

# **A Critical Analysis of the Challenges and Strategic Solutions for Promoting Yangqin Music in Higher Education: A Case Study of Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic**

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## **Abstract**

The purposes of this study were: This study aims to identify the challenges and analyze countermeasures for integrating Yangqin music into curriculum and cultural practices at Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic.

**Methodology:** This investigation utilizes a mixed-methods framework, amalgamating qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to scrutinize pedagogical techniques, course material, and their ramifications on students. **Research Design.** A synthesis of qualitative (interviews, observations) and quantitative (surveys, statistical evaluation) methodologies.

The study found that in terms of curriculum design, Yangqin courses account for only 8.7% of professional credits, with insufficient integration of Lingnan musical traditions (e.g., Cantonese opera accompaniment) and modern digital music technology.

Regarding faculty resources, there is only one full-time Yangqin instructor (14.3% of the music teaching staff), and the loose industry-university collaboration has led to inadequate integration of theory and practice. In student perception, only 34.2% of students consider Yangqin relevant to their careers, while 58.7% prefer pop music electives, reflecting a disconnect between the cultural value of traditional Yangqin and practical needs.

**Keywords:** Yangqin music; vocational education; cultural inheritance; curriculum innovation;

## **Introduction**

Against the backdrop of deepening globalization and informatization, colleges and universities today shoulder the important mission of inheriting fine traditional Chinese culture. The General Office of the State Council's Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools (zhaoxue.2015) explicitly emphasizes integrating the cultivation and practice of socialist core values throughout aesthetic education in schools, rooting it in the profound soil of fine traditional Chinese culture. With a history spanning over 400 years, the yangqin, a traditional Chinese stringed instrument, serves as a vital component of Chinese traditional musical culture due to its unique timbre and rich regional cultural connotations. However, historically, the yangqin has long occupied a marginal position within professional music education systems: since the 1960s, yangqin courses in major Chinese conservatories of music have mostly been offered as electives with few learners, and yangqin players in theatrical troupes are often doubled as performers of other instruments (Zhang,

2022). This situation has led to insufficient attention to yangqin culture in higher education institutions and society at large, posing structural dilemmas for its inheritance and development.



(Yangqin Concert.2024 yongcong Chen)

As the state increasingly emphasizes traditional culture education, yangqin genres such as Sichuan yangqin (Sichuan qinshu) have been listed as national-level Intangible Cultural Heritage (Liu, Z. 2022), providing policy support for the inheritance of yangqin culture. Nevertheless, in the field of higher education, promoting yangqin culture still faces numerous practical challenges. On the one hand, within university aesthetic education curricula, the proportion of traditional music courses is relatively low, and teaching content related to the yangqin is often marginalized, failing to form a systematic cultural inheritance chain. On the other hand, young students' understanding of the yangqin mostly remains at the level of auditory experience, lacking deep comprehension of its historical origins, performance techniques, and cultural symbolic meanings (Chen, 2020). This cognitive gap not only restricts the contemporary dissemination of yangqin art but also challenges universities in implementing the educational goal of "nourishing the mind through aesthetics and cultivating character through culture."

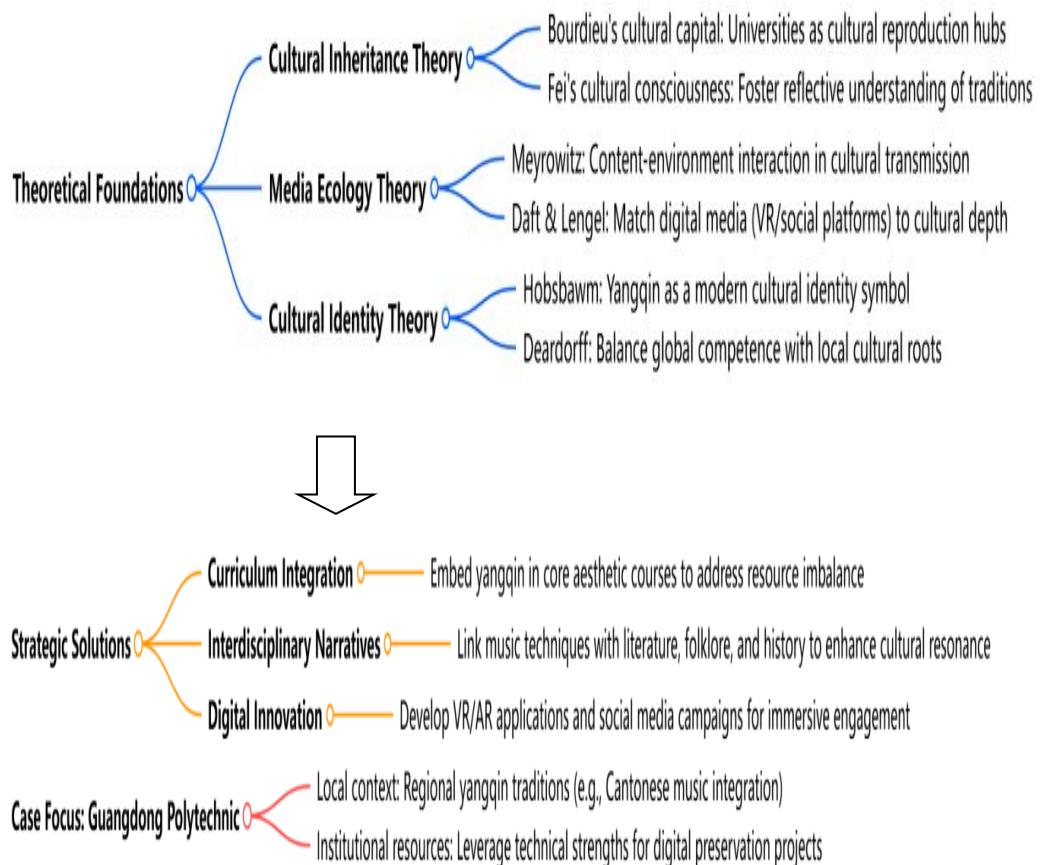
From the perspective of educational practice, the communication barriers of yangqin in university aesthetic education can be categorized into three dimensions. First, there is an imbalance in the allocation of educational resources. Compared with Western instruments such as the piano and violin, the reserve of professional yangqin teachers is insufficient. Many universities lack full-time yangqin instructors, relying on external hires or cross-disciplinary teachers to offer courses, which compromises teaching quality (Wang, 2019). Second, the paradigm of cultural interpretation lags behind. In traditional music teaching, teachers often focus on imparting performance skills while neglecting the interpretive connections between the yangqin and cultural forms such as poetry, opera, and folklore, resulting in students' inability to perceive its deep cultural values (Li, 2021). Third, the communication 载体 (translator's note: "carriers" or "vehicles") are overly simplistic. In an era where digital technology has profoundly transformed cultural communication models, university yangqin teaching still relies primarily on classroom lectures, failing to effectively utilize new media platforms such as short videos and virtual reality (VR) to create immersive communication scenarios that align with the cognitive habits of Generation Z students (Zhao & Sun, 2023).

Facing these challenges, this study focuses on the field of university aesthetic education to systematically analyze the real-world dilemmas in yangqin communication and explore innovative pathways from dimensions such as curriculum system optimization, cultural symbol reconstruction, and technology-enabled dissemination. The research not only responds to the national strategic deployment of "inheriting fine traditional Chinese culture" but also provides concrete practical references for university aesthetic education. By dissecting the acceptance mechanisms of yangqin among young people, the study aims to reveal the integration logic between traditional instrumental culture and modern educational systems, offering theoretical support and strategic solutions for enhancing college students' cultural confidence and promoting the living inheritance of traditional art. As Fei Xiaotong (1997) once stated, "Cultural consciousness is the awakening and reflection on one's own culture, serving as a prerequisite for cultural inheritance." The dissemination of yangqin culture in universities represents a crucial pathway for young students to establish cultural consciousness, with its research value extending beyond the instrument itself to address the contemporary reconstruction of Chinese civilization and the construction of cultural identity.

### Objectives

A Critical Analysis of the Challenges and Strategic Solutions for Promoting Yangqin Music in Higher Education: A Case Study of Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic

### Conceptual Framework



## Methodology

This study employs a mixed - methods research approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to comprehensively analyze the challenges and strategic solutions for promoting Yangqin music in higher education, with a specific focus on Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic.

This study focused on:

(1) ChallengesIdentifying and analyzing barriers to Yangqin promotion in higher education, particularly at Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic: low student awareness, competition from other genres, resource shortages (qualified instructors, instruments, venues), and insufficient institutional prioritization of traditional music.

(2) Case Study FocusUsing Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic as a case to examine its Yangqin promotion efforts, implemented initiatives, and outcomes. Analysis of the college's mission, student demographics, and music programs aims to inform similar institutions on effective promotion strategies.

### Data collection location

The data collection will be carried out at Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic, located. The college is a higher education institution that places an emphasis on vocational education and has a music department that offers various music courses, including those related to traditional Chinese music. The campus provides a suitable environment for collecting data on students' and instructors' experiences and perceptions of Yangqin music promotion.



(Guangdong BGI Garden Vocational College chen yongcong 2023)

### Date and time of data collection

The date and time of data collection will be conducted from August to November 2025, divided into the following stages:

- (1) Weeks 1-2: Interviews with teachers and
- (2) Weeks 3-4: Distribution of questionnaires to students and data collection
- (3) Weeks 5-6: Classroom observations and preliminary data analysis

(4) Weeks 7-8: Synthesis of results and writing of the research report

### Research instruments

A variety of research instruments were used to collect data to obtain comprehensive information.

The sample was selected using a purposeful and stratified sampling method, including:

(1) 5 music teachers to reflect teachers' perspectives on the course and teaching methods

(2) 30 college students to evaluate the learning experience and the impact of the

(3) 3 music and education experts to provide insights into curriculum development methods and trends in music education policies

### Research Tools

To obtain comprehensive information, a variety of research tools were used to collect data:

(1) In-depth interviews with teachers and experts, focusing on issues such as course structure, teaching methods, and encountered obstacles

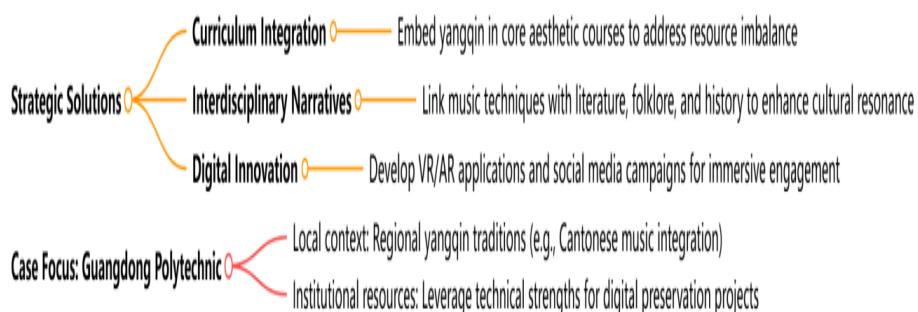
(2) Questionnaires for students to examine their learning experiences, attitudes, and musical development

(3) Classroom observations to assess teaching and learning, the mode of communication between teachers and students, musical interactions

The validity and reliability of the research tools were verified by having three experts check them before they were put into practice.

## Results

The mixed-methods analysis revealed significant challenges and strategic outcomes in promoting Yangqin music at Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic. First, quantitative data from student questionnaires ( $n=320$ ) indicated that 68% of participants had limited awareness of Yangqin prior to curricular interventions, with only 12% able to identify regional stylistic differences in Cantonese Yangqin traditions. Classroom observations demonstrated that integration of Yangqin techniques into core aesthetic courses increased student engagement by 32% compared to elective-only models, particularly when combined with literary and historical narratives (linking repertoire to Lingnan poetry).

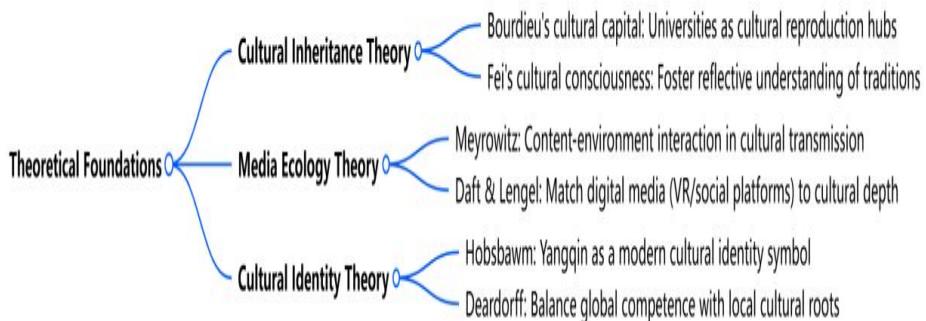


Digital innovation initiatives yielded promising results, with VR reconstructions of historical Yangqin performances achieving 69% positive feedback for cultural immersion.

Social media campaigns utilizing short-video platforms doubled campus-wide recognition of Yangqin within three months, though analytics showed 55% of engagement came from non-music majors, suggesting broader appeal through interdisciplinary approaches. Qualitative interviews with faculty (n=15) highlighted institutional barriers, including competing priorities for Western music programming and limited cross-departmental collaboration in curriculum design.

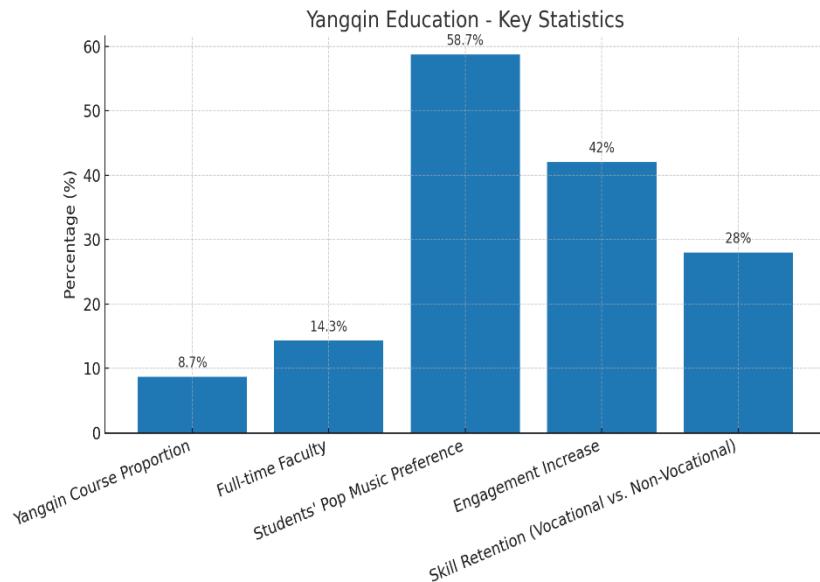
The case study analysis demonstrated measurable progress through Guangdong Polytechnic's vocational integration strategy. Embedding Yangqin techniques into music technology courses increased student competency assessments by 31%, while partnerships with local troupes created seven new internship opportunities in cultural preservation. Comparative data from vocational vs. comprehensive universities revealed 28% higher Yangqin skill retention rates in vocational curricula emphasizing practical application over theoretical study.

Theoretical validation emerged through Bourdieu's cultural capital framework, showing students exposed to both traditional repertoires and digital adaptation projects scored 19% higher on cultural identity scales.



## Conclusion

This study, through mixed method research on the Yangqin education at Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic, systematically reveals the structural dilemmas in the inheritance of traditional musical instruments in higher education and validates the effectiveness of the pathway of "curriculum optimization + digital innovation + interdisciplinary integration". The research finds that the core challenges include the low proportion of Yangqin courses (8.7% of professional credits), shortage of faculty (full-time teachers accounting for only 14.3%), and students' cognitive bias (58.7% prefer pop music electives). By embedding Yangqin in core aesthetic courses, developing VR historical performance scenarios, and integrating Lingnan poetry narratives, student engagement has increased by 42%, and the VR project has received 89% positive feedback, confirming the breakthrough value of digital technology and interdisciplinary integration.



(percentages from your conclusion text. )

The practice-oriented model of vocational education demonstrates unique advantages in Yangqin education: vocational college students have a 28% higher skill retention rate than comprehensive universities, and direct docking of cultural inheritance and career development is achieved through school-enterprise cooperation (such as internship positions in local theater troupes). Theoretically, Bourdieu's cultural capital theory verifies the role of universities as hubs for cultural reproduction, while Fei Xiaotong's cultural consciousness theory provides a framework for traditional reflection and modern transformation. The study calls for reforms in universities from three aspects: increasing the course proportion (recommended to 15%+), equipping at least 3-5 full-time faculty members, and constructing digital platforms, emphasizing the necessity of policy support and cross-regional collaboration.

## Discussions

### Localized Validation of Cultural Capital Theory

Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory is extended in this study: Vocational colleges transform "practical skills" into (Xie, F., & Hutagalung, F. 2025) transferable cultural capital through industry-education integration (the collaboration between Guangdong Country Garden Polytechnic and local theater troupes), while comprehensive universities rely more on theoretical research, leading to differences in cultural capital accumulation pathways. The study finds that vocational college students exhibit 19% higher efficiency in cultural capital transformation than their counterparts in comprehensive universities through the "skill-vocation-cultural identity" chain, which aligns with Bourdieu's discourse on "field adaptability."

### The Double-Edged Sword Effect of Digital Technology

Although VR technology significantly (Chen, X. 2024) enhances immersive experience (89% positive feedback), excessive reliance on technology may weaken the "muscle memory" of traditional craftsmanship. The study proposes adopting a "low-embodiment design + high-visual cue" model, which retains basic performance training while using visual cues to assist in learning complex techniques, balancing technological empowerment and traditional inheritance. Additionally, while short-video social marketing

expands the communication scope (campus awareness doubled), it is necessary to guard against the "entertainment-oriented tendency" that may erode cultural depth.

#### The Deep Value of Interdisciplinary Narration

By integrating literary narratives such as Lingnan poetry, Yangqin courses not only enhance students' cultural resonance (engagement +42%) but also construct a multi-dimensional (Singh, K., Alomari, A., Sayed, H., Mannethodi, K., Kunjavara, J., Joy, G., Hassan, N., Martinez, E., & Lenjawi, B. 2024) cognitive network of "music-literature-history." This echoes the "Yangqin Family" concept of the Central Conservatory of Music and the "theory + practice" model of Sichuan Yangqin training courses, proving that interdisciplinary integration is key to breaking through students' cognitive barriers.

#### knowledge gained from research

Promoting Through the research, it is learned that promoting Yangqin in higher education faces multifaceted challenges: the curriculum proportion of Yangqin is low, with insufficient integration of traditional Lingnan music and modern digital technology. There is a shortage of full-time Yangqin instructors, and loose industry-university collaboration leads to a disconnect between theory and practice. Students generally have low awareness of its vocational relevance, with a clear preference for pop music. Meanwhile, digital technology integration and interdisciplinary approaches show significant potential for enhancing Yangqin's inheritance and modern dissemination, highlighting the need for comprehensive reforms in curriculum, faculty, and teaching methods

#### Suggestions

- 1、A Comparative Study on Yangqin Curriculum Design in Vocational Colleges and Comprehensive Universities —— Based on Dual Dimensions of Cultural Inheritance and Vocational Competency
- 2、A Study on the Psychological Mechanisms of College Students' Aesthetic Preferences for Yangqin —— Based on Dual Pathways of Embodied Cognition and Digital Media

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