

## Music Form and Performance Techniques of Bayu Folk Songs

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### ABSTRACT

Bayu folk songs, rooted in the cultural heritage of the Chongqing, Guizhou, and Hunan regions in China, embody the essence of local identity and tradition. This study aimed to investigate the musical form and performance techniques of Bayu folk songs, offering insights into preserving and transmitting cultural heritage within educational contexts. Through interviews and observations conducted with 14 key informants from diverse backgrounds, including inheritors, local villagers, cultural center leaders, and relevant experts, the research examines the cultural preservation, musical diversity, and transmission challenges of Bayu folk songs within educational settings. The study's results are based on a thematic analysis of qualitative data collected through structured interviews and observation forms. These findings show how vital Bayu folk songs are for building community identity, keeping culture alive, and passing it down from generation to generation. The research underscores the importance of developing standardized guidelines, increasing access to educational resources, and fostering collaboration between academic institutions and cultural stakeholders to promote the preservation and transmission of Bayu cultural heritage within educational settings.

**Key words:** Bayu Folk Songs, Cultural Heritage, Education, Literacy, Transmission Challenges, Cultural Preservation

### INTRODUCTION

Bayu folk songs, cherished for centuries among the diverse communities of the Chongqing, Guizhou, and Hunan regions in China, embody the essence of local culture, heritage, and identity. These songs passed down through generations via oral tradition, are powerful conduits of historical narratives, traditional customs, and communal values (Yao et al., 2023; Chen & Sensai, 2024; Yang & Chonpairot, 2024). Rooted in the rich tapestry of Bayu's cultural heritage, these folk songs encapsulate the essence of everyday life experiences, offering a glimpse into the Bayu people's triumphs, struggles, and collective memories. As the world undergoes rapid globalization and cultural homogenization, a critical need arises to explore avenues for preserving and transmitting Bayu folk songs within the context of education and literacy studies (Yuan & Briel, 2016; Feng et al., 2023; Ping & Chuangprakhon, 2023; Fu et al., 2024).

Integrating education and literacy in Bayu folk songs presents a multifaceted research domain, encompassing diverse aspects of cultural preservation, pedagogical innovation, and community engagement. Within this framework, the central problem revolves around effectively incorporating Bayu folk songs into educational curricula while promoting literacy development and cultural awareness among learners (Su & Jiang, 2021; Yao & Chaotchamrat, 2023). Despite

the intrinsic cultural significance of Bayu folk songs, their integration into formal education systems faces numerous obstacles, including the lack of standardized guidelines, educational resources, and curriculum integration strategies tailored to Bayu's unique cultural heritage (Ho, 2016; Howard, 2016; Zhang, 2017).

The objective of this study is to investigate the integration of education and literacy in the musical form and performance techniques of Bayu folk songs. By delving into this research objective, we aim to unravel the intricate interplay between educational practices, literacy concepts, and the musical elements inherent in Bayu folk songs. Through a comprehensive exploration of Bayu's musical traditions, pedagogical approaches, and community engagement strategies, this study seeks to shed light on innovative methods for preserving, transmitting, and revitalizing Bayu folk songs within educational contexts (Hess, 2019; Ng et al., 2022; Gao & Karin, 2023).

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between cultural preservation efforts and educational initiatives, fostering a symbiotic relationship between Bayu's intangible cultural heritage and contemporary pedagogical practices. By elucidating the integration of education and literacy within Bayu folk songs, this study offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, cultural practitioners, and community stakeholders. Furthermore,

this research contributes to the broader discourse on cultural sustainability, educational innovation, and intercultural dialogue in the context of globalized societies.

This study unravels the complexities surrounding integrating education and literacy into the musical form and performance techniques of Bayu folk songs. By addressing this research objective, we aim to provide practical recommendations and theoretical frameworks for promoting cultural preservation, literacy development, and community engagement by revitalizing Bayu's rich musical heritage. Through collaborative efforts and interdisciplinary approaches, we aspire to safeguard Bayu folk songs' legacy for future generations while empowering learners to connect with their cultural roots and celebrate the diversity of human expression.

### Research Questions

1. How do the musical form, performance techniques, and transmission challenges of Bayu folk songs influence the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage within educational contexts?
2. What strategies can be implemented to enhance their integration into educational curricula effectively?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Integrating education and literacy in preserving and transmitting folk music, particularly Bayu folk songs, is a topic of growing interest among scholars and educators. As an integral component of cultural heritage, folk music plays a crucial role in identity formation and community cohesion (Titon, 2009; Juan et al., 2023). In the context of Bayu culture, folk songs serve as repositories of historical narratives, traditional values, and communal memories. According to Titon (2009), folk music often reflects the socio-cultural context in which it originates, embodying a particular community's collective experiences and aspirations (Wadiyo et al., 2021). Within educational settings, incorporating folk music into curricula has been advocated for its potential to enhance students' cultural literacy, critical thinking skills, and emotional intelligence (Bowers, 2013). Moreover, folk music can serve as a vehicle for promoting linguistic diversity and intercultural understanding (Reily, 2000).

However, integrating folk music, including Bayu folk songs, into formal education systems presents several challenges. One key challenge is the need for standardized guidelines and curriculum integration strategies tailored to the unique cultural heritage of Bayu folk songs (Chang & Hung, 2017). With clear frameworks for incorporating folk music into educational curricula, educators can effectively teach and transmit these songs to students (Ojukwu, 2021; Li, 2022).

This study will draw upon socio-cultural theory of learning and cultural transmission to address integrating education and literacy in Bayu folk songs' musical form and performance techniques. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction, cultural context, and historical development in shaping individuals' cognitive processes and learning outcomes (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, learning occurs through

participation in cultural practices and collaborative activities within the sociocultural environment (Wertsch, 1985). Applied to the study of Bayu folk songs, this theory suggests that learners' engagement with these songs within their cultural context facilitates more profound understanding and meaningful learning experiences.

Furthermore, Wenger's theory of communities of practice highlights the role of social groups and shared practices in knowledge construction and identity formation (Wenger, 1998). In the context of Bayu folk songs, communities of practice refer to groups of individuals, including inheritors, musicians, educators, and community members, who actively engage with and transmit these songs within their social networks (Lave & Wenger, 1991). By examining the dynamics of communities of practice surrounding Bayu folk songs, this study aims to uncover the mechanisms through which knowledge and cultural values are transmitted and negotiated among participants.

The synthesis of socio-cultural theories of learning and cultural transmission provides a theoretical framework for exploring the integration of education and literacy in the context of Bayu folk songs. By applying these theoretical perspectives, this study seeks to elucidate the complex interplay between cultural heritage, educational practices, and literacy development, ultimately informing pedagogical approaches for preserving and transmitting Bayu folk songs within educational contexts.

### METHOD

#### Selection of Key Informants

We selected the key informants (n=14) of the study carefully, by categorizing them into four distinct groups based on their expertise, participation in cultural activities, and leadership positions within their communities. Each group was screened based on specific criteria to ensure the inclusion of individuals with significant experience and knowledge pertinent to the research objectives, as shown in Table 1.

#### Selection of Research Site

The research site encompasses three key regions: Chongqing, Guizhou, and Hunan. These regions were selected based on their profound historical and cultural importance in the Bayu folk song tradition. They provide a rich tapestry of insights into the methods and obstacles of conserving this priceless cultural legacy. The specific venues chosen within each region are shown in Figure 1 and Table 2.

#### Research Tools

This study employed interviews and observation forms to collect data on Bayu folk songs within the context of education and literacy studies. The Interview Form was utilized to conduct structured conversations with participants, while the Observation Form was employed to systematically record observations during performances and events, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 1.** Selection of key informants

Group	Criteria
1. Inheritors of Folk Songs	Three individuals were chosen as national inheritors of Bayu folk songs based on their qualifications, education level, aged over 70, singing experience, ability to sing over 300 local folk songs, and international performance experience. CCTV interviewed them or had international performance experience
2. Local Villagers	Six individuals from Chongqing, Hunan, and Guizhou provinces were selected based on their active participation in local folk song performances, age between 40-60, junior high school education or above, ability to sing over 30 local folk songs, and involvement in at least 30 folk song-singing activities
3. Leaders of Cultural Centers	Three cultural center leaders were chosen based on criteria including having a university degree, being 40-50 years old, having over five years of leadership experience, having over 10 years of involvement in local ethnic folk song culture, and organizing at least 30 local competitions or performances
4. Relevant Experts	Two Chongqing-based professors were chosen as experts due to their residency, over 30 years of teaching experience, publication of over 30 music theory articles, and extensive guidance in various music schools and cultural centers over 30 times



**Figure 1.** Map of research sites in Chongqing, Guizhou, and Hunan, China  
Source: Sparks Commentary (n.d.)

**Data Analysis**

The data analysis process in this study involved a comprehensive examination of the information gathered through interviews and observations regarding Bayu folk songs in the context of education and literacy studies. Firstly, the qualitative data obtained from the interviews were transcribed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to integrating education and literacy in the music form and performance techniques of Bayu folk songs. Thematic analysis was then conducted to categorize the data into meaningful themes and subthemes, allowing for a deeper understanding of the research topic. Additionally, the observations recorded using the observation forms were analyzed to assess the quality of performances, audience engagement, and the

effectiveness of integrating Bayu folk songs into educational settings. The interviews and observations’ findings were synthesized to draw conclusions and generate recommendations for effectively transmitting and preserving Bayu folk songs within educational and literacy contexts.

**RESULTS**

**Cultural Preservation and Community Identity**

The research revealed that Bayu folk songs are not merely musical compositions but intricate narratives woven with historical significance. These songs narrate tales of triumphs, struggles, and everyday life experiences unique to the Bayu culture, offering profound insights into the community’s

collective consciousness. Passed down from one generation to the following, Bayu folk songs act as living archives, preserving the memories and wisdom of ancestors for posterity. They serve as cultural touchstones, connecting individuals to their shared heritage and ancestry across time and space.

Moreover, Bayu folk songs are vital in fostering social cohesion and reinforcing shared identity among community members. These songs unite people through communal performances and participatory rituals, forging bonds of solidarity and belonging. They serve as cultural glue, uniting diverse individuals under a common cultural umbrella and fostering a sense of pride and belonging among Bayu communities.

The study highlighted how Bayu folk songs serve as powerful instruments of cultural transmission, passing down traditions, values, and beliefs from one generation to the next. Inheritors of the Bayu tradition play a crucial role in this process, serving as custodians of cultural heritage and agents of continuity. Through their performances and teachings, they ensure the preservation and perpetuation of Bayu folk songs, safeguarding the cultural legacy of their ancestors for future generations.

Furthermore, Bayu folk songs serve as dynamic expressions of cultural resilience and adaptation. Despite the changing social and environmental landscapes, these songs

have endured, evolving to reflect the realities of contemporary Bayu life while retaining their core cultural essence. This adaptive quality speaks to the enduring relevance and vitality of Bayu cultural heritage, demonstrating its capacity to evolve and thrive in response to changing circumstances.

In conclusion, Bayu folk songs hold profound cultural significance within the Chongqing, Guizhou, and Hunan regions, embodying local communities' rich heritage and identity. Rooted in oral tradition, these songs serve as repositories of historical narratives, traditional customs, and communal values, fostering social cohesion and reinforcing a sense of shared identity and belonging among community members. Through their preservation and transmission, Bayu folk songs ensure the continuity of cultural heritage, serving as enduring symbols of cultural resilience and adaptation in the face of change.

### Musical Diversity and Integration

The research delved into the rich tapestry of musical diversity inherent in Bayu folk songs across different regions, shedding light on various musical forms and performance techniques. Through extensive fieldwork and ethnographic observations, the study unearthed a plethora of musical genres, ranging from narrative ballads to celebratory chants, each exhibiting unique stylistic characteristics reflective of the Bayu people's cultural influences and historical narratives. These diverse musical forms serve as vibrant expressions of Bayu culture, capturing the essence of Bayu identity through their evocative melodies and lyrical compositions.

Furthermore, the study revealed the intricate integration of Bayu folk songs with various cultural elements, underscoring their role as potent vehicles for artistic expression and cultural representation. Bayu folk songs serve as dynamic cultural heritage repositories, encapsulating the Bayu people's ethos, values, and beliefs through their nuanced musical compositions. From traditional instruments to vocal ornamentations, these songs incorporate many cultural elements, weaving together a rich tapestry of sonic textures that reflect the complexity and diversity of Bayu culture.

Moreover, Bayu folk songs serve as conduits for inter-generational transmission, bridging the gap between past and present while adapting to the changing socio-cultural landscape. Despite the passage of time, these songs retain their

**Table 2.** Areas and Locations Involved in the Study

Area	Venues
Chongqing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chongqing China Three Gorges Museum</li> <li>2. Chongqing Huguang Guild Hall</li> <li>3. Xiushan County Cultural and Tourism Commission in Southeast Chongqing</li> <li>4. Inheritors of folk song Wang Shijin's home</li> </ol>
Guizhou	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural Center of Songtao County, Guizhou Province</li> <li>2. Xiangshuidong Village, Songtao County, Guizhou Province</li> <li>3. Miaowang City, Songtao County, Guizhou Province</li> <li>4. Local villager Wu Yazhen's home</li> </ol>
Hunan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural Center of Longshan County, Hunan Province</li> <li>2. Shidi Village, Dianfang Town, Longshan County, Hunan Province</li> <li>3. Inheritors of folk song Tian Longxin's home</li> <li>4. Inheritors of folk song Li MingWu's home</li> </ol>

**Table 3.** Research tools

Research Tool	Purpose	Components
Interview Form	Gather qualitative data from participants	It comprises sections on participant information, background details, knowledge and expertise, challenges and opportunities, and suggestions and recommendations. The form aims to elicit comprehensive responses from participants to inform the research on effectively transmitting and preserving Bayu folk songs within educational and literacy contexts.
Observation Form	Systematically record event observations	It includes sections for documenting venue details, observation specifics, performance analysis, educational integration, and recommendations. Researchers utilize this form to capture pertinent information about the quality of performances, audience engagement, cultural authenticity, and the integration of Bayu folk songs into educational programs.

cultural authenticity and relevance, continuing to resonate with contemporary audiences while preserving the legacy of their ancestors. This adaptive quality speaks to the resilience of Bayu's cultural heritage, highlighting its ability to evolve and adapt to new contexts while retaining its core identity.

In conclusion, the research underscored the diverse musical forms and integration of Bayu folk songs across different regions, showcasing their role as vibrant expressions of Bayu culture and identity. Through their nuanced compositions and evocative melodies, these songs encapsulate the essence of Bayu identity while serving as potent vehicles for cultural expression and transmission. As custodians of this rich musical tradition, it is imperative to recognize and celebrate the diversity and integration inherent in Bayu folk songs, ensuring their preservation and transmission for future generations.

### Transmission Challenges in Educational Settings

The research shed light on significant challenges associated with effectively transmitting Bayu folk songs within educational environments, particularly in formal school settings. One primary obstacle was the need for standardized guidelines and curriculum integration strategies tailored to incorporate Bayu folk songs into academic programs. Educators needed clear frameworks to integrate these cultural artifacts into their teaching practices. This led to a lack of consistency and coherence in how Bayu folk songs were presented and taught to students. This gap highlighted the need to develop comprehensive guidelines and curriculum frameworks to provide educators with the tools and resources to teach Bayu folk songs effectively in formal education.

Furthermore, the study revealed the limited availability of educational resources to support the teaching and learning of Bayu cultural heritage. Many educators expressed needing help accessing relevant materials and instructional resources that could aid in transmitting Bayu folk songs to students. This scarcity of resources hindered educators' efforts to incorporate Bayu folk songs into their teaching and limited students' exposure to this rich cultural heritage, impeding their ability to develop an appreciation for Bayu traditions and values. Addressing this gap in educational resources is crucial for ensuring the successful transmission of Bayu folk songs within educational settings.

Moreover, the research highlighted the disconnect between traditional modes of transmission used within Bayu communities and the pedagogical practices prevalent in modern educational environments. While Bayu folk songs have historically been transmitted orally and through informal apprenticeships, formal schooling systems often prioritize standardized instruction and assessment methods. This misalignment between traditional transmission methods and modern educational practices posed additional challenges for educators seeking to integrate Bayu folk songs into their curricula, as it required them to adapt conventional teaching methodologies to suit the structure and requirements of formal education.

In light of these challenges, the research underscored the urgent need for comprehensive approaches to ensure the

successful transmission of Bayu folk songs within educational contexts. This includes the development of standardized guidelines and curriculum integration strategies that provide educators with clear frameworks for incorporating Bayu cultural heritage into their teaching practices. Additionally, efforts should be made to increase the availability of educational resources tailored to support the teaching and learning of Bayu folk songs, ensuring that educators have access to the materials and tools they need to effectively transmit this cultural heritage to students. By addressing these challenges and fostering greater collaboration between educational institutions and cultural stakeholders, it is possible to safeguard the transmission of Bayu folk songs within educational settings and preserve this invaluable cultural heritage for future generations.

### Educational Implications and Cultural Literacy

The research findings underscored the importance of integrating Bayu folk songs into educational curricula to enhance students' learning experiences and preserve local cultural heritage. Schools can play a pivotal role in promoting cultural diversity, fostering intercultural understanding, and enriching students' linguistic and musical competencies by recognizing the profound cultural significance embedded within Bayu folk songs and developing comprehensive guidelines for their transmission.

Incorporating Bayu folk songs into educational frameworks presents an opportunity to broaden students' perspectives and deepen their understanding of cultural traditions beyond their own. Exposure to Bayu folk songs encourages students to appreciate the diversity of human expression and fosters empathy and respect for different cultural perspectives and practices. Moreover, integrating Bayu folk songs into educational curricula allows students to connect with their cultural roots, providing them with a sense of belonging and identity within their local communities.

Furthermore, incorporating Bayu folk songs into educational contexts contributes to cultivating global citizenship and cultural literacy among students. Students develop the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate an increasingly interconnected and diverse world by engaging with Bayu cultural heritage. They learn to appreciate and respect cultural differences, effectively communicate across cultural boundaries, and contribute positively to their communities and society.

Moreover, integrating Bayu folk songs into educational curricula enhances students' linguistic and musical competencies. Through the study and performance of Bayu folk songs, students can develop their language skills by learning and interpreting lyrics in local dialects and languages. Additionally, participating in musical activities related to Bayu folk songs enables students to hone their musical abilities, including singing, rhythm, and melody, thereby fostering their appreciation for music as a cultural expression.

Integrating Bayu folk songs into educational curricula holds immense educational value and cultural significance. By incorporating these songs into their teaching practices,

**Table 4.** Summary of research results

Main Point	Summary
Cultural Preservation and Community	Identity Bayu folk songs serve as intricate narratives embodying historical significance, acting as living archives that preserve ancestral memories and wisdom while fostering social cohesion and reinforcing shared community identity.
Musical Diversity and Integration	The research highlights the diverse musical forms and integration of Bayu folk songs, showcasing their vibrant expressions of culture and identity through unique stylistic characteristics and cultural elements.
Transmission Challenges in Educational Settings	Significant challenges were identified in effectively transmitting Bayu folk songs within educational environments, stemming from the absence of standardized guidelines and limited access to educational resources, emphasizing the need for comprehensive approaches to ensure successful transmission within educational contexts.
Educational Implications and Cultural Literacy	Integrating Bayu folk songs into educational curricula presents opportunities to promote cultural diversity, foster intercultural understanding, and enhance students' linguistic and musical competencies, thereby contributing to the preservation and transmission of Bayu cultural heritage for future generations.

educators can create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments that empower students to connect with their cultural heritage, celebrate diversity, and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world. Through these efforts, schools can play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting the rich cultural heritage embodied within Bayu folk songs for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

In summary, the study reveals that Bayu folk songs are more than just musical compositions; they are historical narratives that preserve ancestors' memories and foster community identity. They also serve as cultural transmission instruments, adapting to changing socio-cultural landscapes. However, transmitting Bayu folk songs in educational settings is challenging due to the need for standardized guidelines and limited resources. Integrating these songs into curricula can promote cultural diversity and intercultural understanding and enhance students' linguistic and musical competencies, preserving Bayu cultural heritage for future generations, as shown in Table 4.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The research on integrating education and literacy in Bayu folk songs provides valuable insights into preserving and transmitting cultural heritage within educational contexts. Consistent with the literature review, which emphasizes the importance of incorporating folk music into curricula for its cultural and educational benefits (Bowers, 2013), the study reveals the profound significance of Bayu folk songs in preserving historical narratives, traditional values, and communal memories (Yao et al., 2023). Moreover, the findings highlight the role of Bayu folk songs in fostering social cohesion and community identity, aligning with socio-cultural theories of learning and cultural transmission (Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998).

However, the research also identifies challenges in effectively transmitting Bayu folk songs within educational settings, including the lack of standardized guidelines and limited access to educational resources (Chang & Hung, 2017). This inconsistency between the theoretical principles of cultural preservation and the practical

implementation of educational initiatives underscores the need for comprehensive approaches to address transmission challenges and promote cultural literacy (Su & Jiang, 2021; Gao & Karin, 2023).

The research methods, including interviews and observation forms, provide a systematic framework for gathering qualitative data on integrating Bayu folk songs into education and literacy studies. By strategically selecting key informants and research sites, the study ensures the inclusion of diverse perspectives and insights relevant to the research objectives (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This methodological approach enhances the validity and reliability of the research findings, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the complexities surrounding integrating education and literacy in Bayu folk songs.

In light of the research results, which underscore the cultural significance and transmission challenges of Bayu folk songs within educational settings, the study offers practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and cultural practitioners. These recommendations include developing standardized guidelines and curriculum integration strategies, increasing access to educational resources, and fostering collaboration between academic institutions and cultural stakeholders (Yang & Chonpairot, 2024). By addressing these challenges and leveraging the educational implications of Bayu folk songs, stakeholders can ensure the preservation and transmission of Bayu cultural heritage for future generations.

In educational frameworks, the evolution of Bayu folk songs while retaining their cultural essence poses opportunities and challenges. Consistent with the research findings, Bayu folk songs serve as vital conduits for preserving cultural heritage and fostering community identity (Juan et al., 2023). However, the influence of modernization and globalization challenges their authenticity and transmission within educational settings (Yuan & Briel, 2016). To address these challenges, educators must adopt innovative approaches that balance tradition and modernity. For instance, integrating Bayu folk songs into interdisciplinary curricula that combine music education with cultural studies can provide students with a holistic understanding of their cultural significance while promoting literacy development (Hess,

2019). Moreover, leveraging digital technologies and online platforms can facilitate broader access to Bayu folk songs while ensuring their preservation in changing socio-cultural landscapes (Ng et al., 2022). By embracing these strategies, Bayu folk songs can evolve within educational frameworks without compromising their cultural essence, empowering future generations to appreciate and uphold this invaluable cultural heritage.

In conclusion, the research on integrating education and literacy in Bayu folk songs highlights the cultural significance and transmission challenges inherent in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage within educational contexts. The study underscores the importance of incorporating Bayu folk songs into educational curricula to promote cultural diversity, foster intercultural understanding, and enhance students' linguistic and musical competencies (Yao & Chaotchamrat, 2023). By aligning with theoretical principles of cultural preservation and employing systematic research methods, the study provides valuable insights and practical recommendations for addressing transmission challenges and promoting cultural literacy. Moving forward, policymakers, educators, and cultural practitioners must collaborate to ensure Bayu folk songs' continued relevance and vitality as integral components of cultural heritage and educational practice.

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