as a cultural medium for transmitting local history, moral values, collective memory, and regional identity. Beyond artistic expression, it performs educational and social functions by reinforcing community ethics, fostering social cohesion, and responding to contemporary issues. Its aesthetic dimension lies in the integration of music, language, and embodied performance, enabling strong emotional communication between performers and audiences. Sustainable development of Chunluo depends on balancing cultural continuity with adaptive innovation. The study proposes an integrated framework encompassing preservation of traditional elements, intergenerational transmission, digital promotion, and community-based cultural tourism. Embedding Chunluo within educational systems, digital infrastructures, and supportive policy frameworks ensures its continued relevance as a living form of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary society.

KEYWORDS: Chunluo Folk Songs, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Cultural Transmission, Folk Performing Arts, Regional Identity, Jiangxi Province.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pingxiang, located in Jiangxi Province, possesses a long history and a rich cultural heritage that has fostered diverse forms of folk expression. Among these, Pingxiang Chunluo stands out as a distinctive form of folk performing art that embodies the life experiences, aesthetic values, and cultural memory of the local community. With its vivid musical expression and close connection to everyday life, Chunluo has long functioned as both an artistic practice and a cultural medium through which social values and regional identity are transmitted across generations (Hua Kang, 2009). As such, Chunluo represents an important embodiment of localized knowledge and communal expression.

Music, as a universal yet culturally embedded form of human expression, serves as both an artistic language and a historical archive. Folk music in particular operates as a repository of social memory, encoding the historical transformations, social structures, and everyday practices of a community. Previous scholarship has recognized that Chunluo reflects not only the artistic creativity of the people of Pingxiang but also the socio-cultural evolution of the region (Shao Hua Li, 2019). Nevertheless, in the context of rapid urbanization, digitalization, and shifting cultural consumption patterns, many traditional folk arts—including Chunluo—face pressures of marginalization, weakened intergenerational transmission, and declining community engagement (Xu and Yu, 2018). These challenges raise critical questions concerning the sustainability and revitalization of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary society.

Existing studies have explored Chunluo's historical origins, performance structures, and social functions. Scholars commonly trace its roots to the agricultural custom of "announcing spring," which gradually evolved into a performative art integrating music, narration, percussion, and communal interaction (Li Sha Huang, 2018). However, academic debates persist regarding the balance between preservation and innovation. While some argue that contemporary adaptation strengthens Chunluo's relevance, others contend that excessive modernization risks diluting its traditional aesthetic core. This unresolved tension underscores the need for a comprehensive re-examination of Chunluo within its broader historical and socio-cultural context. Against this background, the present study undertakes a systematic and in-depth investigation of Pingxiang Chunluo, focusing on its historical development, musical characteristics, and cultural significance. By integrating historical analysis with

cultural interpretation, this research seeks to clarify how Chunluo has sustained cultural continuity while negotiating processes of social change. In doing so, the study contributes to broader discussions on the dynamics of intangible cultural heritage, cultural identity formation, and the adaptive resilience of traditional performing arts in contemporary China.

This article is structured as follows. Section 2 outlines the research methodology. Section 3 reviews relevant literature and theoretical perspectives. Section 4 presents the historical evolution and musical characteristics of Chunluo. Section 5 discusses its cultural significance and contemporary challenges. The paper concludes by emphasizing that the sustainable development of Chunluo depends upon a balanced interaction between cultural preservation and thoughtful innovation.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative historical-cultural research design to examine the development, musical characteristics, and cultural significance of Pingxiang Chunluo. The research approach emphasizes interpretive understanding of cultural practices within their historical and social contexts. The researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation, engaging reflexively with participants, performance settings, and documentary sources to construct contextualized meanings rather than statistical generalizations.

2.2. Research Site and Duration

The research was conducted in Pingxiang City, Jiangxi Province, China, recognized as a significant cultural center of Chunluo traditions. Fieldwork extended over a twelve-month period to ensure sustained engagement with performers, cultural institutions, and community contexts. This prolonged immersion enabled a deeper understanding of both formal and informal modes of cultural transmission.

2.3. Research Procedures

Step 1: Documentary Analysis

Historical documents, academic studies, local chronicles, archival materials, and cultural policy records related to Chunluo were systematically collected and critically reviewed. This phase established the historical evolution, socio-cultural background, and structural transformation of Chunluo across different periods.

Step 2: Participant Selection

Purposive sampling was employed to identify key informants possessing extensive knowledge and practical experience in Chunluo traditions. Informants included senior Chunluo practitioners, local cultural experts, and music educators involved in preservation and transmission activities.

Step 3: Participant Selection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide designed to explore themes concerning historical development, musical structure, symbolic meaning, pedagogical transmission, and contemporary adaptation. Emphasis was placed on narrative accounts and experiential knowledge.

Step 4: Field Observation

Field observations were undertaken during Chunluo performances, rehearsals, and cultural events. Both participant and non-participant observation methods were used to document performance structure, musical practices, instrumentation, staging, performer-audience interaction, and socio-cultural contexts.

2.4. Data Analysis

All collected data were transcribed and analysed using thematic qualitative analysis. The analysis focused on four major dimensions: (1) Historical Development of Chunluo Folk Songs, (2) Cultural Significance of Chunluo Folk Songs, and (3) Preservation and Promotion of Chunluo Folk Songs. Data triangulation across documentary sources, interviews, and observations was applied to enhance analytical credibility and interpretive depth.

2.5. Presentation and Discussion of Findings

Findings were synthesized by integrating documentary evidence, interview narratives, and observational insights. The results were presented thematically and discussed in relation to historical continuity, cultural identity formation, artistic transformation, and contemporary adaptation. Interpretations were contextualized within broader cultural and musicological perspectives to strengthen conceptual coherence and scholarly contribution.

2.5. Trustworthiness

Research rigor was ensured through prolonged engagement in the field, member checking with key informants, peer review of analytical interpretations, and triangulation across multiple data sources. Transparent documentation of research procedures supported dependability and conformability.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pingxiang Chunluo originated in Pingxiang and surrounding areas of Jiangxi Province and its historical roots can be traced to the ancient agrarian custom of “proclaiming spring.” In earlier periods, when almanacs were not widely available, designated individuals would visit households after the Spring Festival, beating gongs and drums while announcing the twenty-four solar terms to guide agricultural activities. This seasonal proclamation served both practical and ritual functions, ensuring agricultural coordination and reinforcing communal cohesion. Over time, as printed calendars became widespread, the utilitarian function of proclaiming spring gradually diminished. The content evolved toward conveying auspicious messages, moral exhortation, festive greetings, and social commentary, eventually transforming into a narrative musical performance characterized by rhythmic chanting and performative storytelling. This transformation marked the rudimentary stage of Pingxiang Chunluo as a folk art form (Editorial Board of Dictionary of Chinese Opera and Folk Art, 1981).

Scholarly attention to Chunluo increased significantly in the 1980s, when researchers began documenting its historical origins, performance structures, and regional characteristics (Guo JianBo, 2021). Notes that the geographic spread of Chunluo expanded from Pingxiang to central and western Jiangxi, reflecting its growing cultural visibility (Li ShaoHua, 2019). emphasizes the artistic evolution of Chunluo, highlighting its transition from solo performance to duet and group forms, and the incorporation of additional instruments such as pipa and electronic organ. These studies suggest that Chunluo’s adaptive capacity has been central to its continued vitality.

From a broader perspective, research on Chinese folk performing arts has increasingly framed such traditions within the discourse of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) (Dou, Xinyue, 2024). Scholars argue that folk arts function not only as aesthetic expressions but also as mechanisms of cultural memory, identity construction, and social education (Xiao Pingjun, 2025). Within this framework, Chunluo can be understood as both a historical archive and a living cultural practice that negotiates continuity and innovation. However, existing studies often focus either on descriptive historical accounts or on isolated aspects of performance form, with limited integration of historical development, musical characteristics, and cultural significance within a unified analytical framework.

Furthermore, while modernization and innovation are frequently acknowledged as

necessary for cultural survival, there remains scholarly debate concerning the balance between preservation and transformation. Some researchers argue that modernization enhances public engagement and artistic diversity (Chen Lini, 2025), whereas others caution that excessive adaptation risks weakening traditional aesthetic structures and dialectal authenticity (Lin Lu, 2025). This tension between safeguarding and innovation remains insufficiently examined in the specific context of Pingxiang Chunluo.

Based on this review, it becomes evident that although previous studies have documented the origins and artistic development of Chunluo, there is still a need for a comprehensive analysis that situates its historical evolution, musical structure, and cultural functions within a coherent interpretive framework. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by systematically examining Chunluo from both traditional and modern perspectives, integrating historical documentation, performance analysis, and cultural interpretation to provide a more holistic understanding of its contemporary significance.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

This section may be divided into subheadings. It should provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation, and the experimental conclusions that can be drawn.

4.1. *Historical Development of Chunluo Folk Songs*

Pingxiang Chunluo, now commonly referred to as Chunluo Folk Songs, originated in Pingxiang City and surrounding areas of Jiangxi Province. Its historical roots can be traced to the ancient agrarian custom known as “proclaiming spring,” a seasonal practice that emerged in periods when formal calendars and almanacs were not yet widely used. After the Spring Festival, designated individuals would carry gongs and drums from household to household to announce the agricultural schedule of the coming year according to the twenty-four solar terms. This practice served as a vital mechanism for regulating farming activities and sustaining rural livelihoods, forming the earliest functional foundation of Chunluo.

With the gradual development of society and the popularization of written calendars, the practical necessity of seasonal proclamation declined. However, the expressive and communicative dimensions of the practice continued to expand. The content of proclamation gradually shifted from

agricultural instruction toward the dissemination of auspicious messages, moral guidance, social commentary, and festive greetings, transforming the original custom into a narrative folk art form characterized by rhythmic chanting and performative storytelling. This transformation marks the formative stage of Chunluo Folk Songs as a cultural tradition embedded in the social life of Pingxiang communities (Li Tenghong, 2020).

In its early performance form, Chunluo was predominantly presented as a solo genre. Performers typically tied a small drum, approximately fifteen centimeters in diameter, with red silk, accompanied by a slightly larger gong. The lyrics were mainly composed in seven-character lines with recurring rhyme schemes appearing every two, four, or eight lines, creating a compact and rhythmic musical structure. Although the repertoire was relatively concise, performances integrated multiple artistic elements, including singing, percussion, gesture, dance movement, and costume, gradually forming a comprehensive folk performance system (Gao Lu, 2021).

From the 1980s onward, Chunluo Folk Songs began to receive sustained scholarly attention, and their cultural influence expanded beyond Pingxiang to central and western Jiangxi Province (Guo, 2022). In response to changing social conditions and rising aesthetic expectations, Chunluo underwent continuous innovation. Thematically, performances evolved from simple praise toward episodic narratives, historical stories, contemporary news, and social reflection. Structurally, solo performance developed into duet and group formats, while musical accompaniment expanded from traditional gongs and drums to include instruments such as pipa and electronic organ. These transformations not only enriched the artistic vocabulary of Chunluo Folk Songs but also reinforced their cultural vitality and adaptive capacity in modern society (Li, 2019).

4.1.1. *Performance Forms and Artistic Evolution of Chunluo Folk Songs*

Chunluo Folk Songs in Pingxiang have developed through a continuous process of artistic evolution, reflected most clearly in their performance forms. Historically, Chunluo performances can be broadly divided into traditional forms and modern transformed forms, each representing different stages of artistic expression and social function within the local community.

4.1.2. *Traditional Performance Forms of Chunluo Folk Songs*

Traditional Chunluo Folk Songs are generally classified into three principal performance forms: solo, duet, and group performance, reflecting progressive development in musical complexity, narrative interaction, and collective participation. Among these, solo Chunluo represents the earliest and most fundamental form. It is performed by a single singer who typically ties a small drum, approximately fifteen centimetres in diameter, around the waist with red silk, accompanied by a slightly larger gong. The performer strikes the drum and gong in coordinated rhythmic patterns, such as “Cang Dong Dong Cang,” to introduce and punctuate the singing. The lyrics are predominantly composed in seven-character lines and sung in the Pingxiang dialect, covering a wide range of themes including historical legends, moral teachings, daily life, agricultural production, and praise of common goods and occupations such as charcoal making, tea production, and grain cultivation (Qi Yuqin, 2021). This form is valued for its simplicity, flexibility, vivid language, and strong local flavor, which make it highly accessible and appealing to broad audiences, while also establishing the artistic foundation for later developments.

Building upon the solo form, duet Chunluo emerged as an important artistic innovation. Typically performed by one male and one female singer, duet Chunluo employs dialogic singing in which both performers hold gongs and drums and engage in interactive narrative exchange. This structure enhances dramatic expression and aesthetic appeal while preserving the vernacular language and rhythmic chanting that characterize the tradition. The lyrical content of duet Chunluo often emphasizes humor, praise, satire, and moral commentary, and may incorporate contemporary events, social issues, and local news, thereby strengthening its communicative and educational functions (Yu LanLan, 2019). Group performance represents a further expansion of Chunluo’s traditional forms. By incorporating multiple singers and choral elements, group Chunluo increases musical diversity and visual richness, moving beyond the earlier reliance on solo vocal delivery accompanied solely by gongs and drums (Hua Kang, 2014). In addition, group performances frequently integrate melodic and tonal elements from related regional operatic traditions, such as Pingxiang tea-picking opera, enabling Chunluo Folk Songs to evolve from a primarily narrative style toward a more musically elaborate and structurally complex form (Wang Suzhen, 2016). This progressive transformation marks a significant stage in the artistic maturation of Chunluo Folk

Songs.

4.1.3. Modern Transformation and Artistic Innovation of Chunluo Folk Songs

In response to social change and rising cultural expectations, Chunluo Folk Songs have undergone significant transformation in the modern period. Contemporary performances incorporate song, dance, stage lighting, and scenic design, enhancing overall artistic expression. The length of performances has expanded from short pieces to medium- and long-form works, addressing themes drawn from history, mythology, current affairs, and social life. Musical accompaniment has also diversified, extending beyond traditional gongs and drums to include instruments such as erhu, sanxian, pipa, suona, bamboo flute, and occasionally cello. These innovations reflect a broader process of artistic integration, encompassing choreography, script creation, costume design, and stage aesthetics (Li and He, 2024).



Figure 1: This is a group performance of Chunluo Folk Songs presented on a rural stage in Pingxiang City, Jiang.

Source: Fieldwork photograph by Ge Yang, 2025.

Modern Chunluo Folk Songs have further developed into various derivative forms, including short theatrical pieces, narrative song-dance works, and staged performances. Through these transformations, Chunluo has evolved into a comprehensive folk art form that preserves local language, reflects social realities, disseminates cultural values, and integrates entertainment, education, and aesthetic appreciation, thereby sustaining its relevance in contemporary society (Zhao Jigang, 2013).

4.2. Cultural Significance of Chunluo Folk Songs

4.2.1. Transmission of Cultural Values and Identity

Chunluo Folk Songs function as a vital cultural medium through which the people of Pingxiang transmit local history, moral values, and collective memory. Originating from the agricultural custom of “proclaiming spring,” Chunluo embodies the historical experiences of rural life, seasonal rhythms, and communal cooperation. The narratives embedded in its lyrics—ranging from historical legends and everyday labor to moral instruction and social reflection—serve as a living archive of regional culture. Through repeated performance in communal spaces, Chunluo reinforces shared values, ethical principles, and social norms, thereby strengthening regional identity and sustaining a sense of cultural continuity across generations. As an orally transmitted tradition, Chunluo enables communities to preserve cultural knowledge not merely as historical information but as lived experience embedded in sound, language, and performance.

4.2.2. Educational and Social Functions

Beyond artistic expression, Chunluo Folk Songs perform important educational and social functions within the local community. Their accessible language, familiar melodies, and vivid storytelling make complex social concepts and moral teachings understandable to diverse audiences. Through themes such as respect for elders, diligence in labor, harmony in social relations, and moral responsibility, Chunluo operates as a form of informal education that complements formal schooling. Moreover, the incorporation of contemporary events, local news, and social commentary into performances allows Chunluo to remain socially responsive, serving as a medium for public communication and community dialogue. In this way, Chunluo not only reflects social life but also actively participates in shaping community consciousness and social cohesion.

4.2.3. Aesthetic and Emotional Communication

The aesthetic dimension of Chunluo Folk Songs lies in the integrated use of music, narration, percussion, and movement, which together create a powerful mode of emotional communication. The rhythmic interplay of drums and gongs, combined with expressive vocal delivery and physical gesture, enhances audience engagement and deepens emotional resonance. This multisensory form of expression allows performers and listeners to connect affectively with the stories being told, fostering empathy, collective sentiment, and cultural

belonging. Through continuous adaptation in form and content, Chunluo sustains its artistic vitality and emotional relevance in contemporary community life, demonstrating its enduring capacity to function as both a cultural symbol and a living artistic practice.

4.3. Preservation and Promotion of Chunluo Folk Songs

4.3.1 Traditional Transmission Mechanisms

The findings indicate that the continuity of Chunluo Folk Songs is fundamentally grounded in community-based oral transmission and intergenerational learning. Traditional master-apprentice mentorship, family-based cultural practice, and informal community gatherings remain key mechanisms through which repertory, pronunciation, vocal technique, and performance etiquette are embodied and sustained. In particular, veteran singers transmit not only musical materials but also dialectal nuances, poetic conventions, and culturally specific interpretive norms that cannot be fully preserved through textual descriptions alone. Regular participation in local rituals, seasonal festivities, and communal events provides the social environment in which Chunluo continues to function as a living tradition rather than a museumized artefact. Importantly, intergenerational dialogue strengthens community cohesion and cultural belonging, enabling younger participants to internalize Chunluo as part of local identity rather than merely as an artistic skill.

4.3.2 Contemporary Preservation Strategies

Alongside traditional transmission, contemporary safeguarding increasingly relies on institutional and systematic measures. Documentary preservation—through high-quality audio-visual recordings, transcription of lyrics and melodies, and contextual ethnographic documentation—was identified as essential for reducing the vulnerability of oral heritage to the loss of elder practitioners. Participants emphasized that documentation should capture not only melodic lines but also timbre, ornamentation, tempo variation, gesture, and performance context, thereby preventing decontextualization when materials are reproduced or taught elsewhere. Furthermore, the establishment of expert committees or advisory bodies was viewed as a strategic mechanism for authenticating repertoires, developing safeguarding guidelines, and evaluating public representations in education, media, and festival settings. Protection of dialectal and poetic structures emerged as another critical

strategy, given the increasing pressure of linguistic homogenization; phonetic documentation, annotated translations, and collaboration with dialect specialists were proposed to preserve pronunciation, prosody, and culturally embedded metaphors.

Broader contemporary strategies also include educational integration, such as embedding Chunluo content into school curricula, training music teachers with support from tradition bearers and scholars, and organizing student performances in community festivals. In addition, digital initiatives—such as online archives, mobile learning tools, and virtual exhibitions—have expanded accessibility beyond geographic boundaries and enhanced youth engagement. At the same time, informants cautioned that safeguarding must include measures to mitigate over-commercialization, including review mechanisms for adaptations, transparent labelling of “traditional” versus “adapted” versions, and community consent in decisions regarding cultural representation and benefit distribution. Policy integration at municipal and provincial levels was likewise considered necessary to secure long-term funding, institutional responsibility, and cross-sector collaboration among cultural, educational, tourism, and media agencies.

4.3.3. Sustainable Development in the Modern Context

Sustainable development of Chunluo Folk Songs depends on balancing cultural continuity with adaptive innovation. The results suggest that

effective sustainability requires a dual-track approach: maintaining the integrity of core elements—such as dialect, poetic structures, and traditional performance conventions—while allowing context-sensitive creative development that supports contemporary relevance. Digital communication and social media dissemination can widen participation and improve visibility, but such expansion must be guided by ethical standards to avoid cultural distortion. Similarly, cultural tourism and creative industry initiatives offer opportunities to generate economic value and strengthen regional branding; however, sustainability requires community-led governance, equitable benefit-sharing models, and reinvestment into transmission, education, and archiving.

Through creative enterprise development, Chunluo Folk Songs can be repositioned from a symbolic form of heritage into a productive cultural resource that stimulates innovation, strengthens community cultural confidence, and contributes to sustainable rural development, while maintaining the integrity of its core traditional elements. Building upon this perspective, the present study proposes an integrated strategic framework that organizes preservation and promotion efforts into four interconnected domains. Each domain is supported by concrete actions designed to reinforce cultural continuity, expand social participation, and enhance the long-term vitality of Chunluo Folk Songs within contemporary society. These strategic domains and their corresponding actions are summarized as follows.

Table 1: Integrated Strategies for the Preservation and Promotion of Chunluo Folk Songs.

Strategic domain	Key actions
1. Preservation of traditional elements	Document and archive lyrics, melodies, and performance practices; establish expert committees for authentication and safeguarding guidelines; protect dialectal features and poetic structures; transmit traditional vocal techniques and embodied gestures; mitigate risks of over-commercialization through review and labeling mechanisms; integrate safeguarding into local regulations and policy instruments; promote intergenerational dialogue in community contexts.
2. Intergenerational transmission and educational integration	Incorporate Chunluo Folk Songs into school curricula; provide teacher training with support from tradition bearers and scholars; develop after-school clubs, workshops, and mentorship/apprenticeship programs; encourage family-based learning, cultural camps, and community-school partnerships.
3. Media and digital promotion	Disseminate through social media and video platforms (e.g., Douyin) with culturally responsible content; produce podcasts and mini-documentaries to contextualize heritage; develop mobile applications for learning; build curated digital archives and metadata standards; design virtual exhibitions to enhance public access and engagement.
4. Cultural tourism and economic development	Integrate Chunluo Folk Songs into cultural tourism routes and experience-based packages; establish community-led performance and tourism cooperatives; support folk-song-themed creative enterprises and crafts; implement fair benefit-sharing and reinvestment models to sustain transmission, education, and archiving.

This study outlines a comprehensive and multi-dimensional framework for the promotion of

Chunluo Folk Songs in Pingxiang City, Jiangxi Province. The proposed guidelines prioritize the

safeguarding of core traditional elements—such as dialect, melodic structure, and performance practice—while simultaneously strengthening intergenerational transmission through formal education and community-based mentorship systems. Innovation and creative adaptation are encouraged, provided that cultural integrity and historical authenticity are preserved, particularly in collaborations with contemporary artists and digital media platforms. The framework further emphasizes the strategic use of media technologies, digital tools, and cultural tourism to broaden public visibility, enhance audience engagement, and extend the social functions of Chunluo Folk Songs. At the structural level, community empowerment, institutional coordination, and the establishment of systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms constitute the foundation of a sustainable and adaptive cultural preservation model. Collectively, these integrated strategies seek to protect, revitalize, and recontextualize Chunluo Folk Songs as a living cultural heritage with enduring contemporary relevance and long-term developmental vitality.

Overall, the study indicates that long-term viability is most achievable when Chunluo Folk Songs are embedded simultaneously in community life, educational systems, digital infrastructures, and supportive policy frameworks. This integrated model enables Chunluo to remain a living heritage practice capable of responding to modern social conditions while preserving its cultural depth, authenticity, and local identity.

5. DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that the historical development, musical characteristics, and transmission patterns of Pingxiang Chunluo Folk Songs are largely consistent with previous scholarship, while also revealing new challenges emerging under contemporary social transformation. Based on field research and interviews, the findings indicate that although Chunluo has experienced certain degrees of revitalization in recent years, significant structural and cultural obstacles continue to affect its long-term sustainability.

The results reaffirm that Chunluo's historical foundation is deeply rooted in the agrarian tradition of "announcing spring" (baochun), a seasonal communication practice that once functioned as an essential agricultural coordination system in rural Pingxiang. Over time, this functional custom gradually evolved into a narrative folk art that integrates blessings, storytelling, and moral education. This historical trajectory supports Guo

Jianbo's (2022) argument that Pingxiang Chunluo represents a living folk narrative tradition that emerged through continuous inheritance and innovation by both folk performers and professional cultural practitioners. The transformation from an agricultural utility to a complex cultural expression illustrates Chunluo's adaptive capacity while maintaining its cultural continuity and spiritual significance as a community-based heritage form.

The findings further reveal that Chunluo's modernization is closely associated with musical innovation and performance restructuring. Musically, Chunluo continues to preserve its core tonal identity, particularly its predominant use of the Yu mode (羽调式) within the pentatonic framework, with frequent emphasis on scale degrees I, III, V, and VI to mirror local speech intonation—confirming the observations of Peng Yeqin (2014). Its melodic structure, characterized primarily by interval leaps and secondarily by stepwise motion, aligns with Chen Jie's (2022) findings regarding the prominence of fourth and fifth leaps, reinforcing Chunluo's strong dialect-melody relationship.

Lyrically, the inseparable connection between Chunluo and the Pingxiang dialect, including auxiliary words and localized rhyme schemes, underscores Guo Jianbo's (2021) conclusion that linguistic competence in the dialect is indispensable for authentic composition and performance. At the same time, Chunluo's performance forms have expanded from traditional solo narration into duet and group formats and have increasingly incorporated modern staging, instrumentation, and narrative themes. These developments reflect a process of artistic hybridization that enhances public appeal while simultaneously raising concerns regarding cultural dilution—an unresolved tension that characterizes many forms of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary contexts.

With respect to preservation and transmission, the findings emphasize that Chunluo's sustainability requires a multidimensional safeguarding system. Consistent with Hu Sang's (2017) conclusions, the vitality of Chunluo depends fundamentally on human-centered revitalization mechanisms. Core heritage elements—lyrics, melodies, performance styles, dialectal structures, and folkloric contexts must be systematically documented through audiovisual archiving and musical transcription, accompanied by expert evaluation committees to standardize transmission criteria and authenticate cultural representation.

Integrating Chunluo into school music curricula, organizing community workshops, master-

apprentice programs, and cultural camps correspond with Fang Kaixin's (2022) call for interdisciplinary and practice-based approaches that extend beyond purely textual research. Moreover, dissemination strategies that utilize new media—short videos, live streams, podcasts, mobile applications, and digital archives—offer powerful tools for expanding public engagement and rebuilding youth participation, echoing Wang Xiubo's (2019) emphasis on comprehensive media integration.

Finally, the results highlight the growing importance of linking Chunluo with cultural tourism and creative industries. When supported by community-led governance and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, such integration can establish a virtuous cycle in which cultural preservation generates economic value while reinforcing cultural identity and local development.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the historical development, artistic evolution, cultural significance, and contemporary challenges of Chunluo Folk Songs in Pingxiang City, Jiangxi Province, situating the tradition within broader processes of social change and cultural transformation. The findings reaffirm that Chunluo Folk Songs are not merely performative artefacts, but dynamic cultural practices through which local history, moral values, collective memory, and regional identity are continuously constructed and transmitted.

The proposed integrated strategic framework demonstrates that the sustainable vitality of Chunluo Folk Songs depends on a balanced interaction

between cultural continuity and adaptive innovation. By organizing preservation and promotion efforts across four interconnected domains—preservation of traditional elements, intergenerational transmission and educational integration, media and digital promotion, and cultural tourism and economic development—this framework provides a systematic model that aligns community participation, institutional support, and creative engagement. In practice, the framework can guide policymakers, educators, cultural organizations, and local communities in designing coherent safeguarding programs that simultaneously protect core traditions and expand contemporary relevance.

The study further indicates that embedding Chunluo Folk Songs within community life, formal education, digital infrastructures, and supportive policy systems is essential for long-term sustainability. Such integration enables Chunluo to function as both a living cultural heritage and a productive cultural resource that contributes to social cohesion, cultural confidence, and rural development.

Future research should extend this framework through comparative studies with other regional folk music traditions in China and beyond, as well as through longitudinal analysis of policy outcomes and community-based initiatives. Further empirical investigation into audience reception, youth engagement, and digital dissemination practices will also deepen understanding of how intangible cultural heritage adapts within rapidly changing cultural ecosystems.

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