

Dissemination of Shanxi Mountain Songs

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate three genres of Shanxi mountain songs: Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, and Juanxipian in terms of their current dissemination, channels and media, and to measure the differences in the dissemination of the three genres. For the purpose of this study, an online questionnaire was designed and conducted and a total of 435 samples were responded to. The results of this study show that respondents' familiarity with and popularity of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs are low, and the audience's knowledge of Shanxi mountain songs is generally weak. Respondents accessed information about the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs more from communication channels like cultural events and educational environments, and from traditional media like television programmes. In addition, the feedback from the respondents clarified the situation that there are differences in the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs. In conclusion, the survey report on the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs will help to provide data support for the development of subsequent studies on the dissemination of Shanxi mountain songs.

Keywords: Shanxi Mountain Songs, Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, Juanxipian, Dissemination

Introduction

In recent years, the dissemination of traditional Chinese folk songs is facing a difficult situation, facing a scarcity of inheritors and a drastically shrinking audience (Du, 2022; Ma, 2023; Sun & Zhu, 2024). A number of local folk music varieties in China have died out, and there are differences in the spreading popularity of different folk music genres (Zhang & Wang, 2007). Several studies have been conducted to find that the dissemination process of traditional folk songs creates the phenomenon of difference (Li, 2012; Zuo, 2018; Luo, 2024).

Mountain songs are a large category of traditional Chinese folk songs (Zhou, 2003), which are characterised by shorter songs, free rhythms, and lyrics that can be improvised according to the context in which they are sung (Han, 2012). According to the characteristics of mountain songs, the Shanxi folk songs that can be attributed to mountain songs include Shanqu, Kaihuadiao and Juanxipian (Han, 2012).

Existing studies on the dissemination aspects of Shanxi mountain songs have focused on the problems of Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, and Juanxipian in their respective dissemination processes, such as a decrease in the number of dissemination subjects (Li, 2019; Chen & Han, 2021), and a low level of audience participation and large-scale loss of the dissemination audience, especially in the area of youth education (Chen, 2022; Pang, 2020; Zhao, Lv & Huang, 2015).

Although some studies have referred to the problem that different genres of Shanxi mountain songs or Shanxi folk music face differences in dissemination (e.g., Zhang & Wang, 2007; Li, 2012; Zuo, 2018), studies in this area on the one hand only dealt with Shanqu and Kaihuadiao, and did not refer to Juanxipian; and on the other hand, failed to collect and analyse data on the specific dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs.

At present, the specific dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs cannot be clarified. Therefore, this survey was designed to clarify the current specific dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs, as well as their dissemination channels and media, and to measure the differences in the dissemination of the three genres, in order to provide data support for subsequent studies on the dissemination of Shanxi mountain songs.

Based on the above research objectives, the questions for this study were generated: (1) What is the current dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs? (2) What are the main dissemination channels and media for each of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs? (3) Are there differences in the current dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs?

Materials and Methods

This study used simple random sampling to design a questionnaire survey of the audience of Shanxi mountain songs. The survey was conducted in digital form, using the 'WJX' web tool to create the questionnaire, which was posted on the web on 5 May 2024 and closed on 15 May 2024, with a total of 435 samples collected.

Table 1

Questionnaire Structure

	Framework content	Title content	
Part A	Demographics	Gender Age Occupation	
Part B	Dissemination status	Shanqu	Familiarity Frequency of seeing or hearing Accessibility Popularity
		Kaihuadiao	Familiarity Frequency of seeing or hearing Accessibility Popularity
		Juanxipian	Familiarity Frequency of seeing or hearing Accessibility Popularity
Part C	Dissemination channels and media	Dissemination channels	Shanqu Kaihuadiao Juanxipian
		Dissemination media	Shanqu Kaihuadiao Juanxipian
Part D	Description of differences	Degree of acceptance of dissemination Degree of difference in dissemination Expanding the potential for dissemination	

Source: Made by the author.

Table 1 demonstrates the compositional structure of the questionnaire, which consists of four sections.

Part A: Demographic information. This section includes (a) Age; (b) Gender; and (c) Occupation.

Part B: Dissemination of each of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs. The scale was used to investigate (a) familiarity; (b) frequency of viewing or listening; (c) accessibility; and (d) popularity of Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, and Juanxipian by the audience respectively.

Part C: The dissemination channels and media of each of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs. The scale was used to investigate (a) the frequency of audiences watching or listening

to Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, and Juanxipian through different channels; and (b) the extent to which audiences relied on different media to obtain information related to Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, and Juanxipian, respectively.

Part D: This part deals with the description of the differences in the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs. (a) Investigating the degree of recognition of the spread of Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, and Juanxipian among audiences. The scale to investigate (b) the degree of difference in the dissemination of Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, and Juanxipian; (c) the potential for further dissemination of Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, and Juanxipian among audiences.

Results

Demographic Information

Table 2

Sociodemographics of the Research Participants

Factors		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	238	54.7
	Male	197	45.3
Age	18≥	5	1.1
	19-44	250	57.5
	45-60	161	37
	60<	19	4.4
Occupation	Music-related	68	15.6
	Not related to music	367	84.4

Source: Made by the author.

A total of 435 recipients participated in the questionnaire, of which 238 (54.7%) were female and 197 (45.3%) were male. The age of the participants was concentrated between 19-44 years old (n=250, 57.5%) and 45-60 years old (n=161, 37%). 68 (15.6%) of the participants were engaged in occupations related to the music profession, while 367 (84.4%) were engaged in occupations unrelated to the music profession.

Dissemination of each of the three Genres of Shanxi Mountain Songs

Table 3

Dissemination of three Genres of Shanxi Mountain Songs

Genres		Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
Shanqu	Familiarity	2.8	3	1.178
	Frequency of seeing or hearing	2.66	2	1.12
	Accessibility	3.23	4	1.017
	Popularity	3.19	4	1.051
Kaihuadiao	Familiarity	2.79	3	1.254
	Frequency of seeing or hearing	2.66	2	1.11
	Accessibility	3.08	3	1.103
	Popularity	3.11	3	1.026
Juanxipian	Familiarity	1.78	1	1.102
	Frequency of seeing or hearing	1.91	1	1.075
	Accessibility	2.03	1	1.202
	Popularity	2.38	2	1.11

Source: Made by the author.

Table 3 demonstrates the current dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs. Through the survey of respondents' familiarity with each of the three genres, the frequency of watching or listening to them, the degree of accessibility, and the degree of popularity, the respondents' familiarity with Shanqu (Mean=2.8, Mode=3) and Kaihuadiao (Mean=2.79, Mode=3) was mostly 'some knowledge', while for Juanxipian (Mean=1.78, Mode=1) it was 'very unfamiliar, no knowledge at all'. 'and Juanxipian (Mean=1.78, Mode=1) were 'very unfamiliar, never heard of it at all'.

Meanwhile, the frequency of respondents listening to or watching the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs was 'rarely' (Shanqu, Mode=2; Kaihuadiao, Mode=2) or 'never' (Juanxipian, Mode=1). In terms of accessibility, respondents found Shanqu (Mean=3.23, Mode=4) to be more accessible and Juanxipian (Mean=2.03, Mode=1) to be much more difficult to access.

In addition, respondents perceived the popularity of Shanqu (Mean=3.19, Mode=4) to be somewhat better relative to the other two genres, and the popularity of Juanxipian (Mean=2.38, Mode=2) to be somewhat worse.

Dissemination Channels and Media

Table 4

Dissemination Channels

Genres	Dissemination Channel	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
Shanqu	Cultural activities	3.06	3	0.986
	Educational environment	2.97	3	1.017
	Family environment	2.59	2	1.238
	Personal Leisure Recreation	2.72	2	1.198
Kaihuadio	Cultural activities	2.93	2	1.064
	Educational environment	2.72	3	1.083
	Family environment	2.49	1	1.234
	Personal Leisure Recreation	2.64	2	1.205
Juanxipian	Cultural activities	2.19	2	1.015
	Educational environment	2.14	2	1.105
	Family environment	1.95	1	1.051
	Personal Leisure Recreation	1.99	1	1.136

Source: Made by the author.

The data in Table 4 reveals that audiences tend to be more inclined from cultural activities (Shanqu, Mode=3; Kaihuadio, Mode=2; Juanxipian, Mode=2) and educational environments (Shanqu, Mode=3; Kaihuadio, Mode=3; Juanxipian, Mode=2) to obtaining information about the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs. In contrast, information on Shanxi mountain songs from the family environment (Shanqu, Mode=2; Kaihuadio, Mode=1; Juanxipian, Mode=1) and personal leisure and recreation (Shanqu, Mode=2; Kaihuadio, Mode=2; Juanxipian, Mode=1) sources were 'never' or 'rarely'.

Table 5 demonstrates the respondents' choices of dissemination media for the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs. The data showed that respondents relied more on TV programmes for information about Shanqu (Mode=3) and Kaihuadio (Mode=3), relied more on short-video apps for information about Shanqu (Mode=3), and seldom relied on live events for information about the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs (Shanqu, Mode=2; Kaihuadio, Mode=2; Juanxipian, Mode=2), and seldom or never relied on music apps for information about the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs (Shanqu, Mode=2; Kaihuadio, Mode=2; Juanxipian, Mode=1).

Table 5

Dissemination Media

Genres	Dissemination media	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
Shanqu	Live performance	2.85	2	1.09
	Television programmes	3.27	3	1.067
	Music App	2.72	2	1.21
	Short Video App	3.14	3	1.129
Kaihuadiao	Live performance	2.73	2	1.101
	Television programmes	3.08	3	1.091
	Music App	2.6	2	1.228
	Short Video App	2.95	2	1.223
Juanxipian	Live performance	2.14	2	1.094
	Television programmes	2.3	2	1.097
	Music App	2.03	1	1.146
	Short Video App	2.25	1	1.178

Source: Made by the author.

Description of Differences

Table 6

Degree of Acceptance and Difference in Dissemination

		Frequency	Percent
Degree of acceptance of dissemination	Shanqu	260	59.8
	Kaihuadiao	136	31.3
	Juanxipian	39	9
Degree of difference in dissemination	Not at all	17	3.9
	Slightly	54	12.4
	Moderately	67	15.4
	Very much	144	33.1
	Extremely	153	35.2

Source: Made by the author.

According to the data in Table 6, of the 435 respondents, 59.8% (n=260) believed that Shanqu is more widely known and better disseminated relative to the other two genres. 35.2% (n=153) believed that there is an extreme difference in the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi Shanqu, and 33.1% (n=144) believed that there is a very large difference in the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs.

Table 7 shows the potential for respondents to further expand the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs. The potential for respondents to recommend Shanqu, Kaihuadiao, or Juanxipian to others interested in traditional Chinese music was 'very likely' (Mode=4), 'somewhat likely' (Mode=3), and 'not very likely' (Mode=2).

Table 7

Potential for Expanded Dissemination

Genres	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
Shanqu	3.17	4	1.008
Kaihuadiao	3.09	3	1.086
Juanxipian	2.5	2	1.129

Source: Made by the author.

Discussion

The results of this study show that respondents' familiarity with and popularity of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs are not high, generally remaining in the state of 'having some knowledge' and 'having heard of it occasionally', and the audience's knowledge of Shanxi mountain songs is generally weak. Similarly, the frequency of listening to or watching the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs is also low, which leads to a low level of attention and expectation from the audience, and a lack of awareness of the local characteristics of the musical resources and culture, and a decline in the scope and influence of its dissemination (Liu, 2023; Pang, 2020).

In terms of dissemination channels and media, respondents tend to passively access information about Shanxi mountain songs from cultural activities and educational environments, and have low motivation to access Shanxi mountain songs from family environments and personal interests. Meanwhile, respondents tended to get information about the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs from traditional media such as television programmes.

According to Meng's (2023), study, the current publicity of Shanxi folk songs relies on traditional channels and forms such as publishing books on folk songs, television programmes, audio-visual products, and holding concerts of folk songs, and seldom relies on new media for publicity. The traditional way of communication has been difficult to adapt to the current Shanxi mountain songs communication needs, can not effectively improve the use of new media, in the long run will lead to the situation of poor dissemination effect (Meng, 2023; Gu, 2021; Du, 2022; Wang, 2023).

In terms of differences in dissemination, the feedback from the respondents clarifies the situation that there are differences in the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs, and according to the results of the survey on the respondents' potential for expanding the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs, the respondents are more willing to disseminate Shanqu, while the potential for dissemination of Juanxipian is 'unlikely'. , so such differences may be further expanded. Li (2012) suggested a discrepancy between Shanqu and Kaihuadiao in her study; unfortunately, she did not delve into the reasons for this, and no other researcher has followed up to investigate the discrepancy in depth.

Conclusion

The study found that the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs are facing a situation of poor dissemination, among which the dissemination of Juanxipian is the most serious. The audience pays low attention to the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs in their daily lives

and has insufficient knowledge about them, so strengthening the promotion and popularisation of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs is the primary problem they face (Wang, 2015).

Based on the results of this study, attention should be paid to the aspects of dissemination channels and communication media of Shanxi mountain songs. The dissemination channels should be enriched and the dissemination media should be fully utilised in order to expand the dissemination range of Shanxi mountain songs, increase the audience and improve their dissemination effects (Du, 2022; Huang, 2024).

New media and traditional media have their own advantages, new media have convenience, popularity and interactivity, while traditional media have accuracy, stability and authority (Meng, 2023). Combining the advantages of new media and traditional media to disseminate Shanxi mountain songs can expand the scope of its dissemination and optimise its dissemination effect, and a convenient and efficient dissemination method is exactly what Shanxi mountain songs need (Meng, 2023; Wang, 2023; Chen, 2022).

The significance of this study lies in the fact that data on the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs have been collected, counted and analysed, filling in the gaps in the data of previous studies, and on this basis clarifying the situation of differences in the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs, which will help to identify the problems faced by Shanxi mountain songs in the development of their transmission. The data from this study suggests that this is an area that should continue to be looked at and researched. What are the reasons for the differences in the dissemination of the three genres of Shanxi mountain songs, what are the influencing factors, and what can be done to resolve the differences, and it is expected that these issues will continue to be tracked by more researchers.

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