

A Narrative Review of Kodaly-Based Strategies for Integrating Sichuan Han Folk Songs into University Preschool Education Programs

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Abstract

This study employs a narrative review method to explore the integration of Sichuan Han folk songs into university preschool education programs through the Kodály teaching method. Sichuan Han folk songs, as a treasure of Chinese ethnic music culture, hold rich historical heritage and unique artistic value (Qin, 2017; Xu & Jiang, 2019). Nevertheless, current preschool music education in China faces challenges such as curriculum content westernization and the insufficient incorporation of indigenous music resources (Wang & Feng, 2014; Chen, 2022). The Kodály teaching method—known for its emphasis on national musical heritage, solfège-based skill development, and child-centered pedagogy—provides both theoretical and practical tools for integrating regional folk music into early childhood music education (Forrai, 1991; Choksy, 1999). Against this backdrop, the present study delves into the musical characteristics and educational value of Sichuan Han folk songs (Luo, 2022), and further investigates how these can be meaningfully combined with the Kodály method to enhance music instruction in university preschool programs (Hou, 2020). Such integration not only aligns with contemporary trends in localized and culturally responsive music education but also offers promising pathways for innovation in China’s early childhood music curricula (Chen, 2023; Zhang, 2023). While challenges remain—such as teacher preparedness (He, 2019), teaching material development, and curriculum policy constraints (Wu, 2022)—the adoption of Kodály’s pedagogical principles, along with modern educational technologies, holds the potential to revitalize Sichuan folk songs in preschool settings. Ultimately, this study seeks to address a critical gap in localized music education by proposing a Kodály-based framework for incorporating Sichuan Han folk songs into university preschool curricula.

Keywords: Sichuan Han Folk Songs, Preschool Education Programs, Kodály Teaching Method

Introduction

Sichuan Han folk music, rich in history and artistic value, is a valuable local resource for early childhood education. Yet, current music curricula often favor Western content, neglect local traditions, and lack systematization, hindering the use of such cultural assets. In response,

national policies now advocate for integrating traditional culture into schools, creating an opportunity to embed Sichuan folk music into early education.

The Kodály method, known for its focus on national music and structured pedagogy, offers a suitable framework for this integration. This study examines the educational potential of Sichuan Han folk music through the lens of Kodály principles, aiming to promote cultural heritage, enrich preschool music education, and support the development of future educators.

Although Sichuan Han folk songs possess profound cultural value and educational potential, their systematic and scientific application remains absent in current university-level preschool education curricula. This study aims to fill this gap by introducing the internationally recognized Kodály Method to develop, for the first time, a localized and systematic teaching framework for Sichuan folk songs tailored to preschool education programs in universities. Its contribution lies not only in expanding the theoretical boundaries of the Kodály approach within the Chinese context, but also in offering practical and actionable guidance for teacher training and curriculum policy development in higher education.

Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the integration of Sichuan Han folk music and the Kodály method in early childhood music curricula to promote the integration of national cultural heritage and music education. Specifically, the research objectives include:

1. To reveal the educational value of Sichuan Han folk music in early childhood education.
2. To demonstrate the applicability of the Kodály method in local music education.
3. To propose feasible implementation strategies to provide theoretical and practical references for the reform of early childhood music curricula.

Research Significance

This study holds significant theoretical and practical importance. Theoretically, by integrating Kodály method with Sichuan Han folk music, it fills the gap in the research of local music education and provides a new theoretical perspective for the localization of preschool music curricula. In practice, the study offers strong support for the reform of preschool music courses. It helps enhance children's identification with local culture, improve the quality of preschool music education, and cultivate professional talents with a sense of local cultural inheritance. Additionally, from a socio-cultural perspective, the study promotes the inheritance and dissemination of Sichuan Han folk music, enhances the cohesion of national culture, and contributes to the development of cultural diversity, infusing new vitality into the transmission of traditional culture.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the core theoretical framework of cultural heritage theory and Kodály teaching method. According to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), the education system plays a crucial role in the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, emphasizing the principle of "authenticity" in cultural inheritance, which means that teaching should be conducted in accordance with traditional singing styles and cultural backgrounds (Campbell, 2004). On the other hand, Kodály's teaching method proposes the principle of "musical mother tongue," emphasizing that

children's music education should start with their own ethnic music and be learned through pentatonic scale training, singing, games, and other methods (Kodály, 1974; Choksy, 1999). Based on these two theoretical frameworks, this study will explore how to combine the Kodály method to make the application of Sichuan Han folk songs in preschool education more systematic and scientific, in order to promote the integration of cultural inheritance and music education.

Methodology

This study employs a narrative review approach to examine the application of Sichuan Han folk songs in preschool music education and their integration with the Kodály teaching method. The goal is to establish a solid theoretical foundation for future practical implementation.

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across Chinese databases (CNKI, Wanfang, VIP) and international platforms (Scopus, ERIC, Web of Science), covering publications from 2000 to 2025. Keywords such as "Sichuan Han folk songs," "preschool education," "music curriculum," and "Kodály teaching method" were used to ensure topic relevance. In addition, core journals like *Chinese Music Education* and *Preschool Education Research* were manually reviewed to identify key studies not captured in initial searches.

Inclusion criteria focused on studies addressing the use of Sichuan Han folk songs in preschool education and research involving the Kodály method in early childhood contexts, limited to works published between 2000 and 2025. Excluded were irrelevant studies, duplicate entries, and works without full-text access. A total of 30 relevant studies were selected for analysis. Key data—including research context, objectives, methods, and findings—were extracted and categorized using qualitative analysis techniques to structure the review.

During the research process, two main challenges were encountered. First, some regional studies and case reports were not published in mainstream databases, making access difficult. Second, applying the Kodály method in the local context required careful consideration of cultural compatibility. To address these issues, supplementary data were gathered through field interviews and expert consultations, helping to strengthen the study's comprehensiveness and reliability.

Overview of Han Folk Songs in Sichuan

Sichuan Han folk songs have a long history and diverse forms, including labor songs, mountain songs, minor tunes, nursery rhymes, and folk ballads, reflecting the region's cultural traditions and social life (Qin, 2017). Their origins trace back to the pre-Qin period, with early references like "Hou Ren Xi Yi" recorded in *Lv Shi Chun Qiu*, and further development during the Han Dynasty through forms such as "grass pulling gongs and drums" in the Ba Yu region (Qin, 2017).

Since the 20th century, social changes have led to a decline in some repertoires. However, the revival of interest in intangible cultural heritage has brought renewed academic focus to their preservation and transmission (Bai & Zeng, 2021).

Beyond cultural value, Sichuan folk songs play an important role in early childhood education. Their distinctive tonal and rhythmic features support children's auditory and cultural development (Xu & Jiang, 2019), while nursery rhymes aid in enhancing language, rhythm, and emotional expression skills (Li, 2020).

Recent efforts include adapting songs like "Sujichuan Insect Song" for preschool settings and exploring digital approaches such as picture book versions of traditional children's songs (Zhang, Ren & Yu, 2021; Wang & Yang, 2024).

Despite progress, challenges remain, including a lack of systematic teaching materials, limited teacher training, and low student engagement (He, 2019). Further research should integrate Sichuan folk songs with modern pedagogical methods like the Kodály approach to develop more structured and effective teaching models (Hou, 2020).

Current Situation of Preschool Education and University Teaching in China

Music education has played an important role in developing children's perception, aesthetics, and creativity in China since the first preschool institution was founded in 1903 (Fang & Yu, 2025). As quality-oriented education advances, universities—key training grounds for preschool teachers—are paying more attention to course content, teaching methods, and local cultural integration in music education (Bao, 2025; Li, 2025). However, issues such as the lack of regional content, repetitive teaching methods, and a gap between theory and practice still persist (Chen, 2022; Zhou, 2024).

This section explores two aspects: the historical development of preschool music education in China and the current state of music curricula in university preschool education programs, with a focus on integrating Sichuan Han children's rhymes.

The Development of Preschool Education in China

Preschool music education in China has gone through five main stages: early emergence, institutional establishment, post-Reform reconstruction, 21st-century development, and the current phase of legislative support.

The first preschool, Hubei Kindergarten, was founded in 1903, marking the beginning of China's preschool education. It was officially included in the national education system the following year and gradually influenced by Western educational theories (Li, 2022; Fang & Yu, 2025). Although initial development occurred in urban areas, it remained limited (Zhou, 2024).

From the early 20th century to the late 1940s, known as the "school song period," modern children's music education began to develop. Educators like Tao Xingzhi explored localized preschool teacher education at Xiaozhuang Normal School, aiming to build a system rooted in Chinese culture (Xu, 2001; Chen, 2022).

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the government promoted a national kindergarten system with policies focused on collective education and socialist values (Zhou, 2024; Fang & Yu, 2025). During this time, the Soviet education model was adopted. However,

during the Cultural Revolution, preschool music education faced severe setbacks (Zhou, 2024).

Post-1978 reforms brought a shift from adult-centered to child-centered teaching, emphasizing scientific approaches and modernization. The 1993 Teachers Law helped regulate and professionalize preschool teacher training (Yuan, 2021; Fang & Yu, 2025; Chen, 2022).

In the 21st century, the value of preschool music education has been widely recognized. Music helps develop children's emotional, cognitive, and creative abilities (Li, 2023; Yu, 2011). Scholars emphasize modernizing teacher training while reconnecting with traditional practices (Fang & Yu, 2025; Chen, 2022).

On June 1, 2025, the Preschool Education Law of the People's Republic of China came into effect, providing legal support for the standardized development of preschool music education (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2024; Wu & Yang, 2025).

Current Status of Music Curriculum Teaching in University-Based Preschool Education Programs in China

With the promotion of quality education, music instruction in Chinese universities is shifting from knowledge-based to competency-based models. Educators now emphasize emotional expression, creativity, and overall musical literacy (Bao, 2025; Li, 2025). However, several problems remain.

Firstly, course content often lacks a practical connection. Many programs still follow outdated, adult-centered methods that don't suit young learners (Wu, 2025; Bao, 2025). Local children's rhymes are rarely included in textbooks, and regional culture is largely absent (Huang, 2006; Zhao, 2024; Chen, 2024; Wang, 2020; Wang & Feng, 2014). Some course content is outdated and not aligned with current educational trends (Li, 2022).

To solve these issues, scholars suggest integrating local music and cultural resources into teaching. This can enrich content and enhance students' cultural identity and confidence (Bao, 2025; Geng, 2020; Sun & Liu, 2023). However, current usage of local materials lacks systematization and structure (Hao, 2022; Qian & Lu, 2025). Many instructors lack a deep understanding of local culture and tend to use adult-focused content instead (Chen & Zheng, 2024). Even when local rhymes are used, they often lack standardized rhythmic notation, limiting their practical teaching value (Liu, 2015; Zhang, 2018; Chen, 2020).

In terms of teaching methods, many universities still rely on lecture-based instruction, which limits student engagement and hands-on practice (Chen, 2022; Zhou, 2024; Bao, 2025). The lack of classroom innovation leads to low student motivation and poor learning outcomes (Wu, 2022).

Additionally, some programs overemphasize vocal or piano techniques without showing how these skills apply in preschool settings. There is limited training in areas such as designing music activities, using games, or teaching music appreciation. As a result, students may learn technical skills but are not prepared for real-life teaching (Kang, 2022; Chen, 2023).

In conclusion, while there has been some progress in music education in preschool teacher training programs, key challenges remain—especially regarding localized content, diverse teaching strategies, and practical training. Future reforms should prioritize the systematic integration of regional cultural resources and promote innovative teaching methods to improve students' teaching competence and cultural awareness.

Kodály Teaching Method

The Origin and International Influence of Kodály Teaching Method

Zoltán Kodály, a renowned Hungarian ethnic educator, music theorist, and composer, founded the Kodály music teaching method in the 1920s. This method, with its unique educational philosophy and innovative teaching methods, has had a profound impact on the global music education field (Sheridan, 2018). The Kodály teaching method emphasizes the core role of local folk songs in music education, combining sight singing and ear training, rhythm training, gesture teaching, and other methods to improve students' music literacy (Choksy, 1999).

Internationally, the Kodály teaching method was introduced to the United States in the 1960s and widely applied in multiple countries. Sheridan's research analyzed the development process of Kodály teaching method in the United States, explored its evolution from early adaptation to modern times, and summarized the advantages of this teaching method in children's music learning. Research has shown that the Kodály teaching method not only enhances students' music perception ability but also promotes the cultivation of their music creativity.

Through the analysis of international literature, it was found that the Kodály teaching method has achieved significant results in music education in different countries. It has not only had a profound impact on Hungary's own music education system but has also been widely promoted in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and some Asian countries, becoming an important teaching system for global music educators to study and learn from (Mihelač, 2022).

Forrai Katalin (1991) mentioned the core theory of the Kodaly method:

- a) Music education must start from the folk traditions of one's own ethnic group.
- b) Music education should start from birth.
- c) Music belongs to everyone, and music literacy is a part of national culture that must enable everyone to acquire the ability to read and write music.
- d) Emphasize understanding music principles through actual singing or performance.
- e) Singing is the most natural form of music creation.
- f) Music education must be provided to everyone from infants to adults.

Forrai Katalin (1991) outlined the primary objectives of the Kodály method in early childhood music education as follows: a) to cultivate children's musical interest and aesthetic sensitivity through singing and music appreciation activities, thereby developing their sense of pitch, rhythm, and physical coordination, and establishing a foundation in the "musical mother tongue"; b) to enhance children's self-confidence, discipline, and sense of group belonging through joyful musical experiences, promoting their holistic physical and psychological development; and c) to position music education as an essential component of aesthetic

education, fostering mutual reinforcement with other educational domains to support children's balanced growth.

Regarding instructional materials, Choksy (1999) emphasized that Kodály firmly believed in three primary sources for music education content: a) children's games and rhymes; b) folk music; and c) classical works composed by renowned composers.

The Kodaly method emphasizes that music education should start from the folk traditions of the nation and run through the entire life process, in order to cultivate the music literacy of the whole nation and emphasizes singing as the most natural way of music expression and the foundation of instrument learning. This method believes that music should belong to everyone, and people can enhance the overall cultural literacy of the nation by enjoying and understanding music.

International adaptation of Kodály method

The Kodály education system has had a significant influence on global music education, with its international spread marked by several key milestones (Duan, 2003). In the mid-20th century, the method gained recognition at major international music education conferences, notably the 1958 Vienna and 1963 Tokyo conferences. The 1964 Budapest conference marked a turning point, where Zoltán Kodály himself delivered a keynote and showcased successful teaching practices, drawing widespread attention and academic interest (Kodály Education Research Institute, China, 2025).

As the birthplace of the Kodály Concept, Hungary has fully incorporated the method into its national education system. From kindergarten onward, students engage in folk song-based curricula, which have been shown to greatly enhance musical development (Asztalos, 2023). Eősze (1992) articulated the method's core philosophy, emphasizing music's essential role in both society and child development. Today, the Kodály approach remains central across all educational levels in Hungary, particularly in early childhood settings where it supports holistic development through music (Péteri, 2021; Szűcs & Juhász, 2023).

Introduced to the United States in the 1960s, the method was adapted by Kodály's student Szőnyi to fit American contexts, incorporating local folk material into teaching tools like the 333 Reading Exercises (Hanne, 2024). The approach has since been widely adopted in K–12 music education, with certification programs offered at institutions such as Wichita State University (Chong, 2022). Organizations like the Kodály Center of America contribute through folk song collections and teacher training (The American Folk Song Collection, Kodály Center, 2025). Studies show the method effectively improves students' sight-singing and musical literacy (Sheridan, 2018).

In Canada, the Kodály method forms a key part of teacher education programs, with several universities offering master's degrees focused on Kodály pedagogy. This highlights both the method's pedagogical value and Canada's commitment to quality music education (Choksy, 1999).

In the UK, primary music education often employs the Kodály approach, using English nursery rhymes and folk songs to develop students' listening, rhythm, and sight-singing skills.

Professional training workshops are available through institutions such as the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and the UCL Institute of Education to help teachers apply the method effectively in classrooms (Waluga, 2021).

Malaysia has integrated the Kodály method into preschool education by combining it with local folk songs. Field research has documented and incorporated traditional songs from Han, Hokkien, and Kenyah communities into a song-based curriculum. Simeon and Pugh-Kitingan (2021) reported positive outcomes when the method was applied to Rungus children's songs in Sabah, using hand signs, rhythm games, and musical storytelling to engage students (Chong, 2021).

In China, research on the Kodály method is extensive. As of May 2025, the CNKI database lists 1,528 entries using the keyword “Kodály,” including 754 journal articles. The more specific term “Kodály Method” yields 661 results, with 369 academic articles.

At the basic education level, Hou (2020) confirmed the method’s effectiveness in improving pitch accuracy and expressiveness in primary students. Chen (2020) and Liu (2019) highlighted its benefits in choral coordination and polyphonic listening skills, respectively. Yu (2019) found that Curwen hand signs help high school students build pitch awareness, though some challenges remain with teaching complex rhythms.

More recently, scholars have explored its integration with ethnic music instruction. Zhang (2023) showed the method strengthens students’ connection to traditional music. Qu (2024) applied it innovatively to teaching Tujia folk songs to students with autism. Studies by Chen (2023), Wang (2021), Pang (2022), and Yu (2015) further examined its role in teaching regional folk music from Guangxi, Shandong, and Changli.

Although most research focuses on basic education, there are valuable cases in higher education. Wang (2020) used the method in early childhood vocal music courses, effectively addressing content monotony. Qiu (2014) applied it to develop ethnic music literacy among preschool teacher trainees, while Xue (2022) confirmed its benefits for improving music skills in vocational colleges.

In summary, the Kodály Method has successfully extended beyond Hungary and adapted to diverse educational settings around the world (Asztalos, 2023; Péteri, 2021). These international experiences not only enrich the theoretical understanding of the method (Eősze, 1992) but also offer practical insights for localizing music education in China.

The combination of Sichuan Han folk songs and Kodály teaching method

After examining the international adaptation experiences of the Kodály teaching method, this study explores its feasibility in the context of Sichuan Han folk songs by integrating the fundamental principles of the Kodály approach. Through the analysis of practical case studies, the research further illustrates the application and implementation pathways of the Kodály method within early childhood education programs in higher education institutions, aiming to provide valuable insights and references for relevant educational practices.

Rationale for Integration

The Kodály teaching method emphasizes that “music education should be rooted in the nation’s own outstanding musical traditions,” advocating that children should first be exposed to their native folk music in order to develop musical perception and expressive ability within a familiar cultural context (Choksy, 1999). This fundamental principle aligns closely with the local and folkloric characteristics of Sichuan Han folk songs. Characterized by the pentatonic scale, Sichuan folk songs feature natural and approachable melodies as well as lively and flexible rhythms, making them ideal teaching materials consistent with the Kodály approach. Integrating Sichuan folk songs into the music curriculum of early childhood education programs in higher education not only echoes the Kodály philosophy of “beginning with one’s national music,” but also enriches localized teaching resources and strengthens students’ cultural identity and sense of belonging (Qin, 2017).

The Kodály method places particular emphasis on “singable,” suggesting that melodies should be easy to imitate and memorize. Many Sichuan folk tunes, such as ditties, mountain songs, and children’s rhymes, are characterized by simple melodic lines and vivid language, which makes them highly suitable for teaching solfège, singing imitation, and rhythm training. Moreover, Kodály’s instructional strategies—such as the use of hand signs, rhythm syllables, and musical games—naturally resonate with the playfulness and everyday nature of Sichuan rhymes and traditional folk songs, providing an organic connection for lesson design (Luo, 2022). For example, when teaching Sichuan children’s rhymes, educators can apply Kodály rhythm syllables (such as ta, ti-ti) alongside rhythmic patterns found in the folk songs, thereby achieving the dual goal of musical skill development and cultural transmission.

Feasibility of Implementation

Building upon the international success of the Kodály method, its applicability within the context of early childhood education in China—particularly in combination with Sichuan Han folk songs—can be examined from the perspectives of musical characteristics, teaching strategies, and localized curriculum development.

In terms of musical characteristics, Sichuan Han folk songs and the Kodály method exhibit notable compatibility in melody, rhythm, and vocal style. For example, many Sichuan folk songs adopt a pentatonic scale, which aligns with the Kodály method’s emphasis on pentatonic training (Qin, 2017). In addition, rhythmically rich genres such as work chants and children’s rhymes in Sichuan folk music can be effectively integrated into Kodály’s rhythm training modules to help children internalize musical pulse and rhythmic sense (Luo, 2022).

From the perspective of teaching strategies, the Kodály method advocates starting from singing and incorporating games, hand signs, and rhythm exercises as core components of music learning (Choksy, 1999). These strategies align closely with the pedagogical needs of early childhood education. For instance, in kindergarten settings, teachers can use Sichuan children’s rhymes such as “Ants, Ants, Come, Come” (蚂蚁蚂蚁来来), pairing them with Kodály rhythm syllables and body movements like clapping and stomping to help children feel rhythmic changes and enhance their musical perception (Nie, 2022).

In terms of localized curriculum development, some studies have already explored the integration of Sichuan Han folk songs into early childhood education programs at the

university level, yielding promising results. For example, a university in Sichuan has implemented a local folk song course within its early childhood education program, applying the Kodály approach in practice. The results indicate improvements in students' musical literacy and increased interest in regional music traditions (He, 2019). Additionally, some scholars argue that combining local folk music with internationally recognized teaching methods can boost students' enthusiasm for learning music and foster a stronger appreciation for their cultural heritage (Zou, 2018).

The integration of Sichuan Han folk songs and the Kodály method not only aligns with global trends in music education but also offers new pathways for the localization and innovation of early childhood music education in China. From a theoretical standpoint, Sichuan folk songs are rich in cultural value, yet local elements remain underutilized in current preschool music education. The Kodály method's emphasis on native music as the foundation for teaching corresponds closely with the characteristics of Sichuan folk music, providing a solid theoretical basis. In terms of practical feasibility, the pentatonic and rhythmic features of Sichuan folk songs match well with the Kodály approach, with both sides demonstrating strong compatibility in melody, rhythm, and instructional form. Empirical practice has shown that integrating this approach into early childhood education curricula at the university level can lay a strong foundation for curriculum development and teacher training.

Implementation Pathways

The integration of Sichuan Han folk songs with the Kodály teaching method can be realized through the following pathways: First, developing teaching materials tailored to early childhood education programs at the university level, thereby enriching the repository of localized educational resources. Second, incorporating Sichuan folk song content into teacher training courses, guided by the pedagogical principles of the Kodály method, to design diverse instructional activities that enhance students' musical literacy and teaching competence. Finally, conducting practical teaching activities in kindergartens, where Sichuan Han folk songs can be integrated into daily instruction through rhythm training, melodic singing, and cultural experiences.

Case Study of Practical Implementation

To further examine the feasibility of integrating Sichuan Han folk songs with the Kodály method, this study designed and implemented a specific teaching activity using the representative folk song "Ants, Ants, Come, Come". The activity targeted second-year and above university students majoring in early childhood education, with 15 participants in total. The teaching objectives included: understanding insect-related elements and expressions in the rhyme; mastering its rhythmic patterns and melodic structure through rhythm training; developing the ability to design nature-themed musical activities suitable for young children; and enhancing interdisciplinary integration skills by linking nature awareness with music instruction.

The teaching process was structured as follows: In the introduction phase, the instructor sang "Ants, Ants, Come, Come" while using multimedia tools to present images and videos of ants, helping students become familiar with the content of the rhyme. In the analysis phase, the instructor guided students in analyzing the text and musical patterns of the rhyme, accompanied by rhythm training exercises and the use of Kodály hand signs to reinforce

rhythm perception. During the expansion phase, students were encouraged to explore methods for introducing the rhyme in kindergarten classrooms, such as using multimedia resources (images, videos), enriching the song with polyphonic exercises, or incorporating scenario-based dramatizations. Following this, students worked in small groups to design music activities based on the insect theme and presented their work for peer and instructor feedback. In the final phase, the instructor provided a summary of each group's strengths and areas for improvement, along with practical suggestions for enhancement.

According to post-activity surveys and classroom discussions, 90% of students expressed interest in the teaching activity, and 85% reported improvement in their ability to create rhythmic compositions. The instructor's reflection noted that while most students quickly grasped rhythm training, some encountered challenges during the activity creation phase, indicating a need to simplify the instructional steps further. This practical case not only demonstrates the concrete application of integrating Sichuan Han folk songs with the Kodály method but also offers empirical support for the theoretical framework of this study.

Discussion

Educational and cultural implications

Combining Sichuan Han folk songs with the Kodály teaching method provides young children with music learning materials close to daily life in the educational aspect. Genres such as labor chants and nursery rhymes in Sichuan folk songs, with their vivid lyrics and rhythmic patterns, can intuitively cultivate children's auditory perception, rhythmic control, and language expression abilities. For example, nursery rhymes like Yellow Silk Ant stimulate children's imagination through personification. Culturally, this integration represents the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, allowing children to understand the production labor, folk customs, and emotional expressions of the Sichuan region through exposure to local music, thereby enhancing their cultural identity and sense of belonging. Kodály's concept of "musical mother tongue" aligns with the "authenticity" principle of cultural heritage protection, ensuring that the traditional singing styles and cultural connotations of folk songs are preserved in teaching, and achieving mutual empowerment between music education and cultural inheritance.

Value of Localized Curriculum

The development of localized curricula, with Sichuan folk songs as the core resource, remedies the lack of indigenous content in preschool music education. By adapting folk songs such as Su Jichuan Insect Song into teaching materials suitable for young children and integrating Kodály's rhythmic training, gesture teaching, and other methods, a curriculum system with regional characteristics is constructed. Such curricula not only enrich the diversity of teaching materials but also lower the learning threshold for young children and enhance their interest in learning through the pathway of "starting with local music." For example, a university has offered a Sichuan folk song course in its early childhood education program, and practice has shown that students' interest in regional music has significantly increased, and they can better integrate local elements into future teaching. The value of localized curricula also lies in supplementing global music education models, providing Chinese experience for other regions to innovate curricula using local resources.

Challenges

The Current Practice Faces three Core Challenges

Inadequate Teacher Preparation: Most early childhood teachers lack systematic knowledge of Sichuan folk songs and practical skills in applying the Kodály teaching method, making it difficult to effectively integrate the two. Traditional teaching focuses on Western music theory, so teachers need to additionally learn folk song singing techniques, cultural backgrounds, and Kodály tools such as gestures and rhythm syllables. The teacher training system urgently needs improvement.

Lagging Material Development: There is a scarcity of teaching materials on Sichuan folk songs suitable for young children. Most existing resources are in their original form and have not been adapted to children's cognitive characteristics. The development of digital resources (such as interactive picture books and audio archives) is insufficient, leading to single teaching forms that struggle to capture children's attention.

Curriculum Policy Gaps: The integration of local music into preschool education curriculum standards is not clearly defined, lacking systematic policy support. The varying degrees of emphasis on folk song education by local education departments and schools result in arbitrary curriculum design, making it difficult to establish long-term mechanisms.

Relevance to Broader Multicultural Education Frameworks

This study is deeply aligned with the global trend of multicultural education. Practices of the Kodály teaching method in countries such as Malaysia and the United States demonstrate that its core principles can be adapted to the music education of different ethnic groups through localization. For example, Malaysia has integrated it with Han and Kenyah folk songs, while the United States applies it to the teaching of African-American spirituals. In the Chinese context, the integration of Sichuan folk songs provides a typical case for multicultural education: it not only upholds the roots of local culture but also enhances its communicability through internationally universal teaching methods. This model of "local resources + international methods" helps build an inclusive cultural ecosystem in preschool education, allowing young children to understand the diversity of musical cultures while engaging with their own ethnic music. From a broader perspective, this practice provides an educational pathway to address the loss of local cultures in the process of globalization, driving multicultural education from theoretical concepts to concrete and operational teaching practices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the research findings and identified issues, this study proposes three constructive recommendations. First, a systematic teaching framework for Sichuan Han folk songs should be established. This framework should be based on musical structure, educational function, and child developmental characteristics, forming progressive curriculum modules tailored to the musical learning needs of children aged 3 to 6. Second, the integration of core principles from the Kodály teaching method is recommended to innovate instructional approaches and classroom organization. For instance, rhythm-based folk games can be developed, Curwen hand signs can be introduced for pitch training, and role-playing activities can be utilized to increase engagement and enjoyment—achieving both education and entertainment. Third, the digitalization and informatization of Sichuan folk song teaching resources should be

accelerated. This includes establishing an audio archive, developing multimedia teaching materials and interactive app-based platforms to enhance accessibility and adaptability of teaching content. Additionally, teacher training should be strengthened through thematic lectures, model lessons, and hands-on workshops to improve educators' understanding and application of Sichuan folk songs.

This study contributes both theoretical and practical innovations. Theoretically, it expands the application boundaries of the Kodály method within the context of Chinese regional folk music education and enriches the research framework for localized music education. Practically, it proposes highly operable teaching strategies and curriculum concepts, providing strong support for the reform of music education in early childhood education programs at the university level.

In summary, the integration of Sichuan Han folk songs into university-level early childhood education programs is grounded in rich cultural heritage and musical advantages, and it is feasible in terms of alignment with modern pedagogical approaches. Although certain limitations and challenges remain in practice, by adopting Kodály's educational philosophies and incorporating modern educational technologies, Sichuan folk songs can be revitalized in early childhood education. Future research could further explore areas such as children's receptiveness, localized curriculum development models, and interdisciplinary integration strategies, promoting the educational, digital, and international advancement of Sichuan folk songs. Through continuous exploration and iterative improvement, Sichuan Han folk songs are poised to become a vital vehicle for enhancing children's musical literacy and preserving national cultural heritage in the new era.

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