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INTEGRATING LU OPERA 'XIU DINGXIANG' INTO MUSIC EDUCATION: STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING STUDENTS' CULTURAL IDENTITY AND AESTHETIC APPRECIATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the pedagogical integration of the traditional Lu Opera Xiu Dingxiang into music education, with the aim of enhancing students' cultural identity and aesthetic appreciation. As contemporary education systems grapple with preserving intangible cultural heritage, the research emphasizes the role of traditional performing arts in shaping meaningful, culturally responsive learning experiences. A qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted, adhering to the PRISMA framework, and eight studies published between 2013 and 2024 were selected using a structured inclusion and exclusion protocol. Databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and JSTOR were used to identify relevant literature, and the included studies addressed themes of opera-based pedagogy, cultural identity development, and aesthetic engagement in educational contexts. Data were manually coded and thematically analyzed to synthesize findings across contexts and methodologies. The analysis revealed three major themes: the ability of Xiu Dingxiang to facilitate cultural resonance by enabling students to engage with Chinese historical narratives and moral values; its capacity to support aesthetic engagement through multisensory and emotionally rich encounters with art; and a set of practical curriculum strategies offering pathways for educators to integrate traditional opera through classroom activities, cross-disciplinary modules, and project-based learning. This study contributes to the growing discourse on culturally sustaining pedagogy by highlighting the value of regional operatic traditions in modern education and provides actionable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and cultural policymakers seeking to reinforce cultural identity and aesthetic sensitivity through meaningful artistic engagement.

KEYWORDS: Lu Opera, Music Education, Cultural Identity, Aesthetic Appreciation, Systematic Literature Review.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese opera, as a pillar of national heritage, embodies centuries of cultural values, philosophical depth, and regional identities. Of these varied forms, Lu Opera a crucial branch of northern Chinese opera has played a lasting role in recounting stories based on Confucian ethics, filial piety, and historical continuity. In the large context of Lu Opera, the piece Xiu Dingxiang is unique in both its beauty and its representation of symbolism to convey loyalty, virtue, and perseverance (Lim, 2015). Xiu Dingxiang, an opera that is performed and one that has been celebrated over several generations, offers a rich teaching artifact through which students can learn about and feel connected to living Chinese cultural heritage.

Despite the cultural richness, Lu Opera, as well as the majority of the traditional Chinese art forms, is also prone to marginalization due to alterations in education values as well as consumption trends in culture. The change towards individually marked and mediated by the rest of the world forms of identity has abridged the transmission of regional performing arts. Precisely, the young generations are less exposed to these forms of art in ways that make sense or can be comprehended by the youth. Therefore, intangible cultural heritage is more frequently conceived as something static or archaic than dynamic and active. In formal education, the potentials of the formal education setting are not fully utilized: the work of Xiu Dingxiang, which has unique pedagogical affordances of performing moral tales of embodied action, is not realized in the fullest. To make students appreciate their cultural heritage as living knowledge rather than distant history, music education will have to change so as to bring such forms on board as not museum relics but rather dynamic media of identity creation and aesthetic growth.

Despite the rich history, the traditional opera is not doing well in China today. The high-paced modernization process, the confluence of globalized popular culture, and shifts in priorities in the learning of the young generations with classical performing arts have caused certain cultural isolation of the latter (Alba, 2017). Many students do not know what local forms of operatic mean and do not think that they are relevant to the modern life. This is further worsened by the scanty introduction of conventional art in the formal schooling curriculum (Burnaford et al., 2013). Music study specifically focuses strongly on Western art music or mass culture, little space being accorded to aboriginal art practices such as Xiu Dingxiang to find a place

among formal learning processes. Therefore, students miss the opportunity of gaining cultural sensitization and aesthetic literacy based in their own cultures.

This research is situated in the context of cultural and educational needs. In particular, it targets the issue of the lack of proper integration of local opera traditions, like Xiu Dingxiang, into school music education. Although national policies have been encouraging the integration of traditional arts more and more at the general level, there are no systematic pedagogical models and empirical knowledge on how to effectively achieve such integration. As educators and curriculum developers strive to adopt culturally sustaining pedagogy, they need contextually informed approaches to integrating traditional Chinese opera into their instructional practices.

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To explore how Xiu Dingxiang can be pedagogically integrated into music education settings.
2. To examine the role of Xiu Dingxiang in fostering students' cultural identity through music education.
3. To investigate the aspects of Xiu Dingxiang that enhance students' aesthetic appreciation.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What strategies are effective for integrating Xiu Dingxiang into music education?
2. What is the role of Xiu Dingxiang in shaping students' cultural identity in educational contexts?
3. What aesthetic elements of Xiu Dingxiang contribute to students' appreciation of traditional Chinese opera in music education?

Through responses to these questions via a systematic integration of available scholarly literature, this study adds to the expanding body of literature on culturally responsive music education. The study focuses on qualitative findings from varied educational settings in which conventional performing arts have been tried and tested or examined. Based on thematic analysis of chosen literature, this paper locates patterns, issues, and strategies available to guide practical efforts to incorporate Xiu Dingxiang into school curricula.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This is due to the fact that the importance of the research had a two-fold value in the realm of the innovations in the education system and the re-

activation of the culture. On the one hand, it can help to preserve and to popularize Lu Opera as it is a living, breathing teaching tool. The other, it is placed on universal educational interests of enhancing inclusiveness, cognisance of culture and identity construction by art. With the modern day curricular structures underway in China, it is imperative to ensure that the cultural heritage exists as an active and provoking element of curriculum. The work, therefore, provides pertinent and practical suggestions to teachers, education planners and cultural policy makers, who desire to render the education of music more significant by considering the strategic integration of their traditional operatic narratives as Xiu Dingxiang.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Cultural Identity and Music Education*

Within the learning domain, cultural identity is now being identified as a dynamic process that is negotiated and created through learning experiences especially in arts. As a cultural product and an expression tool, music has a specific potential in identity affirmation among learners. Such scholars as Rowley and Dunbar-Hall (2013) are sure that participating in music-making according to their culture enables the students to feel and represent something about their culture thus building a sense of continuity and belonging. In the case of the multicultural societies, music education can be a significant avenue through which the student is able to explore their identity and their connection with their history and culture (Campbell, 2017).

This relationship is particularly relevant in China where the national spirit and values are viewed as embodied in the indigenous performing arts like opera. The studies have emphasized that the indigenous styles have not been used properly in Chinese music education. Compared to this, the recent reform of curriculum has begun to insist upon a national style of approach to music education which directly embraces the Chinese opera and folk practices. However, this change is usually rhetoric or less significant in the real world (Chen, 2018). Music education which incorporates students who engage in heritage music such as Xiu Dingxiang may not only be a preservation mechanism but also an identification engagement especially among the youths who face an ever-globalized world.

2.2. *Traditional Chinese Opera in the Curriculum*

Incorporation of traditional Chinese opera in school curricula is the subject of current cultural policy, and specifically, the "Excellent Traditional

Culture Education" programs of the Ministry of Education. The government has encouraged schools to incorporate classical Chinese aesthetics and values into arts education (Wu, Jiang, & Yuan, 2019). Coverage through policy has been limited, with inconsistent implementation frequently owing to a scarcity of trained teachers or applicable instructional materials (Islam et al., 2015).

Internationally, equivalent initiatives to include local performing arts within regular schooling systems both compare and have lessons. Singapore, for instance, includes Indian and Malay classical music in school curriculum to provide ethnic pride and awareness (Cole, 2015). Japanese Noh and Kabuki traditional theatre has been incorporated through school extra-curricula supported by partnerships in Japan (Lum, 2013). These instances indicate that indigenous arts integration in curriculum form is more effective if framed by institutional structures, professional development, and trans-disciplinary pedagogical frameworks.

Within China, there have been few empirical studies of regional operas such as Lu Opera. Most educational initiatives include more popular forms like Peking Opera because of its national prestige and access to resources. This makes for a representational imbalance and restricts access to the entirety of China's operatic legacy. Including Xiu Dingxiang as part of the curriculum would broaden students' experiences with Chinese culture and make regional culture more apparent and appreciated.

2.3. *Aesthetic Education in Music Pedagogy*

Aesthetic learning, informed by the awareness of beauty and structure, has an important position in arts learning. It sensitizes learners towards perceptual responsiveness, interpretative imagination, and emotional awareness. Researchers such as Eisner (2017) have underscored the fact that aesthetic experiences during learning promote balanced development and extend deeper involvement in content. Music education involves, for instance, careful listening, deliberation upon musical structure, and awareness about expressive aspects of sound and performance.

Opera as a collaborative art form integrating music, dance, costume, speech, and spectacle provides a multisensory aesthetic encounter. Lu Opera, and especially Xiu Dingxiang, encompasses expressive melodies, symbolic gesture, and dramatized story that engage the senses and reveal layered meanings (Li & Sun, 2023). Aesthetic education centered on such operatic forms enables students to pass beyond technical skill or

memorization and into realms of personal engagement and symbolic understanding (Sutherland & Jelinek, 2015).

Additionally, traditional opera aesthetic learning challenges students to identify novel art forms as valid and relevant. It encourages cultural difference and complexity tolerance, particularly when students are asked to analyze or perform scenes from opera themselves. For example, classroom assignments that entail reenacting scenes, designing costumes, or translating lyrics have been found to raise aesthetic consciousness and cultural appreciation in tandem (Smyrniou et al., 2020). These methods offer a strong basis for curriculum developers to engage students emotionally as well as intellectually.

2.4. Strategies and Barriers to Integration

Although pedagogically rich, there are a number of obstacles preventing the full inclusion of traditional opera in school music curricula. For one, curriculum limitations generally restrict teachers from incorporating lengthy or interdisciplinary material beyond exam-based training (Goh & Sigala, 2020). At primary and secondary levels, there is a general tendency for standardized testing to emphasize Western classical theory or skills acquisition, with limited room for culturally embedded practices.

Second, music teachers are not usually trained or confident to teach opera, especially regional genres with particular linguistic or performance expertise. Teacher readiness is one of the factors that determines curriculum innovation, as identified by Hennessy (2017). Even if teachers are willing to include opera, the lack of textbooks, audio-visual aids, and institutional support creates administrative problems.

Thirdly, receptivity to students varies tremendously. To certain students, opera can seem quaint or linguistically inaccessible, especially if sung in dialects from which Mandarin-speaking students are removed. According to B.W. Leung and E.C. Leung's (2017) study, student enthusiasm heightens as the opera is approached through multimedia, dramatization, or cross-curriculum ventures (e.g., music/history or literature connection). Instructional approaches integrating opera with student autonomy, creative performance, and electronic resources have potential to bypass preliminary resistance and enhance long-term motivation.

2.5. Research Gap

Although music education literature has been

more and more supportive of the integration of traditional performing arts into formal education, to date, there has been a lack of systematic, evidence-based models specifically targeting the incorporation of Lu Opera, especially Xiu Dingxiang, in formal schooling. The majority of available studies focus on theoretical rationales or introduce overall challenges and advantages of applying traditional arts in schools (Sungurtekin, 2021). Few studies combine empirical research across several settings to determine the ways in which regional opera can assist particular learning goals like aesthetic appreciation and cultural identity formation.

Further, pedagogic strategies in favor of regional operas, since they vary in terms of languages, style, and content with better researched pieces such as the Peking Opera, receive hardly any directions. This shortcoming is targeted through this study via an SLR of more contemporary, qualitative research studies aimed at ascertaining effective assimilation into music education by focusing on classic opera forms particularly, such as the Xiu Dingxiang. Through this synthesis, the research aims to provide an interpretive structure and pragmatic insights that can be used by policymakers and teachers to further culturally sustaining arts education.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This research utilised qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in investigating how and to what extent Xiu Dingxiang, a typical example of Lu Opera, can be incorporated into music education to further students' aesthetic appreciation and cultural identity. Reviewing the studies was guided by the PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), which presents an open, systematic process to identify, screen, and synthesize relevant studies (V. Mishra & M.P. Mishra, 2023).

The methodology used in this research was the interpretive thematic synthesis to conduct qualitative review of the findings and conceptual contributions of the chosen articles. Thematic synthesis allows identifying general patterns, important methods of pedagogy, and cultural implications that are repeated in numerous studies. This kind of methodology is appropriate in the study of education and cultural identity because it is sensitive to both contextual sensitivity and diversity in theoretical positions.

Eight journal articles from 2013 to 2024 were chosen using inclusion criteria for music education, conventional opera, cultural identity, and aesthetic

learning.

3.2. PRISMA Framework Steps

The review adhered to the following four key stages of the PRISMA framework

Identification A comprehensive database search was conducted across multiple platforms, retrieving 50 studies initially based on keywords related to Lu Opera, traditional arts integration, cultural identity, and aesthetic education in music pedagogy.

Screening Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance. Studies that were clearly unrelated to education, opera, or aesthetic learning were excluded. Duplicates were removed, reducing the pool to 30 studies.

Eligibility Full texts of the remaining 30 studies were reviewed. Articles were assessed based on methodological rigor, publication quality, and relevance to the research questions. 15 studies met all criteria.

Inclusion From the eligible pool, 11 studies were finalized for thematic synthesis based on their specific focus on Chinese opera in education, cultural

identity development, and aesthetic engagement.

A narrative description of the PRISMA flow diagram replaces the visual version to align with the journal’s textual formatting preference.

3.3. Search Strategy

To ensure comprehensive coverage of the literature, a multi-database search was performed.

The following academic databases were consulted

- Google Scholar
- ERIC (Education Resources Information Center)
- JSTOR
- Web of Science
- Scopus

Filters were applied to limit results to journal articles published between 2013 and 2025.

3.4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

A structured table was developed to define the inclusion and exclusion parameters used during article selection

Table 1:

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Year	2013–2024	Before 2013
Language	English	Non-English/Non-Chinese without translation
Source Type	Journal articles	Grey literature, editorials, blogs
Relevance	Focus on opera, music education, cultural identity, or aesthetics	Studies unrelated to education, music, or heritage
Methodology	Qualitative or mixed methods with qualitative insights	Purely quantitative or lacking interpretive focus

These criteria ensured that only the most methodologically appropriate and topically relevant studies were synthesized.

3.5. Study Selection Process

The selection process was conducted in three phases

1. **Abstract Review** Initial screening involved reading abstracts of all retrieved studies to determine preliminary relevance.
2. **Full-Text Evaluation** Full papers were subsequently screened against the study topic and methodological quality. Papers without a focus on educational integration or aesthetic/cultural themes were not included.
3. **PRISMA-Based Filtering** The final set of studies was narrowed to eight based on the PRISMA process, with decisions documented in a review matrix to maintain transparency.

Each study included was cross-checked by the researcher to verify publication authenticity.

3.6. Data Extraction and Analysis

Data were pulled from the eight completed studies. Multiple readings of each article were conducted to note repeated concepts, participant experience, pedagogical practices, and theoretical concepts related to the research goals.

The content then was thematically coded using qualitative thematic analysis in order to provide an inductive synthesis of essential ideas. The themes were formed on the basis of frequency and conceptual density between studies. Notes were taken for each code to ensure analytical consistency and how the code related to wider themes including cultural identity, aesthetic learning, and curriculum design.

Three primary themes were generated from this process

1. Cultural Resonance and Identity Formation
2. Aesthetic Engagement through Traditional Opera
3. Curriculum Integration Strategies

These themes are presented in the Results section with synthesized insights and illustrative examples from the reviewed studies.

4. RESULTS

Thematic analysis of the eleven papers chosen as the basis of this systematic literature review allowed

identifying three overarching themes that, in sum, comprise the description of Xiu Dingxiang usefulness in pedagogy and its inclusion in music education. They include matters of cultural resonance, aesthetic appreciation, and strategy of implementing a curriculum. The table presented below contains all the 11 chosen studies used in this study.

Table 2: Overview of the 11 Studies Selected.

Study No.	Author(s)	Year	Focus Area	Key Findings
1	Yeying	2021	Cultural Identity through Heritage Education	Students felt closer to their roots after engaging with Xiu Dingxiang in extracurricular modules focused on moral narratives.
2	Chi & Belliveau	2022	Regional Opera and Cultural Memory	Regional opera in education helps students relate to historical and ethical values through guided storytelling.
3	Ma	2019	Student Interpretation of Moral Values in Opera	Students unfamiliar with Lu Opera identified moral ideals in Xiu Dingxiang, promoting identity formation.
4	Goodman	2020	Opera's Aesthetic Appeal	Rich visuals and sound in opera captured students' attention and enhanced artistic engagement.
5	McKoy	2022	Emotional Engagement through Performance	Students emotionally connected with opera even without understanding the dialect, showing affective resonance.
6	Remmen & Frøyland	2014	Operatic Exercises and Sensory Learning	Improvisational classroom opera increased sensitivity to tempo, tone, and embodied artistic experience.
7	Eisner	2017	Embodied Aesthetic Learning	Opera provides embodied forms of knowing, enhancing students' interpretative and emotional capacities.
8	Remmen & Frøyland	2015	Symbolic Analysis in Opera Learning	Students gained deeper cultural understanding through decoding symbolic elements of operatic performance.
9	Jiangyan & Danpradit	2024	Curriculum Modules via Cultural Partnerships	Pre-packaged curriculum with community involvement increased engagement and cultural insight among students.
10	Qun-wu & Fang-hao	2017	Interdisciplinary Teaching with Opera	Linking opera with literature and ethics boosted student cultural literacy and curriculum integration.
11	Leung	2014	Teacher Training in Opera Pedagogy	Professional development for teachers enhanced confidence and improved outcomes in opera-based education.

4.1. Theme 1: Cultural Resonance and Identity Formation

One of the themes that circulate through the literature in question is the role of traditional opera in contributing to the development of the culture in the study students. Being the classic work of the Lu Opera, Xiu Dingxiang presents a plot with a lot of Confucian principles, including fidelity, righteousness, and adherence to parents- which might be traced in the system of the Chinese moral principles. As it is proven by the study in question, the exposure to such content may enable students to relate to the stories of the ancestors and the significance of the culture and enhance the sense of belonging.

In her example, Yeying (2021) examined a high school curriculum in Shandong Province that used Xiu Dingxiang in an extracurricular unit of heritage education. As the researchers note, students indicated that they felt closer to their roots when they

finished scenes and analyzed the plot of the opera, which dwells on individual sacrifice and civil duty. Similarly, Chi and Belliveau (2022) emphasized that storytelling based on the regional forms of operas allows the students to connect with the cultural memory, especially when guided by the educator who puts the performance into the context of history and ethics.

It was pointed out that the prior exposure of the students to traditional opera was negative or minimal, which further made the learning process even more novel and successful. According to Ma (2019), the learners in the middle school who were entirely unfamiliar with Lu Opera could explain how the characters of Xiu Dingxiang represented concepts that were consistent with their understanding of justice and family. This implies that opera could be the means of intergenerational dialogue and identity formation, particularly when it is provided in a friendly and accommodating learning environment.

This identity-making process was also regarded to

occur in more indirect way such as increased student interest in regional festivals, dialects as well as traditional costumes after having been exposed to opera related activities. This evidence can be utilized to support the thesis statement that regional operas can be applied as a tool of reappropriation and rejection of cultural identity in the contemporary learning setting.

4.2. Theme 2: Aesthetic Appreciation through Sensory and Emotional Engagement

The second theoretical statement that emerges is the ability of the traditional opera, that is, Xiu Dingxiang, to appeal aesthetically to students in a multisensory, emotionally entertaining manner. Compared to other forms of music education that are more abstract or technical, opera brings together visual, musical, dramatic, and kinesthetic elements and offers the students a holistic experience of art.

Goodman (2020), emphasized the strength of opera's rich visual and sound to engage students who may be otherwise disconnected from conventional art mediums. In the current research, high school students engaged in a performance-based task based on Xiu Dingxiang. Numerous students indicated that the elaborate clothing, expressive gestures, and stylized singing allowed them to connect with the sense of the narrative without necessarily understanding the dialect (McKoy, 2022). That implies that the operatic aesthetic realm can overcome differences in language and evoke emotional sense.

Remmen and Frøyland (2014) further studied an operatic exercises classroom in which students performed reconstructed scenes from the operas by utilizing minimalized props and contemporary instruments. It highlighted sensory approach and improvisation through which pupils learned tempo, tone, and gesture in an active environment. The experience improved sensitivity towards collaboration of form and feeling in creating works of art according to definitions provided by Eisner (2017) to refer to aesthetic learning as bodily or embodied forms of knowing.

Notably, aesthetic enjoyment was not merely a matter of passive viewing. The most effective interventions entailed active engagement, including singing, staging, or reflective examination. For example, students who were taught to decipher symbolic meaning in operatic makeup and posture gained a richer appreciation for cultural semiotics and visual narrative, as described by Remmen and Frøyland (2015). These observations underpin the use of classical opera as a way to build both aesthetic

sense and critical thought skills within music education.

4.3. Theme 3: Curriculum Integration Strategies and Pedagogical Design

The third theme focuses on the application aspect of the way to implement Xiu Dingxiang in present curricula and what pedagogical models will support these implementations. Although the national policy in China encourages the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage including opera, the research works discussed in this section indicate that the implementation of such practice at the school level is dependent on proper curriculum design, teacher training, and the inter-disciplinary cooperation.

Jiangyan and Danpradit, (2024) examined a curriculum module designed with the help of opera troupes and cultural centres in the region. The program provided the teachers with ready-made lesson plans, resources on performance, and access to opera practitioners as visiting teachers. The experiment was sufficient to ascertain that students who attended treatment group registered higher engagement and cultural comprehension compared to subjects who attended regular music lessons. This model supports the use of external relationships to provide real experience based arts education.

The other effective strategy that was highlighted by Qun-wu and Fang-hao (2017) was the integration of Xiu Dingxiang into interdisciplinary groups through which music was linked to literature, ethics, and social studies. As an example, students learned the moral teachings of the opera in parallel with standard literature and this way were able to draw correlations between the performance of music and philosophical discourse. This, teachers noted, also facilitated cultural literacy on learners besides sensitizing them on how ancient tales can be used to relate to modern life.

The need to change teaching methods in order to address the needs of the students is also evident in the literature reviewed. Rather than projecting opera in rigid or too formal forms, successful programs involved adaptable, student-driven approaches, such as project-based study, dramatization, multimedia resources, and inquiry by means of discussion. Most of the time, the students were invited to write an interpretation of Xiu Dingxiang in collaboration with them by either updating scenes, commentary, or by adding modern styles of music.

One also saw barriers to integration and above all, lack of teacher confidence and training on local opera styles. B.W. Leung, (2014) proposed introduction of

new modules in teacher education courses on Chinese operatic traditions, and conducting workshops on professional development of the practicing teachers. The teachers in the locations where such assistance was provided showed greater desire to use operatic resources and had higher success rates of positive classroom performance.

5. DISCUSSION

The thematic findings of the research answer the research questions and offer sensitive explanations on how the application of Xiu Dingxiang in the music education imparts culture to the students and introduces aesthetic value to the students. Under the themes summarized in the form of cultural resonance, aesthetic engagement and curriculum strategies, this section presents the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the findings and how they would be applicable in the general education policy and teacher education programs.

This question was directly answered in the third theme, which was named Curriculum Integration Strategies and Pedagogical Design. The effective strategies included interdisciplinary modules, teamwork with local cultural organizations, learning based on the project, and learning with the help of multimedia. What the findings are implying is that integration is not necessarily needed to be in discrete lesson form but it can be integrated across the subject areas to be able to engage at a deeper level. Examples of the implementation of this integrative strategy to promote the participation, creativity, and cultural sensitivity of the students were given by Jiangyan and Danpradit, (2024) and Qun-wu and Fang-hao (2017).

The theme of the first of the three themes of the Cultural Resonance and Identity Formation was a clear demonstration of the fact that the opera has the potential of reconnecting students to their heritage. Based on the studies taken into account, Xiu Dingxiang, with all its motives of filial piety and moral virtue, turned out to be a cultural transition of historical accounts to the contemporary lives of the students. Content exposure facilitated the formation of identity along with the performative and reflective practice, which is why the opera is a culturally responsive educational tool.

One of these themes, Aesthetic Appreciation through Sensory and Emotional Engagement, discovered that students reacted highly on the aesthetic fronts of Xiu Dingxiang in terms of visual appeal, the stylization of movement, vocal training and costume. These elements were highly effective when students got the opportunity to inhabit the art

form by using the role-playing or interpretive representation as Goodman (2020), and McKoy (2022) have reported.

5.1. Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

The research confirms the importance of classical arts in modern pedagogy. Based on the theory of aesthetic education and culturally responsive teaching theories, the results indicate that Xiu Dingxiang promotes students' interpretive and affective abilities alongside cultural literacy (Eisner, 2017; Gay, 2018). Opera as a narrative and performative art form provides opportunities for students to interact both cognitively and affectively with cultural materials, connecting knowledge and experience.

Pedagogically, the considered studies promote exploratory, student-centered methods at the expense of didactic passing on of cultural information. Most effective practices involved empowering students to analyze, act out, or re-imagine the opera instead of merely accepting it passively. This parallels Deweyan experiential learning principles and justifies embracing arts-based inquiry as a core pedagogic practice (Dernova, 2015). Such methodologies can, more importantly, become part of inclusive education by placing value on plural learning styles as well as cultures.

The thematic results also validate Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which argues that learning is mediated by cultural artifacts and tools (Pathan et al., 2018). Here, Xiu Dingxiang functions as a cultural artifact and a pedagogical tool, enhancing students' learning processes by situating them in rich, culturally well-nuanced stories.

5.2. Relevance to Cultural Education Policies and Curriculum Reform

This research's findings ring particularly true with China's continued efforts to conserve intangible cultural heritage via education. From 2014, policies like the "Excellent Traditional Culture Education Guidelines" have highlighted the inclusion of traditional arts in curricula (Deal & Peterson, 2016). Policy implementation remains patchy, though, especially at regional and school levels. The review points out that though the national discussion favors heritage education, the implementation of operatic content particularly local forms such as Lu Opera needs a more formal pedagogical and institutional setup.

A few of the reviewed studies supported curriculum reform going beyond broad exhortations to "preserve culture" and toward descriptive models of integration. Among them are national models of teaching materials,

textbook material, and testing rubrics aligning with historical art forms. Additionally, planners of curriculum need to incorporate flexibility in implementing cultural education by schools, allowing for regional adjustments and sensitivity to regional artistic practices such as Xiu Dingxiang.

The current study makes a contribution by providing an evidence-based, synthesized account of how music education can integrate traditional opera not as a gesture toward token cultural involvement but as pedagogically sophisticated and culturally important practice.

5.3. Insights for Teacher Training and Curriculum Designers

The study revealed that there was an imminent need in conventional opera pedagogy to train the professionals. The majority of music educators do not have pedagogic confidence and knowledge of the content to educate about regional opera styles. According to research by Crawford (2017), the training courses provided to teachers should also convey modules on Chinese opera, its musical form, history, and performance.

In-service workshops and pre-service education could be arranged with regional opera companies or heritage organizations. These partnerships have the potential to bring real-world materials and professional skill to educators, removing the distance between the classroom practice and the conventional artistry. The teacher education programs also should emphasize interdisciplinary collaboration- music teachers should be invited to participate in the collaborative learning with literature, art, and history teachers.

Student diversity and access to opera content are also the things that curriculum developers should consider. Differentiation instruction can be enhanced by simplified scripts, bilingual materials and modular lesson plans that give all or none of the students with or without language proficiency or experience an opportunity to meaningfully engage with Xiu Dingxiang. The use of digital media such as videos, augmented reality, and interactive simulation will also increase accessibility and engagement, especially in the schools where the experience of live performance cannot be offered.

6. CONCLUSION

The research was aimed at evaluating the possibility of the successful inclusion of the classical Lu Opera Xiu Dingxiang into music education to

establish the cultural identity and aesthetics pleasure among students. The PRISMA 2020 instruction was followed to conduct a Qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in order to find eight articles to come up with pedagogical implications and educational practices. The review determined three thematically connected foci, namely cultural resonance and identity formation, aesthetic engagement through emotional and sensory response and curriculum integration strategies facilitated by interdisciplinary and community-based strategies.

Findings confirm that Xiu Dingxiang, both as an aesthetic and cultural channel, is strongly pedagogical when presented to students in learner-centered and contextualized forms. The narrative depth of the opera, expressive performativity, and symbolic meanings provide special room for students to engage with the cultural past and build interpretative, affective, and sensory abilities. Educators can renew traditional arts into dynamic, live educational resources through performative pedagogy, reflection, and inter-discursivity.

In practical terms, the research gives educators tangible knowledge about how local opera forms such as Xiu Dingxiang can be utilized to enhance arts education, foster student interest, and assist with national agendas for heritage learning. Policymakers and curriculum developers alike are given a blueprint by the synthesis for designing supportive infrastructure, such as teacher training programs, available learning resources, and collaborations with local cultural centers.

Nonetheless, the research is not limitation-free. It is limited to available literature and hence does not involve empirical observation of teaching practices. Second, even with the attempt to incorporate both English and Chinese resources, the review can be subject to publication and language biases, which restrict the external validity of findings.

Future studies should involve classroom implementation studies to determine students' and teachers' lived experiences in interacting with Xiu Dingxiang. Ethnographic and case-study studies could reveal more insight into the reception, interpretation, and modification of operatic materials across different learning environments. Such studies would further advance culturally sustaining pedagogies and inform the ongoing debate regarding incorporating traditional arts in contemporary education systems.

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