

## Musical Literacy in the Historical Development of the Chinese Pipa in Beijing

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### ABSTRACT

The pipa, a traditional plucked string instrument with over two millennia of history, embodies China's cultural heritage and artistic values. This study investigates musical literacy in the historical development of the Chinese pipa in Beijing. As a political and cultural hub in Beijing, the pipa has undergone transformative changes in its pedagogy, performance practices, and cultural significance. Employing a qualitative research design, the study investigates how musical literacy has adapted to societal, political, and technological shifts. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four expert informants, participant observations of performances and educational practices, and archival analysis of historical documents and music scores. Findings reveal that the pipa's literacy has expanded from oral traditions to formalized education, cross-cultural collaborations, and technological innovations. Key phases, including the post-1949 reconstruction era, the Reform and Opening-Up period, and the contemporary globalized era, highlight the interplay between tradition and modernity. The research underscores the pipa's role as a cultural symbol, adapting to changing contexts while preserving its heritage. Suggestions for future research include comparative studies with other instruments, youth engagement strategies, and the use of emerging technologies in pipa education. This study contributes to ethnomusicology and music education by demonstrating the enduring relevance of musical literacy in cultural preservation and innovation.

**Key words:** Chinese Pipa, Musical Literacy, Beijing, Cultural Heritage, Traditional Music

### INTRODUCTION

The Chinese pipa, an iconic plucked string instrument with over two millennia of history, is a cornerstone of Chinese musical heritage. Known for its dynamic range and expressive capabilities, the pipa embodies China's cultural and artistic values (Ye et al., 2023; Yeye, 2023). In Beijing, the capital city and a cultural hub, the pipa has witnessed transformative developments in its construction, performance, and pedagogy. From its early days as a folk instrument to its current status as a centerpiece in traditional and contemporary music, the pipa has evolved significantly (Liu, 2020; Ma & Chen, 2024; Xiao, 2025). This study focuses on musical literacy as it relates to the pipa's historical development in Beijing, examining how cultural, social, and educational contexts have shaped and been shaped by the instrument's growth.

The research addresses the problem of understanding musical literacy's evolution in the Chinese pipa's historical context in Beijing. Musical literacy encompasses more than technical proficiency; it includes the ability to interpret, adapt, and innovate within a specific musical tradition (Fanbo & Thotham, 2024; Jian et al., 2024). While much has been written about the pipa's repertoire and techniques, fewer studies have explored the broader literacy required to

sustain its cultural and artistic relevance. The historical trajectory of the pipa in Beijing, marked by political upheavals, cultural shifts, and technological advances, provides a fertile ground for examining these dynamics. Addressing this gap is essential for comprehending how traditional music evolves in response to changing societal contexts (Kuttner, 2020; Wu, 2023).

This study investigates musical literacy in the historical development of the Chinese pipa in Beijing. Tracing the instrument's journey through key historical periods, such as the post-1949 reconstruction era, the reform and opening-up period, and the contemporary globalized era, it aims to identify the factors that have influenced the pipa's transformation. Central to this inquiry is understanding how musical literacy has evolved, encompassing traditional techniques, innovative compositions, and cross-cultural engagements.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to academic and practical understandings of musical literacy. By examining the pipa as a case study, the research highlights the interplay between tradition and modernity, offering insights into how musical instruments adapt to societal changes while preserving their cultural essence. For educators, performers, and cultural policymakers, this study provides a framework for promoting the sustainability and innovation

of traditional music. Moreover, it situates the pipa within a global context, demonstrating how local traditions can engage with and influence broader cultural narratives (Hong & Wu, 2022; Tang & Sornyai, 2023). This exploration not only enriches the field of ethnomusicology but also underscores the enduring importance of musical literacy in the preservation and evolution of cultural heritage.

### Research Question

- How has musical literacy evolved through the historical development of the Chinese pipa in Beijing?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The Chinese pipa, a traditional plucked string instrument, has undergone significant transformations over two millennia due to its musical literacy. The instrument's history is linked to cultural, political, and artistic periods, such as the Tang Dynasty's court music and modern reforms. As a political and cultural hub, Beijing has played a central role in shaping the pipa's development. However, research on the pipa's history, pedagogy, and cultural significance has not fully addressed how musical literacy has evolved through these historical changes.

### Historical Development

The pipa, a regional folk instrument, has evolved from a simple instrument to a symbol of national cultural identity. Its journey began with its introduction via the Silk Road, where it was initially simple and limited in its musical range. During the Tang Dynasty, the pipa underwent significant modifications, including adding frets and expanded techniques (Du & Liang, 2024; Li, 2022). This period saw the pipa as a reflection of the Tang court's cultural grandeur, requiring musicians to develop advanced technical proficiency and interpretive skills. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a shift towards innovation, incorporating Western musical elements and modern pipa compositions (Long et al., 2025; Utz, 2021). This required performers to expand their musical literacy to include Western harmonies, notations, and structures. The instrument's repertoire diversified significantly, with works like "Little Sisters of the Prairie Heroes" and "Ambush on Ten Sides" exemplifying this fusion. Additionally, the pipa's participation in international festivals and orchestras introduced a new dimension of literacy as performers adapted traditional techniques to collaborative works with global musicians (He & Sornyai, 2023; Lim et al., 2022).

### Pedagogical Practices

The pipa, a traditional Chinese musical instrument, has been a subject of significant pedagogical development. Initially, instruction was primarily oral, focusing on master-apprentice relationships to transmit repertoire and techniques. However, formal conservatories in Beijing introduced structured curricula and systematic training, allowing students to access a broader musical framework (Liu et al., 2024; Shen, 2024).

Integrating traditional methods with modern teaching strategies, such as improvisation exercises and cross-disciplinary collaborations, has further enriched pipa pedagogy. These practices encourage creative engagement with the instrument, balancing technical mastery with interpretive depth. Including pipa studies in academic research ensures the preservation and dissemination of knowledge, making historical techniques and compositions accessible to future generations (Duan & Choatchamrat, 2023; Liu & Bhengsi, 2024; Mohiuddin et al., 2020). Recent pedagogical advancements also emphasize preparing students for global performance contexts, teaching cross-cultural techniques, and promoting multilingual music literacy to engage international audiences (Başaran & Turan, 2025).

### Cultural Significance

The pipa, a traditional Chinese instrument, is a cultural symbol that reflects and shapes societal narratives. Its repertoire encapsulates themes of heroism, love, and nature, requiring performers to develop nuanced interpretive skills. In Beijing, the pipa has become a symbol of Chinese heritage, showcased in national celebrations and international exchanges. This requires a form of musical literacy beyond technical proficiency, as performers must understand their repertoire's historical and symbolic contexts. The pipa's adaptability to contemporary genres like electronic music and film scores demonstrates its adaptability to modern cultural expressions, highlighting the evolving nature of musical literacy (Du & Liang, 2024; Wu, 2024). Notably, its increasing visibility on global platforms has further enhanced its status as an ambassador of Chinese culture, where performers must navigate cultural diplomacy and collaborative creativity, highlighting the pipa's role in bridging cultural gaps (Xia, 2022; Zhao, 2023).

### Theoretical Insights

Cultural capital and sociocultural theory provide insights into the role of the pipa in musical literacy. The cultural capital theory highlights the pipa's role as a symbol of cultural identity and prestige, shaping social hierarchies and access to musical knowledge. Sociocultural theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning, with the history of the pipa reflecting collective efforts from performers, educators, composers, and audiences. These theories highlight the importance of literacy as a dynamic skill that adapts to the changing demands of tradition and modernity (Hou & Seekhunlio, 2023; Kong, 2023; Liu et al., 2024). Globalization theory further explains how the pipa's integration into international contexts demands performers' ability to synthesize traditional and global influences, expanding literacy to include cultural adaptability and innovation (Lu, 2023; Wu, 2023).

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design to investigate musical literacy in the historical development of the Chinese pipa in Beijing. By focusing on the perspectives

of experienced practitioners and scholars, the research explores how musical literacy has evolved through the pipa's historical, pedagogical, and cultural transformations. The design emphasizes ethnographic methods, combining interviews, observations, and analysis of historical documents and musical scores (Bresler, 2021; Jones, 2023; Qui et al., 2024). The study integrates descriptive and interpretative approaches to understand the pipa's developmental journey comprehensively.

### Research Site

The research was conducted in Beijing, China's cultural and political heart. Beijing's rich historical and artistic legacy makes it an ideal location to study the pipa's evolution. The city hosts various institutions, including music conservatories, cultural centers, and historical archives, which are instrumental in preserving and promoting the pipa's tradition, as shown in Figure 1.

### Key Informants

The study included four key informants, chosen based on their expertise and long-standing contributions to pipa performance, education, and research. These individuals were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they met the following criteria, as shown in Table 1.

### Data Collection

Data collection involved three primary methods: semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. These methods provided a holistic understanding of the pipa's historical development and its influence on musical literacy, as shown in Table 2.

### Data Analysis

The study used data analysis to identify patterns and themes related to the research question, coding and categorizing it into themes aligned with musical literacy's historical, pedagogical, and cultural aspects. The process involved transcription of interviews and observations, initial coding based on recurring themes, grouping codes into broader themes, and validating themes through triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents.

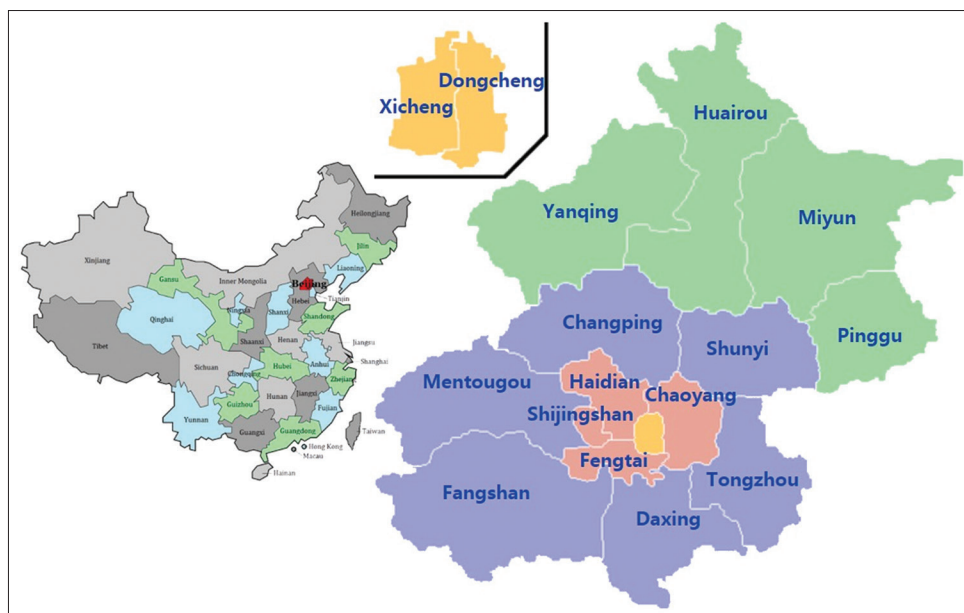
## RESULTS

This study's findings revealed the evolution of musical literacy in Beijing through the historical development of the Chinese pipa, as shown in Figure 2. The results are organized into four phases, each reflecting significant shifts in the pipa's pedagogy, repertoire, and cultural significance. These phases illustrate how the pipa adapted to changing societal, political, and technological landscapes, transforming musical literacy over time. The following sections detail these phases and their impact on musical literacy.

### Post-1949 Period (Initial Development)

The post-1949 period marked a pivotal shift in the development of the Chinese pipa in Beijing as the nation embarked on a transformative journey of cultural reconstruction. This era saw the pipa transitioning from an oral tradition to a formalized teaching system, fundamentally altering how musical literacy was understood and practiced.

Historically, the pipa tradition in Beijing had been passed down orally, with master's mentoring students through demonstration and imitation. However, after the establishment of New China in 1949, the need for standardized education arose. Institutions like the Central Conservatory of Music began to adopt systematic curricula, emphasizing



**Figure 1.** Beijing districts map

Source: Chinafolio (n.d.) & China Discovery (n.d.)

**Table 1.** Criteria of key informants

Criteria	Reason for Inclusion
Over 20 years of experience	Ensures deep expertise and practical knowledge of the pipa's evolution
Familiarity with diverse repertoire	Demonstrates comprehensive understanding of pipa compositions and styles
Significant contributions to pipa development	Highlights their role in shaping musical literacy in Beijing
Understanding of historical and cultural context	Enables insights into the pipa's broader historical and social significance

**Table 2.** Data collection

Method	Description
Interviews	Semi-structured, with open-ended questions focusing on the pipa's evolution and musical literacy
Observations	Participated in live performances and teaching sessions to observe techniques and interactions
Document Analysis	Reviewed historical records, music scores, and institutional archives related to the pipa in Beijing

notation, theory, and technique. This formalized approach enhanced literacy by enabling students to read and interpret sheet music, engage in structured practice, and contribute to a growing repository of written knowledge. One informant reflected on this transition: "Before 1949, learning the pipa relied heavily on oral instruction and memorization. Introducing structured lessons and notations gave us a concrete foundation for understanding and performing music."

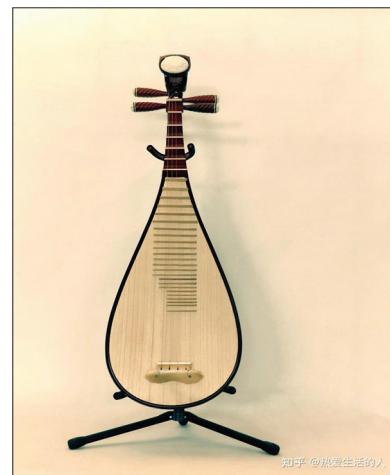
During this period, the government encouraged the creation of works aligned with socialist ideologies. New compositions like "Yi Dance," which integrated traditional techniques with modern ideologies, exemplified this trend. Literacy in this context required performers to not only master technical skills but also understand the cultural and political messages embedded in the music, as shown in Table 3.

The post-1949 reforms expanded the scope of musical literacy to include a deeper understanding of socialist values expressed through music. Performers were expected to interpret compositions in ways that resonated with the collective spirit of the time. This shift also required literacy in collaboration, as ensemble performances became a means to promote national unity. An informant emphasized this change: "Performing pieces like 'Yi Dance' was not just about playing notes; it was about understanding the emotions and stories aligned with the socialist vision. This added a new layer to what we needed to learn and convey as musicians."

The development of a formalized teaching system during this period laid the groundwork for subsequent innovations in pipa education. Students gained access to standardized materials, enabling broader dissemination of knowledge. This institutionalization also fostered literacy in areas like

**Table 3.** Characteristics of musical literacy in the post-1949 period

Aspect	Traditional Approach	Post-1949 Development
Learning Method	Oral transmission	Formalized teaching with structured lessons
Notation	Minimal or absent	Standardized notation introduced
Repertoire Focus	Traditional folk pieces	New socialist-themed compositions
Technical Literacy	Focus on imitation	Emphasis on technical precision
Cultural Literacy	Folk and historical narratives	Integration of political ideologies

**Figure 2.** Chinese pipa

Source: Lili Liu, from fieldwork in September 2023

music theory and historical context, preparing musicians for the evolving demands of the art form, as shown in Table 4.

### 1970-1980 (Reform and Opening-Up Period)

The Reform and Opening-Up period of the 1970s and 1980s marked a resurgence and transformation in the development of the Chinese pipa in Beijing. This era witnessed significant cultural policy changes that encouraged the revival of traditional repertoire, the incorporation of Western compositional techniques, and innovations in collaborative and performance practices. Musical literacy expanded to encompass traditional and modern skills, reflecting the changing cultural and artistic landscape.

The pipa experienced a renaissance during this period as cultural policies prioritized restoring traditional arts. Performers and educators focused on reviving classical repertoire overshadowed earlier political movements. This revival was essential for preserving the pipa's historical integrity and required literacy in traditional techniques, notation, and the historical context of the pieces. An informant explained the significance of this revival: "Reviving traditional pieces was not just about playing the music; it required understanding their origins, techniques, and cultural

**Table 4.** Key changes in pipa literacy post-1949

Component	Description
Educational System	Introduction of formalized pipa education
Repertoire Expansion	Incorporation of socialist-themed works
Technical Proficiency	Focus on precision and standardized techniques
Cultural	Interpretation Integration of political narratives into performance

meanings. It was a way to reconnect with the essence of our musical heritage.”

In addition to restoring tradition, integrating Western compositional techniques became a hallmark of this era. Compositions like *Little Sisters of the Prairie Heroes* reflected a synthesis of Western orchestration methods and traditional Chinese themes. This required pipa performers to develop literacy in modern music theory, ensemble coordination, and innovative techniques. An informant noted: “Performing in an orchestra required us to understand complex arrangements and synchronize with other instruments. It pushed our literacy beyond traditional methods into new realms of collaboration and creativity.”

Another significant development was the emphasis on cross-instrumental collaboration. Pipa players frequently performed alongside Western and other traditional Chinese instruments, creating opportunities for fusion and experimentation. Literacy in this context extended to adapting traditional techniques for new soundscapes and understanding the unique qualities of other instruments, as shown in Table 5.

The period also saw the creation of innovative compositions that combined traditional aesthetics with modern themes. Pieces like *Little Sisters of the Prairie Heroes* showcased the pipa’s versatility and symbolized the cultural and artistic aspirations of the time. This expansion in repertoire demanded literacy in storytelling, symbolic interpretation, and advanced technical execution. An informant highlighted this evolution: “Innovative works like ‘Little Sisters of the Prairie Heroes’ required us to think beyond traditional boundaries. We needed to connect emotionally with the story and interpret it through our instruments.”

### Post-1990 Period (Recovery and Innovation)

The post-1990 period marked a resurgence of the pipa in Beijing, characterized by recovery from earlier disruptions and a wave of innovation fueled by global influences and technological advancements. During this phase, musical literacy evolved to encompass new dimensions, including fluency in modern notation systems, digital tools, and cross-cultural performance techniques. These developments reflected the broader modernization and internationalization of the Chinese music industry.

With China’s opening to the world, pipa players increasingly engaged in international exchanges, which exposed them to diverse musical styles and performance contexts.

**Table 5.** Pipa literacy in cross-instrumental collaboration

Aspect	Details
Interdisciplinary Skills	Coordination with diverse instruments
Adaptation Techniques	Modifying pipa techniques for ensemble settings
Cultural Literacy	Bridging traditional and contemporary elements

Their musical literacy expanded to include an understanding of global music trends, the ability to interpret foreign compositions, and proficiency in adapting traditional pipa techniques for cross-cultural collaborations. An informant elaborated: “We performed in international music festivals where we had to combine the pipa’s traditional sound with orchestral music and even electronic compositions. This required us to learn new techniques and rethink how we represented Chinese culture.”

Technology adoption revolutionized how pipa music was composed, performed, and distributed. Digital tools such as music notation software and audio editing programs became integral to modern pipa literacy. These tools allowed performers to create and share music innovatively, catering to contemporary audiences’ demands. An informant highlighted this shift: “Using digital notation tools made it easier to collaborate remotely and experiment with new ideas. We could visualize compositions and even simulate ensembles before live performances.”

Incorporating Western notation systems became a significant component of musical literacy in this period. Pipa players transitioned from traditional Chinese cipher notation to staff notation, allowing greater collaboration with Western musicians and orchestras. This literacy also supported the development of hybrid compositions that blended traditional Chinese motifs with contemporary global styles. An informant explained: “Learning staff notation opened new doors for collaboration. It was challenging initially, but it allowed us to work seamlessly with Western orchestras and composers.”

The post-1990 era saw a surge in innovative pipa compositions incorporating modern themes and global influences. These works reflected a shift in audience expectations and a desire to make the pipa more accessible to younger, cosmopolitan listeners. Performers and composers developed literacy in new thematic interpretations and extended playing techniques to convey complex, modern narratives, as shown in Table 5.

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Academic Research and Global Promotion)

The 21<sup>st</sup> century ushered in a transformative period for the Chinese pipa, with a heightened focus on academic research, theoretical literacy, and global promotion. In Beijing, institutions like the China Conservatory of Music and other leading academies integrated the pipa into formal curricula, advancing its theoretical foundations while encouraging its application in cross-cultural collaborations. This phase highlighted

the expansion of musical literacy to include critical analysis, academic documentation, and innovative performances aimed at global audiences.

The formalization of pipa studies within academic institutions marked a critical shift. Courses on the pipa expanded beyond performance to include musicology, history, and ethnomusicology. This required students to acquire theoretical literacy, encompassing the ability to analyze historical contexts, interpret traditional repertoire, and innovate within academic frameworks. An informant stated: “Studying the pipa academically requires a comprehensive understanding of its history, cultural significance, and technical evolution. Literacy now extends to reading academic papers, interpreting historical documents, and presenting research findings.”

The international promotion of the pipa introduced performers to diverse audiences and genres. Collaborations with Western orchestras, contemporary ensembles, and even electronic music producers required literacy in adapting traditional techniques to new contexts. Performers needed to understand cross-cultural aesthetics and communicate effectively in global music settings. An informant shared: “When we perform abroad, we represent the pipa and Chinese culture. This demands an understanding of Western musical forms and the ability to adapt our playing styles while preserving authenticity.”

Integrating the pipa into modern genres, including fusion, pop, and experimental music, expanded its reach to younger and more diverse audiences. Literacy now includes proficiency in contemporary notation systems, familiarity with electronic tools, and the ability to blend traditional sounds with modern instrumentation. An informant explained: “We’ve started collaborating with electronic musicians, creating sounds that merge traditional pipa techniques with modern beats. This keeps the instrument relevant to younger generations.”

Cross-cultural collaborations with international musicians resulted in a new repertoire that blended Chinese and Western traditions. These partnerships introduced improvisation and harmonic exploration techniques, expanding pipa performers’ technical and expressive literacy. An informant emphasized: “Working with Western musicians, we learn improvisational techniques and new ways of harmonizing. This adds depth to our performances and broadens our understanding of musical possibilities.” (Table 6).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has solidified the pipa’s role as a traditional and modern instrument. Literacy in this era extends beyond technical proficiency to include academic rigor, cross-cultural fluency, and innovative applications. As shown in Table 7, this phase not only preserves the pipa’s heritage but also propels it into new global recognition and relevance realms.

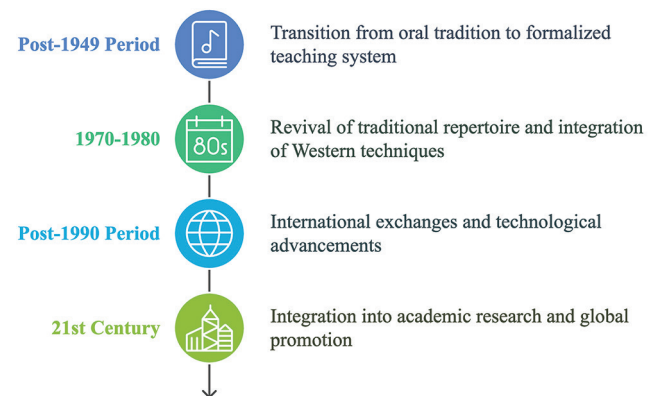
The historical development of the Chinese pipa in Beijing illustrates a rich and dynamic journey marked by cultural, political, and technological transformations. This timeline encapsulates four pivotal periods: the post-1949 era, characterized by the transition from oral traditions to structured teaching systems; the Reform and Opening-Up period of the 1970s-1980s, which saw the revival of traditional repertoire

**Table 6.** Characteristics of contemporary pipa repertoire

Aspect	Details
Thematic Diversity	Addressing modern life, technology, and cross-cultural themes
Innovative Techniques	Extended techniques for wider expressive range
Audience Engagement	Catering to younger and global audiences

**Table 7.** Summary of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century pipa literacy developments

Category	Details
Academic Literacy	Incorporating historical, theoretical, and analytical skills
Global Collaboration	Expanding through cross-cultural partnerships and repertoire
Innovative Techniques	Employing digital tools and engaging with modern genres



**Figure 3.** The historical development of musical literacy in the Chinese pipa

alongside the integration of Western techniques; the post-1990 phase of recovery and innovation, where international exchanges and technological advancements redefined the instrument’s musical literacy; and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, marked by the pipa’s integration into academic research and global promotion. Each phase reflects the evolving demands on musical literacy, adapting to new pedagogical methods, collaborative practices, and cross-cultural interactions while preserving the instrument’s traditional roots, as shown in Figure 3.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study’s findings reveal that the Chinese pipa’s historical development in Beijing reflects a dynamic interaction between traditional practices and modern innovations, aligned with evolving concepts of musical literacy. Consistent with cultural capital theory (Hou & Seekhunlio, 2023) and sociocultural learning frameworks (Kong, 2023), the pipa’s journey illustrates how societal changes, pedagogical reforms, and technological advancements have shaped its role in Chinese music. The post-1949 period, marked by

political and cultural reconstruction, established a formalized education system that broadened access to pipa training, fostering literacy through standardized notation and systematic teaching methods. This aligns with Duan and Choatchamrat's (2023) observations on formalizing Chinese musical traditions.

The study also highlights the 1970s and 1980s Reform and Opening-Up period as a turning point for the pipa, where traditional repertoire was revived alongside the adoption of Western compositional techniques. This phase required performers to acquire new forms of literacy, blending traditional techniques with modern orchestration, consistent with Utz's (2021) discussion on globalization's impact on music composition. However, the reliance on Western methods during this period may have diluted some traditional nuances, a concern echoed by Fanbo and Thotham (2024), who emphasize the need for balance in integrating external influences.

In the post-1990 era, incorporating technology and global interactions further expanded the scope of musical literacy, aligning with Hong and Wu's (2022) assertion that digital tools enhance the preservation and dissemination of traditional music. Staff notation and digital platforms allowed pipa musicians to engage with global audiences while adapting to contemporary demands. Additionally, international collaborations provided pipa musicians opportunities to showcase their artistry in global settings, such as fusion performances with orchestras and contemporary music ensembles. These collaborations expanded their literacy to include understanding diverse musical forms and cultural aesthetics, demonstrating the pipa's adaptability as a bridge between traditions (Zhao, 2023).

The study's theoretical implications underscore the interplay between musical literacy and cultural heritage preservation. The evolution of the pipa supports the notion that literacy extends beyond technical proficiency to include interpretive, analytical, and adaptive skills necessary for cross-cultural collaboration (Bresler, 2021). The findings also reinforce the sociocultural theory's emphasis on collective learning, as the pipa's growth reflects contributions from educators, performers, and audiences over time.

Despite these advancements, certain challenges persist. For instance, emphasizing global promotion and modern genres may risk overshadowing traditional aesthetics. This tension aligns with Shen's (2024) concern about the potential loss of regional musical identities due to globalization. Balancing tradition with innovation remains a critical area for further exploration. Educational policies can address this by integrating modules emphasizing traditional repertoires and regional styles alongside innovative approaches in conservatory curricula, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the pipa's heritage.

This study demonstrates that the historical development of the Chinese pipa in Beijing is a testament to the instrument's capacity to adapt and thrive amidst cultural, political, and technological transformations. From its origins as a regional folk instrument to its current status as a globally recognized symbol of Chinese heritage, the pipa's evolution encapsulates the expanding dimensions of musical

literacy. The research highlights how formalized education, cross-cultural engagements, and technological innovations have collectively enriched the pipa's repertoire, pedagogy, and cultural significance.

The findings offer actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers. Incorporating interdisciplinary approaches that link traditional music to broader cultural and historical narratives can foster a deeper appreciation among students. Additionally, cultural policies should support international exchange programs highlighting traditional Chinese instruments like the pipa, promoting global cultural dialogue while preserving local heritage. Finally, investments in technology-driven tools, such as digital archives and augmented reality applications, could further enhance access to pipa education and performances, ensuring the instrument's relevance for future generations.

This study, consistent with theoretical principles, confirms that musical literacy is a dynamic and multifaceted skill encompassing technical, interpretive, and adaptive competencies. The findings align with sociocultural theory and cultural capital frameworks, demonstrating how the pipa's development mirrors societal changes. However, the study also identifies areas for further attention, particularly balancing traditional preservation with modern adaptations.

Further research could explore the development of the pipa, a traditional Chinese instrument, by comparing it with other instruments like the guzheng or erhu. Expanding these comparative studies to include international instruments, such as the Japanese koto or the Indian sitar, could reveal shared challenges and opportunities in adapting traditional instruments for global audiences. It could also explore the impact of international collaborations on the pipa's repertoire and techniques. Strategies for engaging younger audiences, such as integrating the pipa into popular music or digital platforms, could help maintain its relevance. Exploring regional variations in pipa pedagogy and performance could reveal how local traditions influence musical literacy. Additionally, exploring emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality could further advance the field.

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