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CULTURAL MEMORY IN LYRICS: THE REGENERATION AND EVOLUTION OF TRADITIONAL MELODIES IN MODERN POP MUSIC: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW FROM 2014 TO 2024

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ABSTRACT

This study conducts a systematic literature review to examine the role played by music lyrics in cultural identity, focusing on relevant studies conducted from 2014 to 2024. By integrating the theories of cultural communication and adopting a global perspective, it meticulously analyzes how lyrics in pop music, subcultural music, and ethnic music function as carriers of emotions and historical memories. It also explores how such lyrics facilitate cultural blending and the resurgence of local identity within the globalization context. Findings suggest that lyrics, as a crucial medium of cultural expression, assume multiple roles in aspects such as emotional identification, the struggle of marginalized groups, and cross-cultural dissemination. Nevertheless, a paucity of research persists regarding lyrics in nonmainstream music and within the digital communication milieu. This study aims to provide a theoretical framework and empirical directions for future investigations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the many elements of music, lyrics play a pivotal role in integrating the audience's emotions, historical understanding, and collective experiences. Language expression allows lyrics to evoke emotional resonance and incorporate historical retrospection, cultural traditions, and social critiques, reflecting a community's shared emotional concepts and ultimately strengthening further cohesion and sense of belonging within the group. As an important characteristic of human group life (Christopher, 2015), this aspect transcends mere entertainment and works as a vital medium for disseminating social values, historical memories, and identity.

Lyrics can also serve as an important means through which intangible cultural heritage is inherited (Chao- Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023). For instance, the traditional music of ethnic minorities in southwestern China uses lyrics to spread traditional culture (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023).

In addition, music has distinct social attributes. Pop lyrics often help listeners locate their social positions by reflecting social issues (Hatten & Monelle, 2010). One example is "Scarborough Fair," which highlights the antiwar sentiment during the hippie movement in the last century. From the perspectives of technology and communication, digitalization not only diversifies ways to disseminate music but also allows for more frequent cross-national exchanges, significantly changing how different regions, ethnic groups, and cultural communities express their cultural identities through lyrics (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023). First, the music of different regions is influenced by the global youth culture's productive consumption and experience (Saldanha, 2002). The concept of identity has always been fundamental in the interactionist tradition (Christopher, 2015). Listeners manage their typical identities (Williams, 2016), for example, by expressing their local identity through K-pop music or conveying the resistance of marginalized groups through hip-hop music. Overall, lyrics have become vital in multicultural identities (Cruz & Seo & Itir & Binay, 2021).

However, studies on lyrics are often scattered throughout different disciplinary fields. Consensus has yet to be reached on the correlations between music genres (e.g., pop music and traditional music) and cultural identity. Most studies have focused on specific music genres or have been confined to a particular cultural context, highlighting the absence of broader cross-cultural comparative research that explores the inherent social content in music (Christopher, 2015). Although one can find abundant research on how Western pop music influences cultural identity in its birthplace and globally, compared with studies on music

identity in non-Western cultures, the analysis of correlations and comprehensive discussions between the two have been relatively fragmented and unsystematic (Omojola, 2013). Examples include the "demonization" of early African music during the colonial era (Omojola, 2013) and the musical phenomenon in which some artists distance themselves from "First World" values and worldviews and instead emphasize more "local" beliefs, value systems, symbolic orders as well as ways to understand the local within a global context (Omojola, 2013). Only a few studies have deeply examined how profound changes in music dissemination methods in the digital age affect cultural identity. Social media, as an undeniable force, promotes the global dissemination and interaction of music, expanding channels through which music spreads. Mass media and social media are increasingly becoming arenas for constructing different types of music fans (Williams, 2016).

Therefore, a systematic review of existing research and a description of the complex relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity will provide new insights and future research directions in this field (Cruz & Seo & Itir & Binay, 2021). The process by which people promote globalization often reflects a region's economy, psychology, and culture (Saldanha, 2002). As components of culture, music and lyrics can mirror phenomena and issues of globalization. For instance, recent years have witnessed a more diverse and international dissemination of music through globalization and digitalization with the development of K-pop. The use of English in lyrics addresses the needs of international audiences and promotes the development of cross- cultural identity but also brings the risk of weakening local languages and cultural characteristics (Cruz & Seo & Itir & Binay, 2021).

Therefore, this study conducted a systematic literature review to explore how music and lyrics help form and develop cultural identity within diverse cultural contexts. Specifically, it will address three core research questions:

1. How do music and lyrics shape cultural identity?
2. Under globalization, what new changes can be observed in the dynamism of cultural identity?
3. What are the deficiencies in research, and what are the directions for future studies?

2. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the research objectives and answer the above questions in a well-founded manner, the author performed a systematic review following the methodological principles of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

(PRISMA). This framework not only offers researchers an in-depth conceptual understanding but also covers comprehensive methodological guidance and several meticulously designed practical guidelines. It aims to minimize potential decision-making biases at the levels of specific research and expected outcomes. This comprehensive support system ensures that the research process is scientific and rigorous, helping enhance the reliability and validity of research results.

To ensure the comprehensiveness and broad representativeness of the literature, extensive and in-depth literature retrieval and screening were conducted from multiple authoritative and wide-coverage academic databases. These archives not only contain massive volumes of academic papers but also cover important findings in multiple related fields such as social sciences, cultural studies, musicology, and communication studies. This ensures that the academic information we obtain is interdisciplinary and multiperspective, laying a solid foundation for an in-depth research progress.

Databases: Web of Science (WOS), ProQuest, and Scopus

Keywords: "music," "popular music," "traditional music," "lyric," "identity," "identity construction," "cultural identity," "cultural expression," "globalization"

These keywords were selected mainly because they collectively form a framework for exploring relations among music, cultural identity, and globalization. Conducting an in-depth research on these keywords and their interrelations allows us to better understand the important role played by music in the development of human culture and society and in the complexity of cultural diversity and identity construction in the globalization context.

2.1. Music

Music is an essential part of human culture that features a universality that transcends languages, regions, and time. It is a crucial medium for emotional expression, cultural inheritance, and social interaction.

2.1.1. Popular Music

Popular music is a widespread and well-received music genre in contemporary society, reflecting cultural trends, aesthetic concepts, and value orientations. Through melody, rhythm, and lyrics, popular music shapes the audience's identity and cultural perception.

2.1.2. Traditional Music

Traditional music is a musical form that carries rich histories, legends, and national emotions, passed down from generation to generation within a cultural group. It is vital for maintaining cultural diversity, promoting cultural identity, and constructing one's identity (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023).

2.1.3. Lyrics

Lyrics are an important component of music that directly conveys a song's theme, emotions, and ideas. Through lyrics, the audience can deeply understand the cultural background, social significance, and the composer's intentions in the song, generating a more profound resonance with the music (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023).

2.1.4. Identity

Identity is the basis for an individual's or a group's self-perception and positioning in society. As an important part of culture, music significantly influences how individuals and groups construct their identity (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023).

2.1.5. Identity Construction

Identity construction is the process through which an individual or a group shapes and defines their identity through social interaction and cultural practices. As a cultural practice, music plays a crucial role in the identity construction of an individual or a group (Omojola, 2013), who can express their cultural identity, value concepts, and lifestyles by appreciating, learning, and creating music (Omojola, 2013).

2.1.6. Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is the basis for an individual's or a group's cultural self-perception and positioning and reflects a specific cultural group's history, traditions, values, and behavioral norms. As an important medium for cultural inheritance and expression, music is critical in shaping and preserving cultural identity (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023).

2.1.7. Cultural Expression

Cultural expression refers to the way individuals or groups express thoughts, emotions, and value concepts through art, music, dance, and other cultural forms. As an important form of cultural expression, music has a unique charm and influence, through which people can bridge language and regional barriers and collectively share and experience the charm of culture (Cruz & Seo & Itir & Binay, 2021).

2.1.8. Globalization

Under globalization, music, as a cultural product, spreads and is exchanged across national boundaries, influencing people's cultural identities and perceptions worldwide (Cruz & Seo & Itir & Binay, 2021).

1. WOS: (((TS=(("music" OR "popular music" OR "traditional music"))) AND TS=(("lyric" OR "identity" OR "identity construction" OR "cultural identity"))) AND TS=(("cultural expression" OR "globalization")))

2. ProQuest: abstract("music" OR "popular music" OR "traditional music") AND abstract("lyric" OR "identity" OR "identity construction" OR "cultural identity") AND abstract("cultural expression" OR "globalization")

3. Scopus: (ABS ("music" OR "popular music" OR "traditional music") AND ABS ("lyric" OR "identity" OR "identity construction" OR "cultural identity") AND ABS ("cultural expression" OR "globalization")) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar"))

To ensure the accuracy of the search results, certain keywords were combined using Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR) and modified to fit the search platform. The search time range was 2014–2024 to cover research progress in the fields of music, lyrics, and cultural identity in the past decade.

2.1.9. Inclusion Criteria

1. The study explores relations and impacts among music, lyrics, and cultural identity.
2. The study was published between 2014 and 2024 (classic literature can be appropriately included).
3. The study can be retrieved from reliable academic resources such as peer-reviewed journals, academic book chapters, and conference papers from WOS, ProQuest, and Scopus.
4. The literature is mainly written in English (this may include studies in other languages with detailed abstracts or translations).
5. The study contains original data or theoretical support and has academic value.
6. The examined music genres are associated with cultural identity, such as pop music and ethnic music.

2.1.10. Analysis Methods

1. Thematic analysis: Core themes such as "globalization and cultural identity" and "emotional expression in lyrics" were extracted through step-by-step coding.
2. Narrative analysis: The narrative structures of specific lyric texts were analyzed, such as the narration of historical events and the metaphor of cultural symbols.

Figure 1 illustrates the search and article selection process through a PRISMA flow chart.
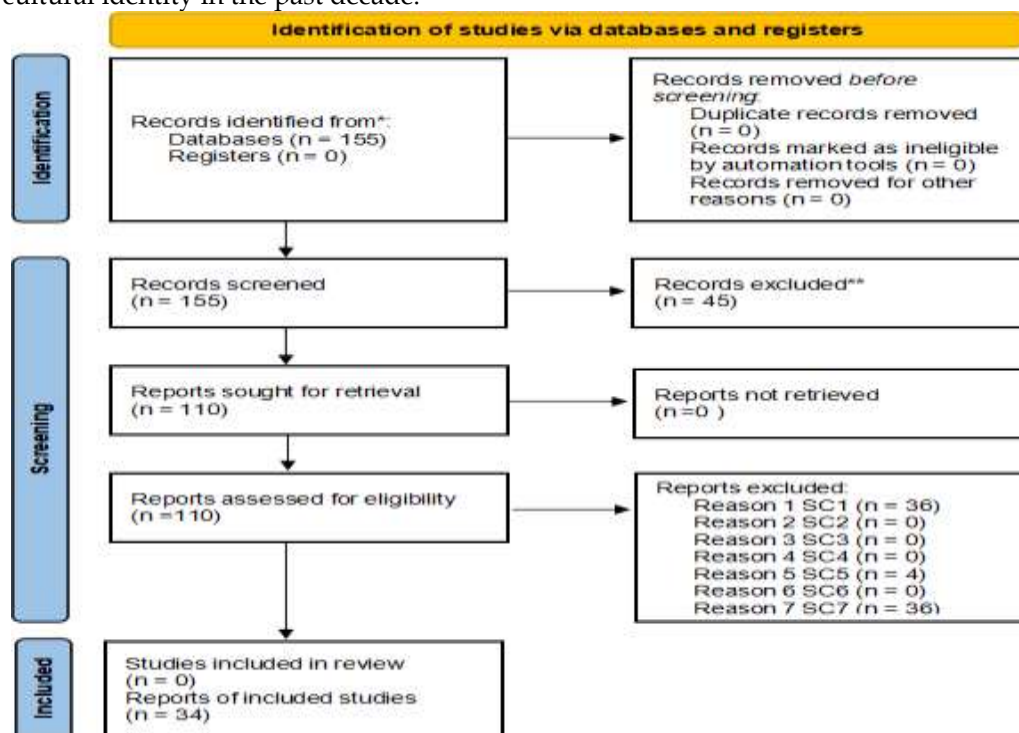

Figure 1: Title Caption.

Figure 1 shows that, in the second stage, 45 articles were excluded because they were outside the set period, were duplicates, and failed to meet the English-language criteria. After considering differences in full-text retrieval (SC4), language (SC5), originality (SC6), and research objects (SC7), the main task in the third stage was to review the collected articles for applicability. Finally, the total number of key studies was reduced to 34, which were manually downloaded and whose full texts were reviewed by the author to ensure that they were thoroughly read and that their validity and final inclusion or exclusion were established. After reading, 36 articles were removed for not meeting SC1, 4 were excluded for being non-English papers, and 36 were removed for focusing only on non-culture-related music (SC7).

The following table shows the criteria and inclusion and exclusion considerations:

Table 1: Title Caption.

	Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
SC1	Theme relevance	Studies that explore the relations and impacts among music, lyrics, and cultural identity	Studies that do not address relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity or that only focus on other aspects such as melody and emotional therapy
SC2	Time	Studies published between 2014 and 2024 (classic literature can be appropriately included)	Studies published before 2014 or after 2024
SC3	Data source	Reliable academic resources such as peer-reviewed journals, academic	Nonacademic resources from non- peer-reviewed sources, social media,
		book chapters, and conference papers	nonacademic blogs, news reports, and others
SC4	Search engines	WOS, ProQuest Scopus	Search engines other than WOS, ProQuest, and Scopus
SC5	Language	Mainly English- Language studies (including literature in other languages with detailed abstracts or translations)	Studies written in languages other than English and those lacking detailed translations or abstract support
SC6	Originality	Studies that contain original data or theoretical support and have academic value	Studies that lack originality and data support, such as book reviews or opinion- based articles
SC7	Research object	Music genres Associated with cultural identity	Research objects only related to noncultural music or overly narrow music genres
		such as pop music and ethnic music	(e.g., only discussing instrumental music)

This literature review explores the relations and impacts among music, lyrics, and cultural identity. Cultural identity is a complex and multidimensional concept that covers different aspects such as language, customs, beliefs, and art. As a vital part of human culture, music conveys emotions through melody and rhythm as well as ideas, values, and social concepts through lyrics (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023). Under globalization, we can understand more profoundly the composition and evolution of cultural identity by exploring the relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity. This review excluded studies that do not discuss the relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity or only focus on other aspects such as melody and emotional therapy. The main reason is that despite being important aspects of music research, they do not directly involve relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity.

This review limited the publication time of the studies to the period 2014–2024. Studies within this time frame reflect the latest findings and progress in this field over the past decade, which is crucial for understanding current research trends and research directions. In addition, relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity may change over time; limiting the time scope helps capture these changes and retrieve more relevant and targeted research. Also, studies published before 2014 or after 2024 were excluded because research from other periods may be somewhat distant from the current research hotspots and frontier issues and may be inconsistent with the topics of concern in the current academic community and society. Furthermore, selecting papers outside this time range is somewhat difficult in terms of comparing and drawing on other

scholars' findings to enrich and improve one's research content.

This study used reliable academic resources including peer-reviewed journals, academic book chapters, and conference papers. A peer review is a crucial mechanism that ensures the quality of academic information. Rigorous reviews by peer experts filter research findings that are innovative, scientific, and practical, guaranteeing the reliability and authority of academic resources. Meanwhile, this study excluded nonacademic resources from non-peer-reviewed sources, social media, nonacademic blogs, and news reports and observed that non-peer-reviewed journals usually have a relatively low academic reputation and influence. Because these resources are not widely recognized, their research findings have low credibility and persuasiveness. In addition, social media, nonacademic blogs, news reports, and other nonacademic resources may contain inaccurate, incomplete, or biased information.

This study selected the search engines WOS, ProQuest, and Scopus mainly because of their influence and authoritative status in the academic community. For the international academic world, WOS is considered the most authoritative, influential, and academically valuable database. It includes three major citation index databases (SCI, SSCI) and several other important databases covering a wide range of disciplines. Meanwhile, Scopus, launched by Elsevier in 2004, is a large-scale abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed studies and is one of the world's largest peer-reviewed literature databases, covering such disciplinary fields as natural sciences, engineering, medicine, and social sciences. Finally, ProQuest is an important academic resource retrieval platform offering powerful search functions and rich academic resources. It also contains journals, dissertations, books, and other resources in multiple fields and supports various search methods and advanced search functions. This study excluded search engines other than these three mainly because although some search engines also provide the function of retrieving academic literature, their coverage and quality control mechanisms are relatively weak. They may also contain a large number of nonacademic documents and redundant information, which may be inconvenient to researchers' retrieval work.

The main focus of this review is English-language literature as English is the common language for international scientific communication and is used by most international academic journals and conferences. This means that the latest research findings are often first published in English and that English-language studies have a widespread global influence. Literature in languages other than English and those without detailed translations or abstract support were excluded because language barriers may limit researchers' understanding and analysis despite the possibility that such literature contains unique cultural perspectives and regional knowledge.

This study selected research with original data or theoretical support and academic value because originality and innovation are important criteria for measuring the value of such research. These studies usually imply that researchers have performed independent thinking, experiments, or analyses and proposed new viewpoints, methods, or conclusions supported by original data or theories. Studies that lack originality and data support, such as book reviews or opinion-based articles, were excluded mainly because although these studies may express the authors' personal insights and viewpoints, they lack objective and verifiable evidence to support such claims and are thus relatively weak in academic argumentation.

For its research objects, this study selected music genres associated with cultural identity, such as pop music and ethnic music, mainly because these are usually closely linked to the cultural identity of specific periods, regions, and social groups. Such music, through lyrics, melodies, and performance forms, convey social values, emotional resonance, and cultural identity. Meanwhile, this study excluded music that is only related to noncultural aspects or whose genre is too narrow primarily because although such music may have artistic value, they often lack a direct connection to cultural identity. Such types of music focus more on musical forms, techniques, and expressiveness and less on cultural backgrounds, social values, and emotional resonance, which are associated with cultural identity.

This study examined data using thematic and narrative analyses. Based on the content, methods, and findings of different studies, this research summarized research results into several core themes, such as "the construction of global cultural identity in pop music," "the role of lyrics in emotional identity," and "the expression of marginalized group identity in subcultural music." It also deeply described the studies under each theme, explained their underlying theoretical support and empirical evidence, and explored their similarities and differences.

After the studies were screened based on the above

criteria, the valid ones are summarized in the   following table:

Table 2: Title Caption.

Article Title	Authors	Publication Year	Source Title	Area
Consumer Authenticatio n of Popular Music in the Global Postmodern	Qirko, Hector	2020	Popular Music and Society	Music
Exploring the Significance of Traditional Music in Safeguarding and Transmitting Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Case Study of theYunnan Bai Ethnic Group	Li, Jiayang; Su, Yimiao	2016	Cultura-International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology	Music Philosophy
Occitan Music Revitalization as Radical Cultural Activism: From Postcolonial Regionalism to Altermondiali sation	Magnat, Virginie	2020	Popular Music and Society	Music
Globalization and Cultural Identity: The Case of Anoration of Vinales in the Framework of New Trends in Contemporary Argentine Folklore	Anzoátegui, M.	2021	Artseduca	Humanities, Multidisciplinary
The Religious and Cultural Identity in Tokach Village That Only Arab-Orthodoxin Turkey	Tacoglu, T.P.; Sagir, A.; Arik, F.	2021	Milli Folklor	Arts & Humanities
Women, Migrations, andRock Without Borders	Guerra, P.	2023	Memoires Identites Marginalites Dans Le Monde Occidental Contemporain	History
Decolonization, Popular Song and Black-Pacific Identity in Melanesia	Webb, M.; Webb- Gannon, C.B.	2014	Media Culture & Society	Communication, Sociology
Foreword: Aesthetics of Interculturalit y in East Asian Contemporary Music	Finchum- Sung, H.V.	2020	World of Music-New Series	Music
Expansion of Knowledge Sources of Artists in the Relationship of Folk Music and Mediatization: The Case of Neset Ertas	Erkan, S.	2022	Milli Folklor	Arts & Humanities
Revitalizing Endangered Traditions: Innovative Approaches to Safeguarding Yunnan's Ethnic Minority Music as Intangible Cultural Heritage	Zhang, S.S.; Wu, C.J.	2019	Heranca-Revista De Historia Patrimonio E Cultura	Arts & Humanities
The Relation between Music and Identity in the Context of Migration: The Case of German- Turkish Young Women	Sahin, N.	2018	Turkish Journal of Sociology-Sosyoloji Dergisi	Music

The Touareg Resistance through Prism of the World Music	Amico, M.	2019	Cahiers D Etudes Africaines	Music
National Spaces and Global Imagination: "Ethiopian Sounds" around the World and in Australia	Alter, A.	2016	Musicology Australia	Music
Marabaixo: Identity and Culture of Resistence	Caldas, Y.P.; Maciel, K.B.; de Andrade, E.V.D	2016	Identidade	Music
Journey to the Center of the Suburbs from Los Chichos to Rosalia: A Flamenco Geography of Spain's Urban Peripheries	Caldwell, T.G.	2021	Humanities-Basel	Urban Studies
Mona aka Sad Girl: A Multilingual Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Music Videos of a Japanese Chicana Rap Artist	Helland, K.I.	2018	Discourse Context & Media	Communication
Cash or Body: Lessons on Space and Language fromCape Verdean Rappers and Their Beefs	Pardue, D.	2017	Popular Music and Society	Music
Speaking of the Spiritual: An Exploration of Knowledge and Pedagogy in Performing Arts in Malang, East Java	Sunardi, Christina	2024	Asian Theatre Journal: ATJ	Music
Being Nomadic and Overseas Rappers Construction of Hybrid Identity in Chinese Hip-Hop Scene: Comunidadese Territorio	Ren, Siyuan; Feixa, Carles	2021	Cidades:; Comunidadese Territorio; Lisboa	Music
Cultural Globalization from the Periphery: Translation Practices of English-Speaking K- Pop Fans	Cruz Angela Gracia B; Seo, Yuri; Itir, Binay	2021	Journal of Consumer Culture; London	Music
Indigenous Youth Reconnect with Cultural Identity: The Evaluation of a Community- and School- Based Traditional Music Program	Good, Arla; Sims, Lori; Clarke, Keith; Russo, Frank A.	2021	Journal of Community Psychology; Hoboken	Music
Symbolism in Ritual: An Example of Teochew Opera Performance amongthe Malaysian Chinese	Ziqiao, L., Chieng, Julia, Foong, A.M.	2024	Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences	Music

Insularity and Musical Horizons in Madagascar: Local Networks, Global Connection, and Vice Versa	Mallet, J.	2023	Youth and Globalization	Music
The Dialectics of Nationalism: Jaromír Weinberger's Schwanda the Bagpiper and Anti-Semitism in Interwar Europe	Frühauf, T.	2023	Cambridge Opera Journal	Music
Societal Narratives in a Vietnamese Rap Song	Chau, T.N.B., Linh, N.T.T., Yen, P.H., Thuy, P.T., Thao, L.T.	2024	Forum for Linguistic Studies	Music
lobalization and Musical Identity: The Reception of Serbian Émigré Composers in the United States	Emmery, L.	2022	Contemporary Music Review	Music
Glocalisation of Nigerian Contemporary Hip-Hop Music	Eze, S.U.	2020	Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa	Music
Consumer Authentication of Popular Music in the Global Postmodern	Qirko, H.	2014	Popular Music and Society	Music
Identifying the English: Essentialism and Multiculturali sm in Contemporary English Folk Music	Keegan- Phipps, S.	2017	Ethnomusicology Forum	Music
Almafuerte: Metal Pesado Argento and Its Construction of Argentinian Nationalism	Calvo, M.B.	2016	Metal Music Studies	Music
Citizen, Consumer, Citimer: The Interplay of Market and Political Identities within	Numerato, D., Giulianotti, R.	2018	Journal of Consumer Culture	Music
Contemporary Football Fan Cultures				
Culture and Globalization: The Indian Creative Industries	Majumder, M.	2014	Media Watch	Music
Critical Interpretation of Hybrid K- Pop:The Global-Local Paradigm of English Mixing in Lyrics	Jin, D.Y., Ryoo, W.	2014	Popular Music and Society	Music
Dig If You Will the Picture . . .: Reading Prince's Semiotic World	Toppins, A.	2022	Design Issues	Music

The systematic literature retrieval and screening resulted in 34 relevant documents covering different cultural backgrounds, music genres, and research methods. These studies mainly focus on several musical forms, such as pop, ethnic or traditional music, K-pop, and rap and have a wide geographical scope, including North America, Europe, and Asia. **The thematic analysis produced the following core themes focusing on the relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity:**

(1) *Pop Music And The Construction Of Global Cultural Identity*

Young people play a complex and crucial role in music globalization. Pop music has become an important component of cultural identity, especially

in the English-dominated global music market (Hector, 2014). Individuals, especially the youth, based on and through pop culture, may simultaneously maintain both local and global identities, form hybrid identities due to the impact of globalization on local cultures, or self-select as members of cultures that resist mainstream (globalizing) forces. They may also experience identity confusion, that is, belonging to neither the local culture nor the global culture (Hector, 2014). For example, "We Are the World" emphasizes individuals' cosmopolitan identity, exerting an especially significant influence on the youth (Yue, Di, Jian-Xin, & Ping, 2019). For the youth, pop music has increasingly become an important channel to express themselves, seek a sense of belonging, and construct a shared cultural identity, which demonstrates the complex characteristics of cultural diversity and integration in the globalization era (Yue, Di, Jian-Xin, & Ping, 2019). For instance, a study found that the unique dissemination power of pop music enhances young people's prosocial identity and that prosocial lyrics encourage college students to engage in more prosocial behaviors (Yue, Di, Jian-Xin, & Ping, 2019).

(2) *The Role Of Lyrics In Emotional Identification*

Lyrics are crucial in reflecting the emotional changes and social-psychological dynamics of specific groups (Kathleen & Lior, 2018). Many studies have found that lyrics, through narration and symbolism, convey group memories and collective emotions (Kathleen & Lior, 2018). Recent research has observed the prevalence of a negative emotional tone in the lyrics of popular mass-market songs (Kathleen & Lior, 2018). The tone of pop music lyrics has undergone significant changes (Kathleen & Lior, 2018) with an increase in anger, disgust, fear, sadness, hesitancy, and sense of responsibility and a decline in happiness, analytical thinking, confidence, and openness (Kathleen & Lior, 2018). While extraversion and agreeableness have not shown clear long-term trends, neither have shown obvious downward trends as well (Kathleen & Lior, 2018). Through the medium of lyrics, people find resonance between melody and words, alleviating their negative emotions to some extent and strengthening their cultural connection and emotional identification. For example, Daniel Powter's "Bad Day" reflects the pressure, anxiety, and unease that one feels by simply existing in contemporary society and also reveals from one aspect people's urgent need for emotional resonance and psychological comfort in the fast- paced and high-pressure modern life.

(3) *Subcultural Music And The Expression Of Marginalized Group Identity*

Some studies found that regional cultural expressions continue to endure stereotypes and prejudice, which simplify traditional concepts into conservative localism conveyed through folk manifestations of rural identities (Virginie, 2016). In such a situation, subcultural music, through lyrics, helps these groups find a unique identity within the mainstream culture by expressing social dissatisfaction and protests.

From a political perspective, Nigerian hip-hop has become a distinctive style in the Nigerian pop music scene, widely loved by both the youth and the older generation (Samson, 2020). Its lyrics are social texts that express love, life, wealth, social commentary, and political dissent (Samson, 2020).

From a gender perspective, discussions have been widespread on changes and the influence of gender in the development of hip-hop. For instance, the inclusion of female elements in Vinida Weng's "Protagonist" diversifies the expression of hip-hop music by demonstrating that female subjects have a profound influence on the identity construction conveyed by music (Manuel, Amanda, & Adrian, 2019).

From a social perspective, hip-hop lyrics often reflect marginalized groups' daily life experiences and social dilemmas (Manuel, Amanda, & Adrian, 2019). For instance, "street language" and "protest symbols" in these lyrics reflect racial discrimination, social inequality, police violence, and other issues, allowing listeners on the social margins to self-identify. In American popular culture, it serves as a major site of resistance, reshaping mainstream female hip-hop artists' image and role and subtly reelaborating the concept of black female identity in the American hip-hop field (James, 2016).

(4) *The Dual Impact Of Globalization On Lyrics*

Globalization has facilitated the dissemination of transnational music, a process that blurs traditionally distinct cultural boundaries and helps form and integrate cultural identities on a worldwide scale (Cruz, Seo, Itir, & Binay, 2021). With the global popularity of pop music, musical forms with specific regional characteristics, historical memories, and national emotions often confront the risks of marginalization or even homogenization (Cruz, Seo, Itir, & Binay, 2021). While the younger generation enjoys the novel experiences and emotional

resonances brought about by global pop music, they may become alienated from or even forget their local musical traditions and cultural roots, weakening their local cultural identity (Cruz, Seo, Itir, & Binay, 2021). Some studies have observed that the discourse power construction of the English-speaking K-pop fan culture has, to some extent, affected the status of the local Korean-speaking fan culture (Cruz, Seo, Itir, & Binay, 2021).

Modern technology such as social media and short-video apps help disseminate music from different cultural backgrounds rapidly, enhancing the global audience's sense of identification with different cultures (Dal & Woongjae, 2012). For instance, first, K-pop music has followed a trend of mixing English and Korean (Dal & Woongjae, 2012), such as in Jennie's "How You Like That." Second, K-pop has undergone a simplification of lyrics to expand its international audience, overcome obvious language barriers through translation to facilitate cross-cultural understanding (Cruz, Seo, Itir, & Binay, 2021), and promote its fan and song culture to other countries and regions through Internet platforms.

Regarding the aesthetic of lyrics, factors including globalization, technological development, and the surge in new songs have helped increase the saturation of music information. People tend to prefer lyrics that are short and contain less information. In a psychological environment of higher information saturation, the preference
for simpler information is also consistent with some claims in cultural evolution theory (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021). Meanwhile, lyric simplification also creates conditions for diverse cultures and the rapid dissemination of local cultural identity (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021).

(5) *The Dynamism And Diversity Of Cultural Identity*

At the cultural level, the success of aesthetic complexity may change (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021). Cultural identity and aesthetic concepts are not static but are instead dynamically reshaped and profoundly transformed with the continuous evolution of social structures, political systems, and economic environments (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021). In such a process, music, as a form of cultural expression, plays a crucial role in guiding the audience toward new points of identity and emotional belonging.

In the 1970s, some rock vocalists distanced themselves from hippie culture in terms of not only lyrics but also music genres, composing more rugged and critical lyrics and blending the musical elements of rock and blues, such as Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" (Calvo, 2016).

In another example, recent years have witnessed the growing number of female hip-hop groups not only enrich the connotation of hip-hop culture but also create a new form of cultural identity.

(6) *The Role Of Lyrics In National Identity*

The lyrics of ethnic or traditional music usually have a significant link to the shaping of national identity (Chao- Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023). In folk art performances, a group seeks to express its indigenous relationship with a place (Simon, 2017), and vocal music is vital in the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2024). Especially in social environments with diverse languages, complex cultural backgrounds, or a concentration of immigrant groups, the language elements in lyrics become a powerful tool for identity with a profound influence on an individual's self-perception and group belonging (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023).

For example, ethnic minorities in Yunnan Province, China, use traditional music to express their identities, preserve their cultural heritage, and find a sense of identity in modern society. Songs are transmitted from generation to generation, carrying these groups' collective memories, history, and narratives (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2024). Through melodies, lyrics, and performances, they celebrate their close relation with nature, protect their heritage, and build a strong sense of belonging (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2024).

3. DISCUSSION

(1) *The Multidimensional Impact Of Music On Cultural Identity*

This systematic literature review demonstrated that music is a powerful tool for cultural identity, revealing several roles played by music and lyrics in shaping it (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023). Whether it is K-pop or American rock in the 1960s and 1970s, artists use the lyrics of pop music to promote the cultural dissemination of emotional expression (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021), profoundly indicating that pop music can be used to mark group identity as it is another socially constructed category (Hector, 2014). Studies have shown that different music genres (hip-hop, pop, subcultural music) have varying impacts on individuals' and groups' cultural identity. In

traditional music, cultural heritage protection is ensured mainly by recognizing and safeguarding the intangible elements forming the core of community identity. Among these intangible aspects, traditional music stands out as a powerful medium of inheritance as it contains not only melodies and rhythms but also the essence of people's narratives, emotions, and values (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2024). In addition, although the means of globalization weakens local cultural identity, it also opens up new paths and possibilities for establishing cross-cultural identity. This observation is consistent with the theoretical viewpoints of many studies, further confirming that cultural identity development is complex and multifaceted in the globalization context. Specifically, as a highly expressive and infectious cultural symbol, music can exert a globalized, localized, or even a hybrid influence, fully displaying the complex dynamics formed by the interweaving and mutual influence of globalization and local culture.

(2) The Crucial Role Of Lyrics In Cultural Identity

This review highlighted how indispensable lyrics are as a core carrier of cultural identity, bearing and transmitting rich and profound cultural meanings. Lyrics play a vital role in both modern-style pop music, which is widely sought after by the youth, and traditional music with historical heritage. One of the most salient features of traditional music is its ability to evoke deep emotional responses such as joy, sadness, nostalgia, and awe through its melody, rhythm, and lyrics (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2024). For example, the Bai ethnic minor "White Moon" from southwestern China expresses the innocent love of Bai lovers. By narrating historical events, expressing personal emotions, and reflecting collective experiences, these songs further consolidate and strengthen people's cultural identity (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2024).

Subcultural music with unique personalities and rebellious spirits, such as hip-hop and punk, have become particularly powerful representatives of the voices of marginalized groups; important tools through which these groups promote their unique ideas, values, and attitudes toward life; and even more potent weapons for them to resist the oppression of mainstream culture and to strive for social recognition and respect. Just as Genesis's "Selling England by the Pound" in the 1970s satirized the social hierarchy, the lyrics in this kind of music contain a profound sense of social criticism and a strong spirit of cultural resistance. Through the medium of music, they convey marginalized groups' voices and demands, demonstrating the complex and diverse aspects of the interaction between music and culture. Nature, cultural heritage, rituals, and social norms are symbolically depicted and integrated into melodies and lyrics, making cultural symbols a key component of vocal music (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2024). One typical example is the role played by cultural activists in promoting Occitan music to counter the institutionalized education by conservatories and university music programs and to democratize artistic practice (Virginie, 2016), which also highlights lyrics as an important tool for the self-expression of marginalized groups (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021).

(3) The Dual Effects Of Globalization And Technological Progress On The Development Of Lyrics

With social development, song length may change, affecting the complexity of the average music (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021). Therefore, perhaps as a result of the shortening of songs, lyrics are more likely to have a compressed meaning (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021). In this process, the content and symbols of some lyrics have undergone simplification to adapt to the development model of globalization and meet the general needs of audiences from different cultural backgrounds. Such lyrics must often possess stronger universality and resonance to spread rapidly and be widely accepted worldwide (Michael, Jaimie, Colin, Alexandra, & Igor, 2021). As a result, some complex culture-specific expressions, regional language features, or profound literary metaphors may be simplified or modified during transnational dissemination for a more direct and understandable presentation to the audience. This simplification is not only reflected in the choice of vocabulary but may also involve the generalization of lyric themes, emotional expression methods, and performance methods to overcome cultural barriers and achieve global emotional resonance and cultural identity. "All My People" by Alexandra Stan and Manilla Maniacs uses short, repetitive lyrics with a strong emotional rendering effect. Bob Marley and The Wailers' "One Love," which Bob Marley cocreated with local Jamaican musicians, combines elements of reggae and rock while conveying the universal themes of peace, unity, and love, allowing the song to be accepted and loved by audiences from different cultural backgrounds worldwide.

The acceleration of globalization offers an unprecedentedly broad platform for reviving and

innovating local cultural identity. The rapid development of digital technology and the widespread popularity of social media have become a powerful force for promoting local culture, especially ethnic music, to the world.Regarding hip-hop, elements such as freedom, individuality, and consumer culture have led to a wide-ranging resonance among young people worldwide and have had a profound influence on them. American hip-hop, through mass media, allows for the transnational adoption and construction of new cultural forms of musical identity (Samson, 2020), encouraging young people to pursue their dreams and express their emotions through the free spirit it advocates.

(4) Music, Lyrics, And Dynamic Cultural Identity

The studies in this review revealed the central idea that cultural identity is not a fixed concept but a complex and dynamic process that evolves with the times, social development, and the interaction between individuals and groups. In such a process, music and its lyrics, as a form of cultural expression, closely and profoundly interact with social, political, and historical contexts. They shape and reshape people's cultural identity, with these changes in turn affecting the development of music and lyrics. For example, Almafuerte combined metal elements with tango and folk music, drawing on not only the music of these genres but also their languages (Calvo, 2016). As important components of culture, music and lyrics guide people's values, aesthetic orientations, and identity perceptions and have become powerful tools for social and cultural critique, helping people find and confirm their cultural identities in modern society. Contemporary K-pop artists exercise their freedom of expression through the use of sexually suggestive lyrics, among others. K-pop has also evolved from a few types before the early 1990s to more Western-style genres in the twenty-first century, including rap and reggae. In addition, with the efforts of teenage singers and group performances, K-pop has played a major role in the Korean Wave (Dal Yong & Woongjae, 2014). The development of K-Pop is closely linked to history; after the end of Japanese occupation, the U.S. military presence in South Korea during the Cold War had a profound influence on Korean pop music, with the U.S. military bases in South Korea becoming a hotbed for the large-scale dissemination of American pop culture (Dal Yong & Woongjae, 2014).

With regard to the complex social context of gender, studies have highlighted the importance of lyrics in constructing and expressing cultural identity (Manuel, Amanda, & Adrian, 2019). For females, the language elements in music closely connect individuals and the group, jointly shaping and strengthening their unique cultural identity and emotional experiences. Several studies have shown that female groups demonstrate their gender identity through lyrics with female-related content and simultaneously adapt to new cultural environments through the language of pop music (Manuel, Amanda, & Adrian, 2019). Black female rappers resist the white gaze by commenting on the white consumption and attraction of black female artists and black cultural forms (James, 2016). Queen Latifah's "U.N.I.T.Y." asserts that female compatriots should break free from men's derogation and calls on women to unite and be independent. Such a dynamic process of the combination of language and music shows that cultural identity is flexible and exists in multiple levels.

(5) Research Limitations

While this systematic literature review offers an in-depth perspective on the complex relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity, it has some inevitable limitations and potential areas for improvement in its analytical process.

First, this study's selection scope was limited to English-language literature. While such an approach helps ensure the accessibility of literature and the consistency of analysis, it may inadvertently exclude relevant studies focusing on the local cultural identity of non-English-speaking countries.

Second, the research time range was restricted to the period 2014–2024. This time span may be sufficient to capture important developments and recent trends in globalization and cultural identity, but it may also overlook some classic studies on the relation between cultural identity and music, which often lay the theoretical foundation for subsequent research and provide theoretical frameworks and analytical tools.

Third, this study excluded non-peer-reviewed gray literature (e.g., industry reports, policy documents, nonacademic publications, etc.) because of the relatively strict literature screening criteria. Although these studies may not be as rigorous and systematic as academic research, they often provide practical-level insights and can reflect the complexity and diversity of the relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity in real- world scenarios.

(6) Future Research Directions

Future studies in the interdisciplinary field of

music, lyrics, and cultural identity can be further refined and deepened by exploring the following research directions:

Cross-Cultural Comparison: Researchers must analyze the similarities and differences in the ways lyrics construct identity across cultural backgrounds. Under globalization, exchanges and collisions among cultures

are becoming increasingly frequent. As an important medium of cultural expression, music plays an increasingly prominent role in the construction of cultural identity. Future studies should focus more on the uniqueness of music cultures in non-English-speaking countries and developing countries as well as explore how music in these cultural contexts uniquely shapes and influences cultural identity.

Music Dissemination in the Digital Age: Studies should explore how short-video platforms are changing lyric creation and identity expression. Social media and streaming platforms have become important music dissemination channels, profoundly influencing the distribution paths and influence of music culture. Scholars should examine how these platforms accelerate the globalization of music dissemination and how the spread of digital music helps shape cultural identity in the interaction between global and local cultures. Specifically, studies must explore how factors such as user interactions on digital platforms, music recommendation algorithms, and the diversity of music content jointly affect cultural identity formation.

Research on Nonmainstream Music: Researchers must conduct in-depth analyses of how lyrics in subcultural and ethnic music reflect marginalized groups' cultural demands. As an important musical component, lyrics

profoundly affect an individual's cultural identity. Future studies can further analyze emotional elements in lyrics and the extent to which they resonate with marginalized groups or immigrants in particular as well as the role played by lyrics as a tool for these groups to express themselves and seek a sense of belonging.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored the complex relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity, highlighting the influence of different genres on cultural identity in the dual context of globalization and localization. Future studies are encouraged to further explore this field in terms of cross-cultural contexts, multilingual music, and digital dissemination to deeply understand the multilevel role of music as a cultural expression and identity- shaping tool.

First, as a widely influential art form, pop music has become an important medium through which culture is exchanged and integrated worldwide. It also plays a pivotal role in shaping transnational cultural identity, especially that of the younger generation, enhancing their understanding of transnational cultures and bridging geographical and cultural boundaries. By identifying and choosing various cultural products, people establish their personal identities, allowing them to gain or enhance their status (Hector, 2014). Meanwhile, through lyrics, melodies, and performance styles, people can understand cultural pride and diversity and cultivate empathy, self-acceptance, and a sense of belonging (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2023). Lyrics of ethnic and subcultural music convey local histories, emotions, and protest discourses, helping marginalized and ethnic groups strengthen their cultural identities. In this process, lyrics emerge as the core tool for cultural identity expression, not only carrying cultural connotations but also constructing a unique sense of cultural belonging through language, narration, and symbolic symbols. An example here is the combination of traditional culture and modern music observed in the integration of chants, rhythmic beats, and lyrics of black Indians with the contemporary jazz foundation (Ricardo, 2016). Among the ethnic minorities in southwest China, vocal music has become a powerful vessel through which cultural symbols and identities are expressed, transmitting their histories, beliefs, values, and aspirations through melody, rhythm, and lyrics (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2023). Another example is the message of female empowerment and resistance conveyed by Japanese hip-hop lyrics, engaging in a dialogue with feminist discourses and discussions of Japanese identity in the genre (Kristin, 2017).

Second, the widespread dissemination of global music has transcended geographical and cultural boundaries, facilitating cross-cultural identity formation and development. Vocal music is the core and soul of cultural expression (Jiayang & Yimiao, 2023). The blend of musical elements has led to the creation of many innovative musical works, helping establish cross-cultural identity. Meanwhile, globalization has presented new opportunities for reviving and disseminating local cultures. The popularization of digital media technology has provided a convenient environment for the cross-cultural dissemination and identity of local music, including the great success achieved by folk music and dance through media (Simon, 2017) and the

protection of traditional music through structured music instruction in educational institutions (Chao-Jung & Shuangshuang, 2023). This review also observed that cultural identity is a dynamic and multilevel process that is influenced by social, historical, and political aspects, among others. The combination of life experiences and local knowledge serves as a powerful resource for poetic and ideological expression (Derek, 2016). Through lyrics, immigrant and marginalized groups express their identities at different historical stages and create hybrid, cross-cultural forms of identity.

While this review comprehensively summarizes the relations among music, lyrics, and cultural identity, more cross-cultural and multilingual empirical studies must be conducted to further explore the diversity of music and identity in different cultural backgrounds. Future research should also examine music dissemination in the digital age, especially the construction of cultural identity on social media and streaming platforms. A deep understanding of these areas will allow us to grasp the multiple functions and potential of music as a tool for cultural identity under globalization.

As important carriers of cultural expression and inheritance, music and lyrics are generally indispensable elements in the construction of cultural identity. Not only do they profoundly reflect individuals' and groups' identity characteristics, value concepts, and historical memories, but they also shape cultural boundaries and one's sense of identity in the global cultural context, enhancing our understanding of and respect for multiculturalism.

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