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Sustaining the Musicological Transmission of Henan Huagu Opera Through Education

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Abstract

This study analyzes the current status of socio-cultural barriers and applicable methods of education for Henan Huagu Opera, a nationally recognized form of intangible cultural heritage in Henan, China. The goal of this research is to create applicable methods for the educational preservation and continued promotion of this unique form of opera by focusing on an exhaustive systematic structural analysis of the living heritage ecosystem. This study is based on multisite ethnographic fieldwork and structured observations. The study's empirical groundwork is based on data from 14 purposefully chosen participants divided into three professional strata: general, scholar, and casual participants. The methods and tools for implementing and validating this study included semi-structured interviews designed for this study, checklists for observing movement during the study, audio-visual recording devices, and primary resources such as local gazetteers and manuscripts with musical notations. The results of this study's qualitative content analysis revealed a highly flexible tripartite repertoire; however, there are barriers to transmission, including a talent gap, major losses of youth, and an aging master instructor. To achieve long-lasting sustainability, this study aims to establish guidelines for the institutionalization of the Tri-Classroom Learning Model alongside the concepts of digital Open Educational Resources and innovative character branding. The results of this study have practical and theoretical implications, as they provide an ethnomusicological research model for the codification of oral traditions that can be replicated. Moreover, they offer educational leaders and folk performance groups an implementable strategy to convert vulnerable Indigenous musical folklore into a consistent and accredited resource for public aesthetic education. Future research should deploy quantitative evaluation methods across diverse provincial regions to measure the long-term impact of digitized resources on youth's cultural identity.

Keywords: Henan Huagu Opera, Musicological Transmission, Aesthetic Education, Tri-Classroom Model, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Ethnomusicology

Introduction

Guangshan County is a unique cultural zone where the Central Plains and Chu civilizations intersect. It is located in southeast Henan Province, China. Soaring from this distinctive regional background is Guangshan Huagu Opera (also called Southern Henan Huagu Opera). It is a style of opera built on local folk tunes, mountain songs and seasonal dances. It was formalized during the mid-Qing dynasty ([Croddey, 2022](#); [Mengwan & Sondhiratna, 2024](#); [Tian et al., 2021](#)). With over 200 years of history, this style of performance is a vital archive of the accents, humor, and aesthetics of regional people.

This opera, with its local performing style, integrates the Jianghuai Mandarin-Huangxiao dialect, creating a musical style of distinct regional character and of a community of working people and peasants. In 2007, Guangshan Huagu Opera was designated a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage item. In 2014, this opera was added to the national-level representative list of intangible cultural heritage of China (Guo & Prompanyo, 2022; Zhu et al., 2025).

Guangshan Huagu Opera's high national status is not enough to outweigh the socio-economic changes that threaten the survival of this art form. Folk opera and theater rely on an audience of villagers, and with urbanization and the restructuring of economies, the villagers are moving away (Jin & Xiaofang, 2025; Liao, 2024). The only remaining audience and villagers are the elderly, who do not have the means to support an active cultural community. Increased access to mass media and the proliferation of digital entertainment systems have rapidly changed cultural consumption patterns across generations (Alzubi, 2023; Bun Ku & Dominelli, 2018). For young people migrating to cities, regional folk opera is often dismissed as provincial, perhaps vulgar or primitive, and out of date. As a result, informal oral transmission networks are disintegrating, and there are fewer venues for live performances. Folk opera is suffering from a generational gap in the establishment of new talents, as the elder generations of practitioners are dying without leaving any heirs to the art (Garcia-Mispireta, 2023; McLaren, 2019; Sun, 2025).

To reverse this decline and protect this national treasure, folk opera can no longer be an isolated form of practice. Currently, the art depends on unorganized festivities in rural communities and can be integrated into the modern classroom and many alternative channels that incorporate technology (Lievrouw, 2023; Tang, 2021). Traditional rural community performances are no longer sufficient to engage youth. The changes in rural community demographics are even more drastic. For the purposes of this research, a community of scholars is needed to carry out the first step of academic work so that institutional education can provide a more predictable and stable context in which to nurture new generations of performers and audiences (Trivelli & Morel, 2021; Wang et al.,

2025). However, a critical research gap persists in the existing scholarship: while previous studies have extensively documented the historical origins and textual properties of this opera, there is an egregious absence of operationalized, school-based curriculum frameworks to facilitate its actual educational survival. This lack of pedagogical translation isolates the endangered art form from younger generations, leaving a profound disconnect between academic preservation and live cultural continuity. The unstructured ethnomusicological information this study transforms into clear and concrete educational frameworks will provide a culturally responsive and contextualized pedagogical resource that integrates the local community's folklore into the formal education system (Camiring-Picpican et al., 2025; Egan, 2021; Ramli et al., 2025). By shifting the academic paradigm from static museum curation to an active, credit-bearing secondary and higher education curriculum, this study offers an original scholarly contribution that bridges the historical lineage of folk opera and modern institutional instruction. This study aims to address the challenges facing Guangshan Huagu Opera by analyzing its current state, modernizing educational frameworks, and providing an implementable strategy.

This study aims to formulate a set of practicable strategies regarding the educational transmission and sustained dissemination of Guangshan Huagu Opera, grounded in a comprehensive analysis of its current state and contemporary musicology and ethnomusicology. This study addresses three important questions to meet its central aim. The first question seeks to establish the current status of Guangshan Huagu Opera in Henan Province, China. The next question is what the current challenges are to the contemporary transmission of musicology caused by structural issues. Finally, the question of how contemporary and educational transmission of Guangshan Huagu Opera within society can be best achieved is addressed. Responding to these questions with relevant empirical data, this study constructs a well-defined plan for cultural and educational revitalization efforts.

Review of Literature

This review incorporates scholarly literature,

regional studies, and state documentation, covering early historical recovery projects of the late twentieth century to contemporary studies of the digital humanities. This inclusive record provides a diagnostic base for the current transmission crisis and a reinvigoration model of the education-led interval. By critically synthesizing these past academic trends, this section tracks the shifting paradigm from historical field documentation to modern pedagogical intervention.

Historical Development and Socio-Educational Realignment of Huagu Opera

Huagu Opera is a broad term encompassing many variants of local Chinese opera, all of which were derived from folk songs, small lantern dances, and agricultural rap. This local form of opera originated in the Hubei, Hunan, and Anhui provinces and eventually spread to southern Henan, creating its own local version, the Guangshan Huagu Opera (Xiaoyu et al., 2023). The form developed structurally over five periods: Huahui wan deng, the informal production period, Da wujian, the initial development stage, Er san dui, the stage of vocal harmony, Di deng ban, a stage of semi-maturity, and Huagu Opera, which fully matured in the early nineteenth century. Crucially, historical accounts present these stages as mere chronological shifts, failing to critique how the early phases lacked formalized instructional methods, which inherently limited the art's long-term structural stability. Throughout most of the twentieth century, China's socio-political landscape transformed the genre's institutional and educational role. Following the Republican period, when Huagu was an uncoded street practice, the genre was fully institutionalized and, in the post-1949 period, became a command performance practice, performed at Zhongnanhai in 1953. After a political hiatus from 1958 to 1976, which nearly eradicated this art form, we now see the early stages of an administrative renaissance in the practice. This is due to state-level protective measures (Cao, 2022; Hockx, 2019; Zhang et al., 2024). However, existing publications predominantly focus on celebrating this post-revival administrative growth, understating the friction between modern institutional mandates and the rapidly shrinking grassroots spaces that

originally sustained the opera itself. In this context, the historical function of opera pivots from being a mechanism of spontaneous entertainment to being a fundamental source of regional cultural inheritance and a public means of aesthetic education.

Pedagogical and Dissemination Frameworks

Modernization threatens the survival of indigenous musical practices. To address this issue, this study adopts a combination of three interrelated frameworks that focus on pedagogical and media-related innovations. The frameworks of ethnomusicology, dissemination, and transmission are of the greatest relevance. Ethnomusicology advocates the analysis of traditional music within its naturally occurring social and educational environments (McKerrell, 2022). This furthers the idea that to understand how opera functions within a community, immersive fieldwork must be undertaken. However, typical ethnomusicological evaluations frequently overemphasize contextual observations without actively constructing operational learning models from the observed environments. Similarly, dissemination theory describes the systematic transmission of musical ideas through a diverse range of media and pedagogical frameworks, contrasting the interpersonal modalities of folk communication with contemporary multimedia communication systems. A synthesis of modern dissemination research reveals an uncritical focus on digital platforms, frequently overlooking whether automated media arrays can effectively replicate the deep contextual nuances of interpersonal folk art. Finally, transmission theory describes the intergenerational transfer of cultural and performance practices and integrates a variety of pedagogical structures for the movement of traditional arts into contemporary frameworks (Emielu, 2018; Kisiel, 2025; Tullberg & Sæther, 2022; Wu, 2025). By intersecting these three domains, this study challenges the traditional boundaries of each framework, offering an integrated approach that directly connects systemic media dissemination with school-based transmission methods.

Research Gap in Curricular Adaptation

The most notable finding of the literature review

was the absence of specialized, practical models to integrate this unique operatic genre into secondary and post-secondary educational systems. Although many studies have contributed to preserving history, documenting regional phonology, and analyzing music structurally, they have all treated opera as a static artifact in a museum rather than an educational resource. This critical limitation indicates that previous regional publications have largely satisfied archival mandates while failing to address the real-world transmission continuity. Teaching methodologies, curricular design, and assessment models are egregiously absent in schools, leaving private folk groups and public heritage centers functioning in complete isolation from the school system (Arbo, 2018; Chiang & Killian, 2024; Reed & Snyder, 2021). This organizational divide remains unexplored in the literature, leaving a distinct gap regarding how to systematically link these separate public and private stakeholders. This paper designs a school-based, community-led initiative for structured, collaborative talent development and offers digital, open educational resources and youth-centered aesthetic practices to close these gaps.

Methodology

This segment includes details on the qualitative research design used to study the heritage ecosystem (He et al., 2025; İneç, 2021; Inanici & Sager, 2023; Wang et al., 2023) of Henan Huagu Opera. To the possible extent, the methodology describes the selection of informants, research instruments, multisite openings, and systematic qualitative data analysis to allow future researchers to replicate the findings.

Participants and Key Informants

This study is empirically grounded in data from 14 specific informants, resulting from purposive sampling. To ensure the validation of multiple perspectives, the data from the informants were organized according to the three operational tiers of the transmission network of the operatic lineage, as outlined in Table 1. Although purposive sampling ensures high professional relevance among key inheritors and scholars, a potential limitation of this non-probability method is the risk of selection bias,

which may under-represent peripheral community participants.

Table 1 Informant Matrix and Demographic Classification

Group	Number	Age	Professional Roles	Area of Research Contribution
General Informants	5	48–72	National and Municipal Inheritors, Inheritance Center Directors, Folk Troupe Leaders	Lineage continuity, troupe operations, traditional public welfare performance data
Scholar Informants	4	37–71	Higher-Education Professors, Specialized Drama Instructors, Musicology Researchers	Curricular integration, theoretical curation, script-writing and innovation barriers
Casual Informants	5	15–40	Vocational Theater Students, Active Folk Performers, Community Enthusiasts	Classroom learning feedback, youth cultural identity, new media consumption habits

Research Materials

Fieldwork and qualitative research instruments were standardized and validated for use in the field.

- **Interviews:** Purpose-built, semistructured interview guides for specific informant clusters to aid the collection of focused data relating to particular institutional histories and current instructional controversies.
- **Observation:** Fieldwork data capture instruments included checklists to capture fieldwork class layouts and public audience data, focusing on inquiry into body movement techniques and class engagement.
- **Materials:** Professional preparation and body movement technique rehearsal data captured using digital audio and video recording equipment and field laptops.
- **Inscriptions:** Documentation of perennial records, including historical county gazetteers,

registries of lineage master-disciple teaching relationships, state protective cultural directives, and manuscripts of verbalizations and notated scores.

Methods

This qualitative study had a rigorous three-phase process for ensuring data validity and synthesis, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Procedural Flow of the Research Process

Phase	Specific Structural Procedures	Target Research Locations
Phase 1: Data Collection	Pairing extensive archival analysis with targeted multi-site field investigations; conducting structured site observations and semi-structured dialogic interviews	Guangshan Huagu Opera Inheritance Center, Wenshu Township Transmission Base, Henan Vocational College of Opera Arts
Phase 2: Data Management	Transcribing recorded audio and video files verbatim; indexing photographic data; categorizing textual records into thematic archives according to the research objective	Regional Research Laborites and Academic Advising Centers
Phase 3: Data Analysis	Applying qualitative content analysis; executing thematic coding; cross-referencing field texts against the theoretical principles of ethnomusicology, dissemination, and transmission	Institutional Synthesis Platforms

In the first phase of data collection, field notes from on-site observations and interviews were contextualized using the existing literature. In the second phase, all verbal data were recorded and

transcribed, and the transcripts were proofread to remove errors, all under the guidance of academic advisors. In the third phase, qualitative content analysis was employed to sort the transcripts and prepare field checklists for thematic analysis. The results were compared with theories of music preservation and pedagogy to develop preliminary guidelines for the sustainable revitalization of the opera tradition.

To ensure the overall validity, internal coherence, and academic reliability of the qualitative framework, specific trustworthiness measures were rigorously implemented throughout the research process. Data triangulation was systematically achieved by cross-verifying the verbatim transcripts of the semi-structured interviews against on-site physical observation forms, field notes, and digital audio-visual recordings to ensure multi-layered factual alignment of the data. Furthermore, member checking was formally conducted by returning typed interview transcripts and synthesized thematic summaries to the respective general and scholar informants for validation, thereby confirming that their professional testimonies and cultural insights were accurately represented without subjective distortions. Finally, researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the field tracking and textual coding stages. The researcher maintained a detailed reflective field journal to consciously identify, evaluate, and control personal academic assumptions and institutional positionalities, thereby preventing personal biases from compromising the objective content analysis of this endangered operatic heritage in the study.

Results

Contemporary Structural Typology of Repertoires

Field research conducted in state-sponsored inheritance centers, regional theaters, and ongoing archives shows that the contemporary repertoire system of Henan Huagu Opera is organized in a three-part structure. This system of structuring shows that traditional folk music remains flexible and adapts to contemporary aesthetics, local educational needs, and political frameworks of protection (Table 3).

Table 3 Contemporary Repertoire Typology of Henan Huagu Opera

Repertoire Classification	Foundational Source of Thematic Material	Representative Selected Works	Documented Performing Scale
Traditional Repertoire	Indigenous mountain songs, minor tunes, harvest dance styles, and domestic village events	Fuqi Guandeng (The Couple Watching Lanterns)	Small scale, typically consisting of two actors performing Dan and Chou roles
Transplanted Repertoire	Finished scripts and musical structures adopted from neighboring external operatic genres	Liu Hai Kan Jiao (Liu Hai Cuts the Reef)	Flexible configuration adjusted to accommodate local dialect phonology
Adapted and Innovative Repertoire	Contemporary social realities, grassroots developmental cases, and modern rural settings	You cha huaerkai (The Camellia Blossoms Are in Bloom)	Large scale, involving automated multi-act ensembles of ten or more actors

Information from administrative catalogs indicates that traditional performances preserve the fundamental elements of historical folk performances and use current community issues, home ethics, and regional humor as their storylines. In contrast, the new innovative adaptations create a wider assembly as opposed to the traditional two-character assembly and require specialized acting arrangements.

At the time of the field interviews about the construction of repertoires, the administrator of the professional inheritance center stated that contemporary performance creations are a strictly professional activity and follow a sequence of steps that starts from writing the text to the design of the singing style, composition of the main music, selection of performers, and finally, the performance of the guided rehearsal by the director. Standardized stage effects and the promotion of new artistic ideas are prioritized; hence, the works are characterized by the use of electronic music that is played in the theater's sound system, and there is no need for an offstage ensemble.

Structural Evolution of Performing Troupes and Infrastructural Facilities

The contemporary organizational structure of

the Henan Huagu Opera system shows a two-part system with state-sponsored professional groups and privately sponsored folk groups in the rural areas. This structural dualism shows the split of financial and social obligations between public service and the survival of the commercial folk business, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Structural Features of Contemporary Performing Entities

Operational Metric	State-Led Professional Entities	Privately Operated Civilian Troupes
Primary Funding Stream	Full municipal budget allocation and special protective state subsidies	Market-driven performance commercial revenue and folk ritual engagement fees
Personnel Status	Officially approved administrative positions with stable state salaries	Independent artists, family-based teams, and seasonal apprentices
Primary Educational Role	Cultivating representative successors, providing inclusive school instruction	Conducting grassroots folk transmission and maintaining local mass interest
Performance Frequency	Over 300 annual public outreach shows under state directives	Approximately 150 annual commercial shows per active ensemble

Surveys conducted by the organization have revealed a marked change in infrastructure settings on the organization's temporary outdoor village platforms compared to the old traditional modern outdoor village platforms. The old simple traditional settings, famously composed by local folk artists as starting an outdoor show, one table with two chairs, have now been transformed into central cultural facilities like the Guangshan People's Theater.

This state-sponsored theater, for instance, has its space covered with an area of around 3000 square

meters, with specially built living spaces and dressing rooms for the artists, with an advanced system of the four border curtains, cyclorama lights for projection, subtitled computer lights, and colored stage lights advanced systems. The data collected from the field revealed that the official bodies professionally used these advanced systems, while the grassroots folk groups used the stage theater on wheels, which were provided by government cultural programs to carry out concentrated cultural voluntary tours for rural locales.

The Investigation on Technical and Pedagogical Training

The methodologies of the field inquiries concentrated on technical training and teaching processes through classroom observations within modern vocational and institutional settings.



Source: Photo by Jing Yaoyao (2025)

Figure 1 Use of the “Wudan Spear” Prop in Classroom Training

Direct observation of the movement technique class at the vocational art college helps integrate martial props into the classroom training system. Figure 1 shows a group of 14 to 15-year-old second-year students using the Wudan spear during class for formal physical conditioning. More than a decorative stage prop, the spear is an essential teaching aid for the control of the body and for spear alignment and shaping of a role, under the guidance of a drama specialist.

During data collection in the institution’s rehearsal space, a vocational art college teacher said that the prop training system integrates physical, vocal, and formal conditioning skills to prepare students with a rounded approach to art. The teacher emphasized that in the modern training system,

props extend students’ movement and help them achieve the technical precision of a professional stage performance, ensuring a solid base of operatic talent.



Source: Photo by Liang Weiguo (2023)

Figure 2 Public Welfare Report Performance of Guangshan Huagu Opera at Tsinghua University

To trace the distribution of the practice in public spaces, the site data recorded the movement of performances in public spaces to national teaching venues. Figure 2 shows the professional inheritance center in public welfare reporting, performing at the Grand Theater of Tsinghua University, the traditional work of Husband and Wife Watching Lanterns. This performance illustrates the movement of folk public space traditions from the village to elite higher education spaces. This movement allows the genre to engage with today’s young intellectuals.



Source: Photo by Fang Yingliang (2025)

Figure 3 Course Presentation on the Transmission of Guangshan Huagu Opera at Xinyang University by Zhang Xiufang and Fang Yingliang

The official establishment of local operatic heritage in higher education has made noticeable progress. Figure 3 shows how the Appreciation of Guangshan Huagu Opera course at Xinyang University ends with students performing as part of an established, formalized, and credited course.

Guided by the hired inheritors of that art form, university students are taught the traditional skills of fan movements. This also shows that local culture can be taught in higher education.

Diagnostic Evaluation of Transmission Barriers and Dissemination Bottlenecks

By analyzing the interviews conducted with key inheritors, musicologists, and students, we identified multiple structural weaknesses in the existing transmission system, as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 Documented Barriers Inhibiting Sustainable Inheritance

Specific Problem Category	Fieldwork Evidence and Testimonies	Primary Structural Consequence
Aging Continuum and Talent Discontinuity	Most national and municipal inheritors are elderly (aged 54–72); youth successors are rare	Immediate threat of traditional performing techniques disappearing across generations
Economic Deficit and Professional Attrition	Long learning curves yield low income; private troupe returns are highly unstable	High-investment, low-return conditions force young artists to switch to other majors.
Pedagogical Model Decay	Physical capacity of aging master instructors declines due to advanced age	Physical limitations decrease the technical accuracy of traditional oral demonstration
Institutional Curricular Gaps	School cooperation is irregular; classes are limited to general music appreciation	Inability to establish an ongoing, stable talent training chain within regional schools

While collecting oral histories, a veteran municipal inheritor noted that, while mastery of the skills of an artist requires years of practice, and while masters of the skills have a willingness to teach, the

number of young people with a willingness to learn has dropped sharply. Traditional folk apprenticeship runs into the problem that the end goal of the teaching process is an occupation that is often lower than the needs for subsistence, which incentivizes learners to seek other professions.

This was supported by the statement of a leader of a privately functioning folk troupe, who noted that while some trainees enter the troupe with enthusiasm, many trainees withdraw due to a lack of money, which has made male actors extremely scarce, given that they can earn a good income by working in other modern professions.

In addition, a musicologist educator expert informant emphasized that the lack of a routine formal cooperation mechanism between schools and local heritage centers makes sustainable preservation impossible. The professor claimed that opera classes are considered optional, non-credited activities; therefore, a stable talent pipeline is impossible.

Language barriers further exacerbate this organizational gap. A young artist mentioned that while Southern Henan's strict adherence to the regional dialect of Mandarin maintains the integrity of the art form, it creates a comprehension gap for external audiences and limits the genre's reach beyond its local confines.

The director of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Center confirmed the existence of fragmented funding. The director noted that while government-led centers do receive some financial support, most of that money is spent on covering costs related to routine daily rehearsals. This leaves no funding for structural creative work, preservation of the art form in the digital realm or broad media outreach. This situation forces art troupes to pursue incomplete commercial strategies to continue practicing their art.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that formalizing the transmission practices of Henan Huagu Opera is necessary to move the transmission practices from an informal transmission system to a formal transmission system. This aligns with transmission theories that advocate practices that reinforce and support the transmission of a culture ([Emielu,](#)

2018; Kisiel, 2025). The identification of a tripartite classification system for repertoire suggests that traditional music possesses a flexible structural system. Modern adaptations of the traditional genre, such as You cha huaerkai, suggest that history vocalization is amenable to contemporary social discourse at state inheritance centers, in line with the findings of the re-creation of traditions during the revitalization of the nation (Jin & Xiaofang, 2025). Some practices, such as the elimination of live instrumental accompaniment and the use of pre-recorded electronic sounds, create a practice paradox. This standardizes performance practice and has a negative effect on the practice area for live percussion musicians (Arbo, 2018).

Additionally, while the expansion of state-sponsored initiatives creates public access to art, state-funded practices often support art on a daily basis. This results in a burden for grassroots initiatives and empowers community-based art practices that are mobile and offer great service (Sun, 2025).

There are notable issues with both the absence of talent and the decay of the educational system in these interviews. While master inheritors have shown a high willingness to teach, the long and difficult learning processes yield an unstable job economy. This aligns with the findings on the inclusion and economic concerns of rural youth (Trivelli & Morel, 2021). This situation worsens with physiological decay. Advanced age decreases the capacity for oral precision in demonstrations (Kisiel 2025). The inclusion of formal Higher Education, as seen in Xinyang University, is an attempt to fill this institutional gap. The inclusion of Higher Education in formal systems is an attempt to fill the institutional gap and align with teaching strategies and methods that support and advocate for the inclusion of localized and culturally responsive curricula within formal education systems (Camiring-Picpican et al., 2025; Ramli et al., 2025).

The narrow regional focus on Guangshan County and small qualitative sample size are major limitations of this study. This prevents the extension or application of these educational models to other localities and Chinese opera variants. Future studies should focus on inter-regional studies across multiple provinces and apply quantitative methods to assess

the impact of digitized open educational resources on youth's cultural identity.

Conclusion

This study shows that formalizing the musicological transmission of Henan Huagu Opera requires moving beyond the tradition's isolated and vulnerable state. Findings indicate that although the sections of the repertoire have adapted and expanded to fit the modernized state theater and organized structures, the whole system of heritage suffers from a critical gap in the new generation, as a consequence of rural depopulation and the economic condition of the youth, in combination with the deterioration of the age of the master artists who perform the oral tradition and instruction. However, a primary limitation of this study is its narrow geographical focus on Guangshan County and its reliance on a compact qualitative sample, which limits the immediate generalizability of these findings across other regional operatic genres. Applying the strategic guidelines formalized in this research, especially the embedding of inheritance in the multi-leveled Tri-Classroom model, the building of digital Open Educational Resources, and imaginative character branding, this research has important theoretical and practical consequences for the revitalization of culture in the region. By establishing a structured, education-driven blueprint to safeguard endangered intangible cultural heritage, these findings explicitly reconnect with the central objective outlined in this abstract. These findings, on the one hand, provide practical help to educational managers and local troupes as a concrete model of school-local collaboration for the cultivation of talent, and on the other, address the gaps in ethnomusicology and the study of transmission by demonstrating the viable preservation and modernization of an endangered indigenous oral tradition in the service of public aesthetic education. To expand on these insights, future research should involve multi-site comparative studies across neighboring provinces and deploy quantitative evaluations to measure the long-term impact of digital educational resources on youth engagement.

Suggestions

It is important for regional educators, policymakers, and performing cultural groups to create a collaborative, multi-layered strategy for the sustainable revitalization of Huagu Opera in Henan. This requires implementing the Tri-Classroom Model through primary curriculum development, supporting creative campus organizations, and establishing credit-bearing grassroots field research. Cultural councils and higher education institutions should jointly fund a digital repository to archive body movement research and build Open Educational Resources, mitigating the physical decline of aging masters. Additionally, design departments must develop youth-oriented character IPs coupled with digital short videos to lower dialect comprehension barriers. Finally, regional vocational institutes should establish order-based training paired with government performance grants and scholarships to offer secure and modern career pathways for young trainees.

Future Research Directions

To address the regional boundaries of this qualitative investigation, future research should expand into cross-regional comparative studies across neighboring provinces, such as Hubei, Hunan, and Anhui, to analyze how localized dialects, funding mechanisms, and regional policies influence the adaptation of various Huagu Opera forms. Additionally, scholars should employ quantitative metrics and longitudinal survey designs to empirically measure the long-term impacts of digitized Open Educational Resources (OER) and the Tri-Classroom Model on youth's cultural identity, cognitive retention, and vocational choices over time.

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