

Implementing Nanyin Music in Quanzhou Kindergartens: Exploring Teacher Training and Pedagogical Challenges

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Abstract

Nanyin music is a traditional musical art rooted in Quanzhou, and in recent years this art has been incorporated into the development of local curricula in kindergarten. However, the integration of Nanyin music into kindergarten education is challenging for teachers with varying levels of support and pedagogical preparation. This study explores kindergarten teachers' perceptions of Nanyin music education and their support for its implementation in early childhood settings. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through a questionnaire survey ($n = 243$) and interviews with kindergarten teachers ($n = 8$). Findings reveal that structured teacher training significantly enhances support for Nanyin teaching ($p = 0.022$), whereas prior teaching experience alone does not improve pedagogical confidence ($p = 0.091$). Additionally, limited instructional resources and a lack of structured curriculum contribute to the overall low level of teacher support. Interview results highlight teachers' challenges and their need for scaffolding through structured guidance and materials. This study underscores the necessity of targeted training, community engagement, and pedagogical scaffolding to promote the sustainable integration of Nanyin music in kindergartens.

Keywords: Nanyin Music, Kindergarten Education, Teacher Training, Pedagogical Scaffolding

Introduction

Nanyin music is a traditional music genre in Quanzhou, China, with important cultural significance and educational value, reflecting the rich cultural traditions and life characteristics of the people of southern Fujian. Its historical origins and contemporary significance illustrate its role in community cohesion and cultural transmission. Like other traditional music, it needs to face the challenge of a new era of inheritance in modern society. Leung (2018) pointed out that the transmission of traditional music is increasingly shifting from informal, community-based oral practices to formal schooling, which often lacks the cultural depth and contextual sensitivity of traditional modes of learning. Despite growing

awareness of the value of traditional music in early childhood education, Nanyin music persists to be underrepresented in kindergartens. As the transmission of Nanyin music shifts from informal community-based learning to formal school education, it is critical to understand how kindergarten teachers' perceptions and implementation of Nanyin music education. This study contributes to early childhood music education by offering empirical insights into kindergarten teachers' experiences, challenges, and support needs related to Nanyin music. It also informs the development of culturally responsive training programmes and curriculum resources to support both effective teaching and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in early education.

Background

As the birthplace of Nanyin music, Quanzhou has a great mission to preserve Nanyin music culture in education nowadays. In terms of cultural significance, Nanyin music has been deeply integrated into the lives of the Minnan people, gradually expanding its audience and forming a unique influence. It originated in the central region of ancient China and has evolved over time. In 2009, UNESCO inscribed Nanyin music on the List of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, emphasising its importance in preserving traditional music and cultural identity (Zhang, 2023). Nanyin music features diverse performance styles, highlighting its adaptability and expressive richness, which are essential for cultural preservation (He & Sornyai, 2023). Modern education is vital to the heritage and preservation of Nanyin music. Informal education and formal schooling in the modern education of Nanyin music play an important role in passing on the oral transmission in contemporary music learning (Lim, 2014). To enhance its effectiveness, existing programmes are examined for key components, including historical and cultural context, music proficiency, pedagogy, interdisciplinary integration, community engagement, technology, professional development, and continuous feedback mechanisms (Chen & Tayrattanachai, 2024). Leong (2005) describes a project that integrates Nanyin music into the elementary school curriculum in Singapore, linking it to subjects such as language, mathematics, social studies, and national education. The promotion of Nanyin music in schools not only enhances students' knowledge and understanding of the local culture, but also fosters a deeper appreciation of this traditional art form.

Nanyin music has been developed for decades at all levels of schooling, which encompasses secondary schools, elementary schools, vocational education, and universities each displaying their own mode of teaching and learning (Chen, 2015). In recent years, there have been phenomena where the development of indigenous specialty programmes in Chinese kindergartens has become popular. In the kindergarten curriculum standards of the Chinese Ministry of Education, kindergartens are emphasised and encouraged to strengthen the learning of their home cultures and to cultivate a new generation of young children who are passionate about their home cultures (Ministry of Education of China, 2012). As the birthplace of Nanyin music, Quanzhou is like a local business card. Many kindergartens in Quanzhou have appeared to learn about Nanyin music and culture, but like many other traditional music, kindergartens are faced with the challenge of teaching it in a way that is not continuous. The research gap by stating that existing studies overlook early childhood education settings in the context of traditional music. In order to address the problems faced by kindergarten teachers with Nanyin music education, this study focuses on the need for structured support in teaching practices. This study investigates how teacher training,

instructional resources, and cultural relevance influence the adoption of Nanyin music in kindergartens.

Research Questions:

1. What are kindergarten teachers' experiences and their levels of support for Nanyin music education?
2. **What are the key challenges and support needs of kindergarten teachers in teaching Nanyin music?**

This study analyses kindergarten teachers' experiences, support and needs in teaching Nanyin music through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. SPSS was used to analyse the data to reveal the key factors affecting teachers' support, and the teaching dilemmas were explored in depth through interviews. The results of the study will provide empirical evidence for the development of Nanyin music teaching modules and promote the effective transmission and promotion of Nanyin music in early childhood education.

Literature Review

The Role of Music Education in Kindergarten

Music education nurtures children's creativity, social adaptation, and well-being, fostering equity and cultural appreciation. It serves as a transformative tool for personal and community growth, supporting skill development and cultural transmission (Sun & Wong, 2025). Music education in preschools has been shown to improve social skills, emotional expression, and cultural identity. Even though it encourages inclusion, it faces challenges such as unequal access to resources and inadequate teacher training, which highlights the need for enhanced teacher support and equitable access (Maldonado, 2024).

According to Ilari (2016), music as a social activity supports identity development and social connections in young children. The importance of cultural tools in early childhood education is further demonstrated in research on British music and foreign language acquisition, showing how music facilitates learning beyond its artistic form (Mykhailova, 2024). However, existing research often assumes that teachers receive sufficient training and institutional support, overlooking practical challenges in curriculum design, teacher preparation, and teaching methods. Studies on culturally responsive music education highlight the importance of guided learning, but research on Nanyin in early childhood education remains limited. This study builds on these discussions by examining how music education can be meaningfully integrated into kindergartens and whether current teacher training and support systems are sufficient for its effective implementation.

Teacher Background, Experience, and Resources in Nanyin Music Education

Teachers' background and experience play a key role in shaping their perspectives on teaching and learning. Variations in teaching experience influence the selection of instructional materials and methods, with specialized educators attributing greater importance to these factors in lesson effectiveness (Cibej, 2024). Additionally, years of teaching experience are positively linked to self-efficacy and motivation, impacting both pedagogical decisions and student engagement (Flint et al., 2024). Understanding teachers' years of experience, their exposure to Nanyin music training, and their Nanyin music teaching experience is crucial for analysing how their backgrounds influence the implementation of Nanyin music education.

Availability of teaching resources is an important factor affecting the promotion and implementation of Nanyin music. Chung (2021) highlighted the importance of practical, hands-on experiences, such as singing, instrument playing, and movement activities, in developing teachers' instructional skills. The programme emphasised play-based learning, aligning with the Hong Kong Kindergarten Curriculum Guide. However, many teachers had limited prior training in music education, which resulted in anxiety and uncertainty when teaching music. For instance, Leong (2005) explores a collaborative arts education initiative that integrates Nanyin music into school curricula in Australian-Singaporean collaborative arts education project, illustrating how government and institutional support in providing teaching resources can enhance student engagement and cultural appreciation. Similarly, He & Sornyai (2023) examine the historical and performance dimensions of Nanyin music in Quanzhou, emphasising its importance in heritage education. These studies provide a perspective on how teachers' backgrounds and experiences with Nanyin music, as well as teaching resources, can contribute to the development of Nanyin music in kindergarten education settings.

Challenges in Integrating Nanyin Music into Kindergarten Curriculum

Integrating traditional music into kindergarten education presents several challenges, primarily due to the gap between traditional culture and modern educational practices, curricular constraints, insufficient teacher training, and evolving cultural dynamics. Jia (2024) discusses the challenges of preserving traditional music in the modern era, particularly through digital dissemination. The study emphasises that the reproduction of traditional music should not only focus on content but also on the imitation of instruments and melodies, ensuring the retention of its original expressive and artistic characteristics.

Teacher training plays a critical role in fostering self-efficacy and balancing structured and creative music activities while ensuring alignment with curriculum goals and classroom practices (Bautista et al., 2023). Lau and Grieshaber (2018) highlight the importance of an integrated curriculum in kindergartens, advocating for flexible subject boundaries to create a cohesive and balanced learning experience. However, despite efforts to encourage integration, music education in Hong Kong kindergartens remains constrained by rigid subject divisions, hindering interdisciplinary teaching approaches (Lau & Grieshaber, 2018). These challenges are particularly relevant to this study for exploring the gaps in modernizing music education in kindergartens with traditional Nanyin music, understanding what are the challenging factors for kindergarten teachers and how to understand the dilemmas that Nanyin music actually faces when taught in kindergartens.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of kindergarten teachers' support for Nanyin music education. The combination of questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews ensures a robust analysis of the factors influencing Nanyin music instruction in early childhood settings.

Quantitative component questionnaire survey, a structured questionnaire was administered to 243 kindergarten teachers to examine the relationships between

demographic variables, teaching experience, training background, and their support for Nanyin music instruction. Qualitative component semi-structured Interviews, in-depth interviews were conducted with 8 kindergarten teachers to explore the practical challenges and perceptions surrounding Nanyin music teaching.

Participants and Sampling Strategy

Participants in this study were kindergarten teachers from various districts of Quanzhou, selected through purposive and stratified sampling to ensure diversity across school types and regions. For the quantitative phase, 300 questionnaires were distributed, and 243 valid responses were collected, yielding a return rate of 81%. According to the 2022 statistical data from the Quanzhou Education Bureau, there were 26,050 preschool teachers in the city. Thus, the valid sample represents approximately 0.93% of the overall kindergarten teacher population. Although this percentage is relatively small, the sample includes a balanced mix of teachers from public and private institutions as well as urban and rural areas, which enhances the representativeness of the findings. For the qualitative phase, eight kindergarten teachers were selected using purposive sampling. These teachers were chosen based on their varying levels of teaching experience, engagement with Nanyin-related activities, and willingness to discuss their instructional challenges. This approach ensured that diverse and relevant perspectives were included in the interview data.

Data Collection

Data were collected using two primary methods: a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert-scale items (rated on a 1–4 scale) designed to assess teachers' support for Nanyin music education, as well as their background in traditional music teaching and participation in training programmes. The survey was distributed in both digital and paper formats to increase accessibility across different kindergarten settings. To supplement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected teachers. The interview questions focused on themes such as teaching experiences, resource limitations, professional development needs, and strategies for integrating Nanyin into the curriculum. These interviews provided contextual depth and enriched the interpretation of the survey results.

Data Analysis

A combination of quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected data. For the quantitative analysis, SPSS was employed to conduct descriptive statistics, including frequency analysis of demographic variables and a summary of Nanyin music related teaching activities. Chi-Square Tests were applied to examine relationships such as teaching experience and support for Nanyin music education, teacher training and support for Nanyin education, and years of teaching vs. support for Nanyin music education. In the qualitative analysis, interview transcriptions were coded and analysed to extract key themes related to teaching challenges, resource needs, and recommendations for enhancing Nanyin music instruction in kindergartens.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Ethics Committee of Universities Sains Malaysia. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, and informed

consent was obtained prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were maintained throughout the research process.

Research Validity and Reliability

To enhance validity, triangulation was employed by cross-referencing findings from both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 20 teachers before full-scale distribution to ensure clarity and reliability. Additionally, inter-coder reliability was established for qualitative data analysis to ensure consistency in thematic coding. This methodology ensures a rigorous and systematic approach to investigating the current status and challenges of Nanyin music education in kindergartens, providing valuable insights for future curriculum development.

Findings

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

To address the first research question, this section presents findings related to kindergarten teachers' experiences with Nanyin music and their level of support for its implementation in early childhood settings.

In terms of professional experience, 44% of surveyed teachers had between 0 to 5 years of teaching experience, 37% had 6 to 10 years, and 19% had over 10 years of experience. Notably, a majority of teachers (74%) worked in urban kindergartens, suggesting greater access to educational resources in these areas. As shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency Analysis of Demographic Variables

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Kindergarten Distribution	Urban	180	74%	1.26	0.439
	Rural	63	26%		
Years of Teaching	0 to 5 years	107	44%	1.75	0.758
	6 to 10 years	89	37%		
	More than 10 years	47	19%		

Regarding cultural engagement, Table 2 shows that 71% of participants reported having experience in conducting traditional cultural activities, indicating a general openness to integrating heritage-based content in early education. However, only 15% had received formal Nanyin music training, and just 22% had previous experience teaching Nanyin music. These findings reveal a clear gap between teachers' general cultural experience and their specific preparedness for Nanyin instruction.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Experience in Traditional Cultural Activities, Nanyin Music Training, and Nanyin Music Teaching

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experience in conducting traditional cultural activities	Yes	173	71%	1.29	0.454
	No	70	29%		
Nanyin music training	Yes	37	15%	1.85	0.36
	No	206	85%		
Nanyin music teaching experience	Yes	54	22%	1.78	0.417
	No	189	78%		

This analysis integrates Table 3 representation of the frequency distribution, providing insights into the prevalence and types of Nanyin music activities in educational settings. The findings reveal varying degrees of engagement in Nanyin music activities, highlighting both areas of success and gaps in implementation.

Table 3

Implementation of Different Forms of Nanyin Activities

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Classroom- related Nanyin Activities	No	139	57%	0.43	0.496
	Yes	104	43%		
Areas Activities	No	134	55%	0.45	0.498
	Yes	109	45%		
Nanyin Performance Appreciation (On-Campus Viewing)	No	126	52%	0.48	0.501
	Yes	117	48%		
Other Forms of Engagement	No	163	67%	0.33	0.471
	Yes	80	33%		
No Participation in Nanyin Activities	No	180	74%	0.26	0.439
	Yes	63	26%		

When examining how Nanyin is currently implemented, the most common activity was performance appreciation (48%), typically involving on-campus viewing of Nanyin performances. Classroom-based instruction (43%) and designated area activities (45%) were less frequent, while only 33% engaged in creative or interdisciplinary forms of integration. A notable 26% of teachers reported no involvement in any Nanyin-related activities, highlighting a need for further curriculum and resource support.

Despite this limited experience, overall support for Nanyin education was relatively high. The Figure 1 pie chart illustrates a combined 72% of teachers either fully supported or conditionally supported teaching Nanyin in kindergartens. Specifically, 55% of respondents

expressed support but cited practical challenges, while 17% supported it unconditionally. Conversely, 21% had not yet considered Nanyin instruction, and only 7% expressed a lack of support.

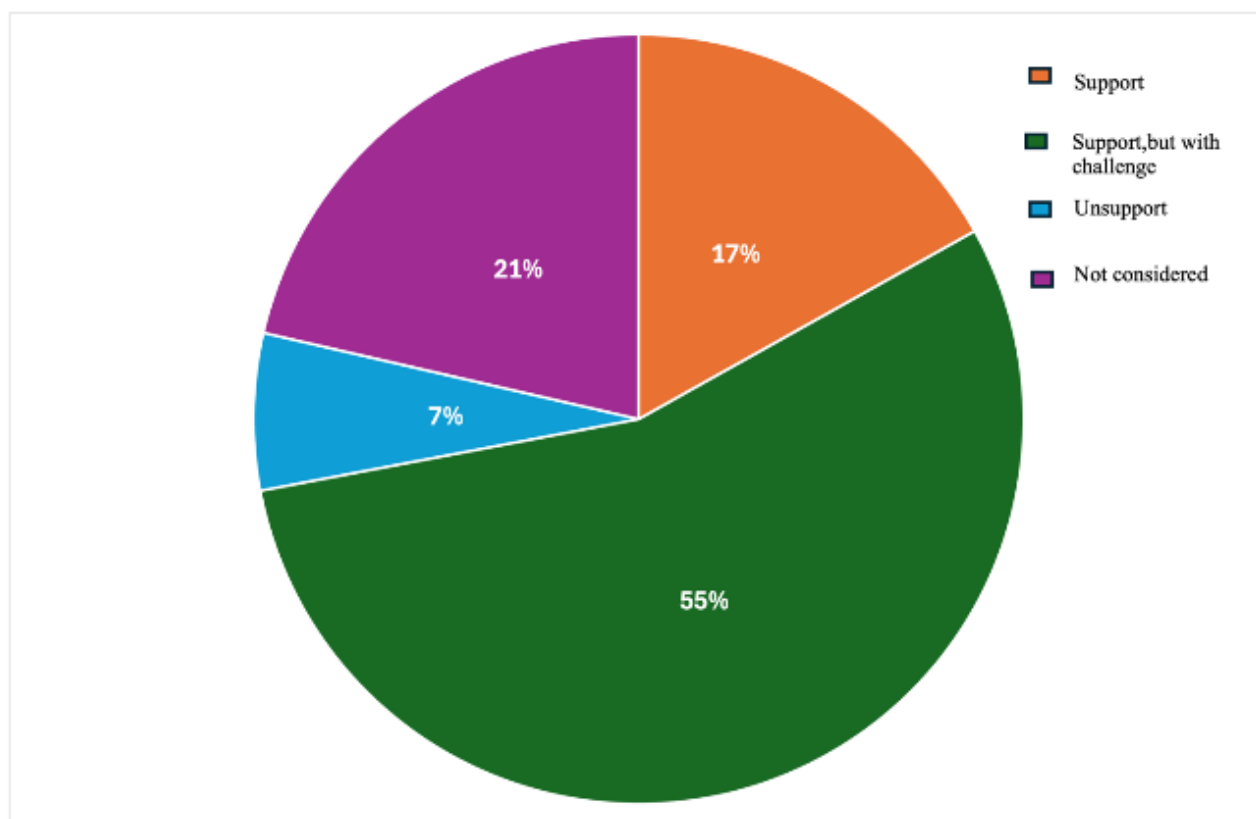


Figure 1. *Percentage of kindergarten teachers' support for the development of Nanyin music activities*

Cross-Tabulation Analysis (Chi-Square Tests)

To further explore the factors influencing teachers' support for Nanyin music education, cross-tabulation and Chi-Square tests were conducted to examine associations between support levels and three key variables: teaching experience, training participation, and Nanyin teaching experience.

Teaching Experience and Support

As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between years of teaching experience and support for Nanyin education ($\chi^2 = 12.757$, $p = 0.047$). Teachers with fewer than five years of experience demonstrated the highest level of support, with 64.5% falling under the "somewhat supportive" category and 15% being "fully supportive." In contrast, teachers with over ten years of experience showed the lowest level of support. This trend suggests that younger or less experienced teachers may be more open to adopting culturally rooted innovations such as Nanyin, possibly due to greater adaptability or exposure to newer educational frameworks.

Table 4

Cross-Tabulation of Years of Teaching Experience and Support for Nanyin Music Education

Teaching Experience (Years)	Not Considered (0)	Not Supportive (1)	Somewhat Supportive (2)	Supportive (3)	Total
0-5 years	20 (18.7%)	2 (1.9%)	69 (64.5%)	16 (15.0%)	107 (44.0%)
6-10 years	20 (22.5%)	10 (11.2%)	40 (44.9%)	19 (21.3%)	89 (36.6%)
Over 10 years	12 (25.5%)	4 (8.5%)	25 (53.2%)	6 (12.8%)	47 (19.3%)
Total	52 (21.4%)	16 (6.6%)	134 (55.1%)	41 (16.9%)	243 (100%)

Table 5

Chi-Square Test Results for Teaching Experience and Support for Nanyin Music Education

Statistic	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	12.757	6	0.047
Likelihood Ratio	13.650	6	0.034
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.747	1	0.186

Nanyin Music Training and Support

Tables 7 illustrates the participation in Nanyin music training was also significantly associated with support levels ($\chi^2 = 9.584$, $p = 0.022$). Among trained teachers, 26.8% expressed strong support for Nanyin integration, and none were classified as unsupportive. In contrast, teachers without such training were more likely to report having “not considered” Nanyin music instruction. These findings emphasise the importance of structured training in increasing teachers’ confidence and willingness to adopt Nanyin music in their teaching practice. As shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Cross-Tabulation of Nanyin Music Training and Support for Nanyin Music Education

Nanyin Music Training	Not Considered (0)	Not Supportive (1)	Somewhat Supportive (2)	Supportive (3)	Total
Yes	4 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	22 (16.4%)	11 (26.8%)	37 (15.2%)
No	48 (92.3%)	16 (100%)	112 (83.6%)	30 (73.2%)	206 (84.8%)
Total	52 (21.4%)	16 (6.6%)	134 (55.1%)	41 (16.9%)	243 (100%)

Table 7

Chi-Square Test for Nanyin Music Training and Support for Nanyin Music Education

Statistic	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	9.584	3	0.022
Likelihood Ratio	11.772	3	0.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.282	1	0.007

Nanyin Music Teaching Experience and Support

As shown in Tables 8 and 9, while descriptive data suggested that teachers with Nanyin teaching experience were more supportive—34.1% of them expressed full support—the Chi-Square test did not reveal a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 6.463$, $p = 0.091$). This implies that prior teaching experience alone may not be a strong predictor of support unless accompanied by targeted training or institutional encouragement.

Table 8

Cross-Tabulation of Nanyin Music Teaching Experience and Support for Nanyin Music Education

Nanyin Music Teaching Experience	Not Considered (0)	Not Supportive (1)	Somewhat Supportive (2)	Supportive (3)	Total
Yes	9 (17.3%)	1 (6.3%)	30 (22.4%)	14 (34.1%)	54 (22.2%)
No	43 (82.7%)	15 (93.8%)	104 (77.6%)	27 (65.9%)	189 (77.8%)
Total	52 (21.4%)	16 (6.6%)	134 (55.1%)	41 (16.9%)	243 (100%)

Table 9

Chi-Square Test for Nanyin Music Teaching Experience and Support for Nanyin Music Education

Statistic	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	6.463	3	0.091
Likelihood Ratio	6.880	3	0.076
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.795	1	0.051

Overall, these results highlight that formal training has a more substantial impact on support for Nanyin education than teaching experience alone. Younger teachers also appear more receptive to Nanyin instruction, possibly reflecting generational shifts in pedagogical openness. These findings support the argument for developing targeted professional development programmes to equip teachers with the necessary skills, materials, and confidence to incorporate Nanyin music into early childhood curricula.

To better understand the underlying reasons for these quantitative trends, the next section presents qualitative insights from teacher interviews, focusing on perceived barriers, classroom realities, and suggested improvements.

Qualitative Analysis Results

In the qualitative analysis of kindergarten teachers' experiences in Nanyin music education, an inductive thematic analysis approach was used, whereby codes emerged from the data through repeated readings. The data were coded, ultimately leading to the identification of four main themes and nine sub-themes. These themes summarize the challenges faced by teachers in Nanyin music instruction, their resource needs, the implementation of the curriculum, and children's interest in learning.

Table 10

Mapping themes from thematic analysis

Themes	Sub-Themes
Teacher's Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient understanding of Nanyin music - Insufficient training and professional development - Demand for teacher training
Teaching Resources and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesson planning difficulties - Limited teaching conditions - Teaching time allocation - Shortage of teaching materials and lesson plans
Curriculum Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curriculum integration - Early childhood teaching methods
Student Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young learners' enthusiasm

Teachers' knowledge and training needs in Nanyin music

This study found that the interviewed teachers generally had limited knowledge of Nanyin music, primarily learning through community courses or personal interest (KT1, KT3). The teachers stated that since Nanyin music is not widely integrated into the professional training system for kindergarten teachers, many of them have not received systematic training (KT1, KT2). Some teachers relied on online resources or learned from community inheritors (KT1), but they still felt their knowledge was insufficient. The teachers generally believed that in order to implement Nanyin teaching in kindergartens, they needed a certain level of foundational knowledge and professional competence. Therefore, they expressed the need for specialized Nanyin training courses or instructional manuals to help them better grasp Nanyin teaching methods (KT3, KT4).

One participant stated,

"Well... I haven't learned much actually. I only recently started engaging with Nanyin music. Currently, I am trying to introduce this course, so my workmate and I attend classes in the nearby community, where an inheritor teaches everyone" (Kindergarten Teacher 1, Question 1, KT1-Q1).

Lack of Teaching Resources for Teaching Practice

Although some kindergartens have attempted to integrate Nanyin music into their curriculum, the level of integration remains low (KT2). Many teachers have only made limited attempts at Nanyin teaching and have not been able to incorporate it into the curriculum systematically and continuously (KT1, KT4). Teachers generally reported that the lack of teaching resources and lesson plans made lesson preparation difficult (KT1, KT3). At present, many teachers rely on online videos or learn from community Nanyin societies. However, due to the absence of formal teaching materials and curriculum design, the selection and arrangement of teaching content tend to be arbitrary, affecting the systematic and sustainable development of the curriculum (KT2, KT3, KT4).

"Mainly using online videos, but teachers need to screen them. Otherwise, some videos may not be of good quality or may not be adapted for young children, making it difficult for them to understand the explanations. Such videos are not suitable for use in kindergarten classrooms, and some are not appropriate for young children to be introduced to" (KT7-Q5).

Additionally, the availability of musical instruments required for teaching is highly limited. Since Nanyin instruments are relatively expensive, kindergartens often do not have the budget to purchase them. As a result, some teachers can only borrow instruments from students' parents for teaching (KT2). This situation imposes significant constraints on lesson planning, preventing teachers from providing a complete Nanyin musical experience (KT3).

Children's Interest and Curriculum Implementation

Despite the limited teaching resources, teachers generally believe that young children show a strong interest in Nanyin music, particularly during instrument demonstrations, where they exhibit great curiosity and eagerness to explore (KT2). This finding suggests that although Nanyin is a traditional musical form, its unique cultural appeal can still attract children's attention (KT3).

However, since Nanyin's musical style differs significantly from modern children's music, teachers need to explore suitable teaching methods for young learners (KT2). Some teachers mentioned that they have attempted to combine Nanyin with games and storytelling to enhance children's engagement (KT3, KT4). However, due to the lack of specific teaching guidelines, effectively incorporating Nanyin into kindergarten classrooms remains a challenge (KT2).

Discussion

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data confirm that Nanyin music instruction is not yet widely implemented in kindergartens. Only 22% of surveyed teachers have experience teaching Nanyin, and classroom-based instruction is reported by just 43%. Instead, most engagement is limited to performance appreciation, indicating a passive approach to cultural transmission.

Crucially, the study highlights that teacher support is more strongly influenced by structured training than by teaching experience alone. Quantitative data shows a statistically significant correlation between training participation and support ($p = 0.022$), while no such effect is seen with teaching experience ($p = 0.091$). The interviews further reinforce that teachers lacking formal preparation often feel underqualified, even if they are motivated to implement Nanyin music.

The concept of scaffolding is a central idea in sociocultural theory, which emerged as a key factor. Teachers need external support systems such as structured materials, community mentorship, and curriculum models to bridge the gap between cultural knowledge and classroom practice. These "cultural tools," including instruments, oral stories, and traditional repertoire, are necessary for creating authentic and engaging learning experiences, however they remain underprovided in most kindergartens. This finding corresponds that Gagné's Nine Events of Instruction offer a systematic framework for designing and delivering instructional content, while also addressing the internal and external conditions necessary for effective learning (Gagné et al., 2005). Similarly, Leung (2014) studied on teaching Cantonese opera in Hong Kong schools demonstrates that partnerships with traditional music experts and structured workshops can significantly enhance teachers' confidence and motivation when engaging with unfamiliar cultural content.

In addition, there appears to be a generational divide that teachers with less than five years of experience expressed greater openness to Nanyin music. This could reflect newer teachers' familiarity with culturally responsive and interdisciplinary pedagogies, indicating the importance of updating training curricula to meet these trends. These findings suggest a number of practical implications for teacher development and curriculum integration:

Structured Professional Development: Implementing a targeted teacher training programme can provide structured guidance and teaching modules to support kindergarten educators in effectively teaching Nanyin music.

Community-Based Learning and Mentorship: Encouraging collaborations with local Nanyin musicians and cultural practitioners can serve as an authentic learning experience that reinforces cultural transmission through guided participation.

Enhancing Access to Cultural Tools: Providing Nanyin music instruments, digital learning resources, and structured lesson plans will help teachers internalize pedagogical methods and promote active rather than passive engagement in Nanyin music learning.

Interdisciplinary Integration: Connecting Nanyin music instruction with storytelling, language development, and movement-based activities can enhance children's engagement and align with broader early childhood education goals.

Conclusion

This study explored kindergarten teachers' experiences and support for Nanyin music education, revealing both opportunities and barriers to its implementation. While most teachers are receptive to introducing Nanyin into their classrooms, the lack of training and resources poses major challenges. Quantitative findings demonstrated that structured training, rather than teaching experience, significantly predicts teachers' support. Qualitative insights underscored the need for professional development, curriculum resources, and contextualized pedagogy.

These findings reinforce the value of culturally responsive music education and highlight the need to preserve intangible heritage through meaningful, developmentally appropriate instruction. Moving forward, it is essential to develop adaptable Nanyin music teaching modules, strengthen community-school collaborations, and ensure that teacher training institutions integrate traditional music into early childhood education. Future research should explore cross-regional comparisons and investigate how digital platforms and peer mentoring can enhance teacher preparedness for traditional music instruction in preschool settings.

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Ethics approval

This study received ethical approval from the Universiti Sains Malaysia Ethics Committee (JEPeM Code : USM/JEPeM/PP/24080742).

Authors' contribution statement

Zaihua Wen mainly conducted the literature review, designed the study, collected and analysed the data, and drafted the manuscript. Dr. Yumi Yoshioka supervised the research design, provided academic guidance throughout the study, and critically revised the manuscript.

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