

## **DEVELOPMENT TEACHING METHOD OF COLLEGES JIANGNAN SIZHU MUSIC ENSEMBLE TO IMPROVE PLAYING SKILLS**

**Yiran Zhang**

Chakrabongse Bhuvanarth International Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies,  
Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-Ok, Thailand,

E-mail: yiran.zha@rmutto.ac.th

**\*Corresponding author: Dr.Krisada Daoruang**

Chakrabongse Bhuvanarth International Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies,  
Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-Ok, Thailand,

E-mail: krisada\_da@rmutto.ac.th

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the progress of the college students' performance level through teaching Jiangnan Sizhu music ensemble. Jiangnan Sizhu traditional Chinese tunes filled with charm and melody in our modern society are faced with problems of survival. This report seeks to blend Jiangnan Sizhu with folk music ensemble teaching, so as to train student ensemble abilities and help carry on the living cultural heritage. Using action research methodology over three cycles of teaching with folk music sophomores of College S, the author focused on improving classic Jiangnan Sizhu ensemble performance skills. Preliminary findings reflect an increase in student interest, understanding and performance skills, which the study suggests that specialist teaching for ensembles may offer synthesis suitable for the preservation revitalization of Jiangnan Sizhu music as well. This research provides a model for integrating traditional music and modern teaching practices, demonstrating them.

**Keywords:** Jiangnan Sizhu, Folk Music Ensemble, Folk Music Ensemble Ability

### **Introduction**

The rich tapestry of Chinese culture encompasses many cultural treasures, such as Jiangnan Sizhu music. The name Jiangnan Sizhu refers to background music that evolved over hundreds of years in a region synonymous with warmth, brightness, and prosperity. This performance style includes string and wind instruments, and its elegant and melodious essence is characteristic of traditional Chinese music. The history of Jiangnan Sizhu, the "Silk and Bamboo Music of the South", which is also called South of Yangtze River Music or Jiangnan Sizhu in Chinese, is deeply rooted in areas south of the Yangtze River and particularly in places such as Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang. The genre's name, "silk" referring to stringed instruments and "bamboo" to wind instruments, recall the harmonious blend of sounds that characterize its performances. The challenges confronting Jiangnan Sizhu despite its historic importance and unique aesthetic value,

persist as society races ahead to modernize increasingly rapid change in cultural landscapes that threaten transmission or preservation of it.

We are now interested in examining for our study how best to respond to these challenges: one possibility is from music teaching, integrating Jiangnan Sizhu college-level folk ensemble teaching model into an educational approach that offers students play practice courses but also trains their appreciation of and understanding this traditional genre. In this way they can pass on what is good among us. Here the study proposes that Jiangnan Sizhu be taken up in the form of a school course. It seeks to reconcile traditional heritage with modern educational methods, offering students not only a chance to touch and live the rich, imaginative life-style of Chinese musical creations but also an uncommon opportunity in today's world for making contributions from within that tradition itself

The study's significance transcends simple technical questions of music cultivation to relate to higher-level issues about cultural protection. Today in a world where preservation of intangible cultural heritage is a global issue, higher education plays key roles to ensure that the shared treasures of mankind can be safeguarded for later generations. This research, seen through the prism of college-level Jiangnan Sizhu ensemble teaching, adds to ongoing Russian debates over education's role in safeguarding cultural heritage by exploring how traditional music can be made to come alive for pupils out of present-day pedagogical methods

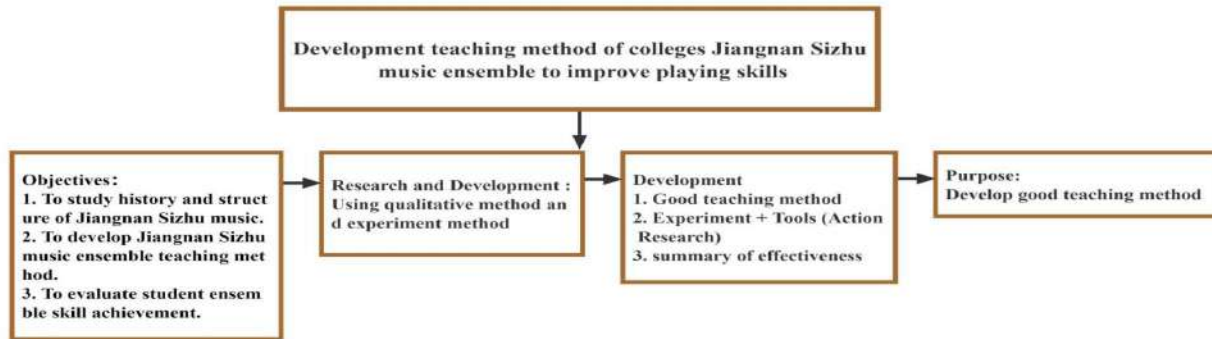
This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive guide to the subject, laying the framework for deeper investigation into pedagogical approaches, methodologies, and outcomes of teaching college-level orchestration with Jiangnan Sizhu. By weaving the threads of musical instruction and cultural protection into an integrated whole, our study aims to light the path toward a harmonious blend of traditional and modern contemporary abilities: ensuring that this melodic Trojan Horse can continue coursing throughout academic galleries or even beyond them.

This can only be assured once these aspects continue to grow together on our educational institutions--as indeed has been the case extant precious legacies will then become more widely available into the future. Through Jiangnan Sizhu for Teaching in Fancy University we hope that pupils at other institutions as well may profit from such methods and help to nourish their country's classical music traditions survive.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To study history and structure of Jiangnan Sizhu music
2. To develop Jiangnan Sizhu music ensemble teaching method
3. To evaluate student ensemble skill achievement

## Conceptual Framework



## Literature Review

### Traditional Chinese Music and Jiangnan Sizhu

The study of Jiangnan Sizhu, a quintessential representation of traditional Chinese music, has garnered attention from scholars interested in its historical development, aesthetic characteristics, and cultural implications. Jiangnan Sizhu, with its gentle harmonies and intricate melodies, serves as a cultural window to the Jiangnan region's rich heritage. Researchers such as Guodong (2006) and Hong (2006) have traced its origins to the Ming and Qing dynasties, highlighting its role in social gatherings and cultural ceremonies. This genre, primarily comprising string and wind instruments, embodies the "silk and bamboo" essence—terms that metaphorically represent the materials from which these instruments are made. Studies by Jiangxi, Ping, Xiaoguang, & Ruirui (2012). further delve into the genre's musical structure, emphasizing its improvisational nature and the communal aspect of its performance, which not only showcases musical skills but also fosters social cohesion and cultural continuity.



Figure 1 Student Jiangnan Sizhu ensemble Performance Scene 1

### **Music Education and Ensemble Teaching**

The pedagogical approaches to music education, particularly in the context of ensemble teaching, have been extensively explored in the literature. Ensemble teaching, as described by scholars such as Yu and Meng (2015), offers a unique blend of individual skill development and collective music-making, promoting not just technical proficiency but also collaboration, listening skills, and emotional expression. Jinping (2017) argues that ensemble settings provide fertile ground for experiential learning, where students navigate the complexities of musical interpretation, dynamics, and tempo adjustments in real-time.

### **Action Research in Music Education**

Action research within music education has emerged as a potent methodology for addressing specific pedagogical challenges, facilitating reflective practice, and fostering innovation in teaching strategies. As defined by McNiff (2013), action research involves a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, with the aim of improving educational practices and outcomes. In the context of music education, action research has been employed to tailor teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students, enhance engagement, and evaluate the effectiveness of new pedagogical tools and approaches. For instance, studies by O'Neill and Susan (2014) have applied action research to investigate the impact of technology integration in music classrooms, revealing significant improvements in student motivation and learning experiences. Similarly, research by Rutkowski, Thompson, and Huan (2016) on the application of action research in ensemble teaching highlights the potential for this approach to adapt teaching practices to better support students' learning processes and outcomes.

### **Integrating Traditional Music into Contemporary Teaching**

The integration of traditional music genres such as Jiangnan Sizhu into contemporary music education poses both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, it offers a means to preserve and celebrate cultural heritage, enriching the curriculum with diverse musical expressions. On the other hand, educators face the challenge of making traditional music relevant and accessible to students in a modern context. Literature on this topic, including works by Liu and Wang (2015), emphasizes the need for innovative teaching methodologies that can bridge the gap between traditional and contemporary musical forms. These studies advocate for a balanced approach that respects the integrity of traditional music while incorporating modern pedagogical practices to engage today's learners effectively.

In sum up, the literature review underscores the rich tapestry of research on Jiangnan Sizhu music, ensemble teaching, and action research within music education. It highlights the potential benefits and challenges of integrating traditional Chinese music into contemporary teaching practices. Through the lens of scholarly work, this review sets the stage for the current study, which seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on the preservation of cultural heritage through music education and the innovative application of ensemble teaching and action research methodologies.

The synthesis of these themes within the literature provides a foundational understanding necessary for exploring the development of Jiangnan Sizhu music ensemble teaching in colleges. This exploration aims not only to enhance students' playing skills but also to ensure the transmission of this valuable cultural heritage to future generations, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of traditional Chinese music in the modern educational landscape.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study employs an action research methodology to explore the integration of Jiangnan Sizhu music into college-level folk music ensemble teaching, with the aim of enhancing students' playing skills and promoting cultural preservation. Action research is characterized by its cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection, allowing for continuous refinement and adaptation of teaching strategies based on empirical evidence gathered during the research process (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). This iterative approach is particularly suited to educational research, where the impact of pedagogical interventions on student learning outcomes needs to be closely monitored and adjusted in response to dynamic classroom environments.

### **Participants**

The study focuses on sophomores majoring in folk music at College S, a fictional institution chosen for its comprehensive music program and diverse student body. Participants were selected based on their enrollment in the folk music major and willingness to engage in the action research project. The sample group consisted of 20 students, diverse in terms of gender and instrumental specialization, ensuring a broad representation of the student population within the folk music program. This diversity is crucial for examining the impact of Jiangnan Sizhu ensemble teaching across a range of musical backgrounds and abilities.

### **Data Collection instruments**

Data were collected through a multi-faceted approach to capture the comprehensive effects of the teaching intervention on students' ensemble performance, cultural understanding, and interest in Jiangnan Sizhu music. The data collection instruments included

#### **Interview**

The interview form is structured to capture the cultural understanding of Jiangnan Sizhu music among students. Six students from College S's folk music ensemble, who play various traditional instruments, are chosen through sampling. The interview is designed to assess students' knowledge of Jiangnan Sizhu music's works, their participation in related music activities, and their understanding of its cultural background. This semi-structured approach allows for flexible, in-depth discussions tailored to the musical specialties of the students.

#### **Jiangnan Sizhu Music Ensemble Ability Evaluation**

The evaluation form is used throughout the material analysis process to assess students' performance in Jiangnan Sizhu music ensemble. It addresses the lack of a defined "folk music ensemble ability" in existing research, creating a structured approach to categorize and measure ensemble performance abilities. The form is developed after conducting a public opinion survey

and analyzing responses from experienced teachers and performers. It covers various performance abilities, including instrumental technique, ensemble auditory skills, and sight-reading capabilities.

### **Jiangnan Sizhu Music Ensemble Ability and Knowledge Level Test**

This part discusses how the study tests students' understanding and skills in Jiangnan Sizhu music through a structured examination, including listening tests and analytical questions. The test is designed to evaluate students' knowledge of musical theory, recognition of musical styles and instruments, and understanding of cultural elements inherent in Jiangnan Sizhu music. This methodical testing serves to quantitatively measure the educational impact of the teaching methods employed in the study.

### **Lesson plans IOC Assessment**

The Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) form is utilized to evaluate the alignment of the lesson plans with various educational and research objectives. It assesses how well the lesson plans meet the study's goals, suit the nature of the course, reflect the students' ability levels, and respond to practical and research needs. The IOC form is an essential tool in ensuring that the teaching content and methods are effectively tailored to develop students' skills in Jiangnan Sizhu music ensemble.

### **Data Analysis**

**Data:** Data were collected through a multi-faceted approach to capture the comprehensive effects of the teaching intervention on students' ensemble performance, cultural understanding, and interest in Jiangnan Sizhu music. The primary data collection methods included:

**Surveys:** Surveys were administered before and after the intervention to gauge students' interest in and understanding of Jiangnan Sizhu music. Questions focused on students' perceptions of the music's cultural significance, their personal engagement with the genre, and the perceived impact of the ensemble experience on their musical development.

**Reflective Journals:** Students were asked to maintain reflective journals throughout the study, documenting their learning experiences, challenges encountered, and personal reflections on the ensemble process. These journals offered qualitative data on students' subjective experiences and learning journeys.

**Observation:** Classroom observations were carried out during the teaching cycles, with a focus on student engagement, interaction, and response to the teaching strategies employed. Observation notes provided contextual insights into the learning environment and the effectiveness of the teaching approach.

**Performance Assessments:** performance assessments were conducted to evaluate improvements in students' musical skills. These assessments were based on predetermined criteria, including technical proficiency, musical expression, and ensemble cohesion.

## **Results**

The action research conducted focused on integrating Jiangnan Sizhu music into the college's folk music curriculum through a series of teaching cycles designed to enhance students' musical skills, cultural understanding, and interest in this traditional genre. Each cycle comprised

planning, action, observation, and reflection phases, facilitating iterative improvements based on feedback and observations.

### **Phrase I: Initial Exploration and Baseline Establishment**

**Planning:** The planning stage involved a meticulously structured session where the instructor prepared to deliver an exhaustive introduction to Jiannan Sizhu music, covering essential aspects such as song types, the range of musical instruments involved, basic playing techniques, and the cultural and historical context of the music. The lesson plan was developed to ensure a holistic understanding, integrating both theoretical knowledge and practical listening skills.

**Action:** In the academic context, the instructor offered a detailed narrative of the Jiannan Sizhu music repertoire's background knowledge, which generally flowed first to the song type, musical instruments in use, playing techniques as well as the musical knowledge known as features of various cultures. After the introductory session, learners used the active listening to the Jiannan Sizhu music activity to develop audit skills. The following activities included student discussions within a group. The students analysed and debated the studying music aspects such as rhythm, dynamics, and ensemble coordination using the lecture nodes. These discussions created opportunities for students to attempt corroboration of the Jiannan Sizhu music concepts.

**Observation:** The instructor monitored the engagement and participation of students throughout the lecture and subsequent activities. It was noted that students showed keen interest in the variety of instruments and were particularly intrigued by the unique playing techniques specific to Jiannan Sizhu music. During the listening comprehension exercises, students demonstrated varying levels of auditory skill, with some quickly identifying key elements of the given song. The instructor observed that the group discussions not only facilitated a deeper engagement with the music but also enhanced peer learning, as students exchanged knowledge and perspectives.

**Reflection:** the instructor concluded that the integration of comprehensive introductory content with active listening and group discussion was effective in deepening students' understanding of Jiannan Sizhu music. The reflection identified that learners appreciated the structured yet flexible approach that allowed them to explore the music critically. However, it was also recognized that some students needed further reinforcement of listening skills to fully appreciate the subtleties of Jiannan Sizhu performances. Reflecting on the group dynamics, it was observed that while the discussions were fruitful, future sessions could benefit from more guided questioning to ensure all musical elements are thoroughly explored. The reflection stage thus provided valuable insights that would inform the enhancement of teaching strategies, aiming to better cater to the diverse learning needs of adult students and optimize the educational impact of studying Jiannan Sizhu music.



Figure 2 Student Jiangnan Sizhu emsenble Performance Scene 2



Figure 3 Segment of "Zhonghua Liuban"

### Phrase II: Deepening Engagement and Skill Development

**Planning:** Building on the insights from the first phrase, the second phase introduced more complex Jiangnan Sizhu pieces and detailed instruction on advanced playing techniques. Cultural immersion was enhanced through guest lectures by Jiangnan Sizhu practitioners and virtual tours of relevant historical sites.

**Action:** During the educational session on Jiangnan Sizhu music, the teacher used a video performance in conjunction with a lecture to make students interested in the subject. Afterward, after assessing the scores of the music, and being able to recognize the notes and understand the structure behind them, the auditory was exercised. Students were given 10 minutes of individual practice in a separate place. The separate place allowed them to focus more easily. Later, they



regrouped to perform in a band. The instructor and Jiangnan Sizhu expert both assessed their performance. The feedback stage, after-integration, included in the feedback stage, was an expert insight and the student's reflection.

**Observation:** Students demonstrated improved technical abilities and a greater sense of ensemble unity. Interest in the cultural aspects of Jiangnan Sizhu music deepened, as evidenced by active participation in discussions and additional research undertaken by students outside of class.

**Reflection:** The success of targeted technical instruction and the integration of cultural education into practical sessions were evident. However, reflections also suggested the potential for incorporating technology to facilitate practice and enhance learning experiences, addressing logistical challenges of group rehearsals.

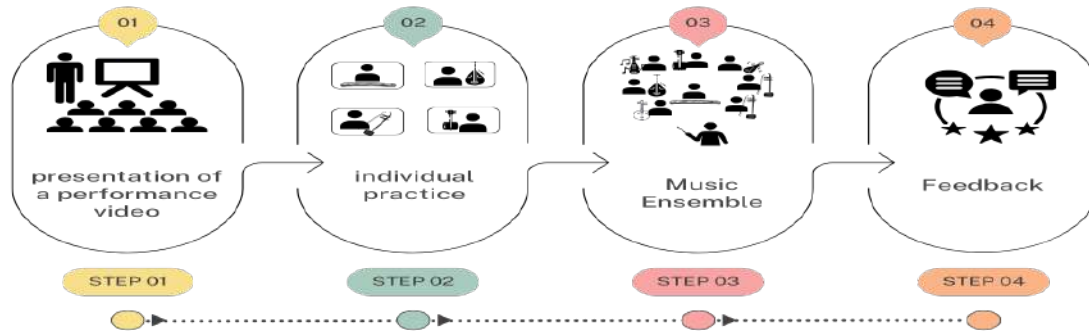


Figure 4 steps of teaching in Phrase II

### Phrase III: Refinement and Culmination

**Planning:** The final phrase aimed to consolidate skills and knowledge gained, focusing on performance readiness and deeper cultural appreciation. Technology was leveraged to create virtual practice environments and facilitate collaborative projects on Jiangnan Sizhu music.



Figure 5 Segment of "Sihe Ruyi"

**Action:** During the course, the instructor played original recordings of Jiangnan Sizhu music for the learners to use in repetitive listening. The exercise was used to boost the learners' familiarity with original recordings, build their confidence, and introduce them to the roles and responsibilities the musicians playing in this genre. The auditory exposure was also seen as an introduction to the historical context of Jiangnan Sizhu music. The session offers students a chance to learn more complex musical forms like harmony and solo performance. These additional layers of the structural and artistic element are designed to deepen the learners' appreciation of how the pieces are built and operate. The exercise helps the learners to listen critically, appreciate more critically the traditional Chinese musical form.

**Observation:** Observations during this phrase showed significant advancements in students' playing skills, ensemble performance quality, and cultural knowledge. The use of technology facilitated effective practice and learning, with students taking greater ownership of their learning process.



Figure 6 Performance on stage after learning the course

**Reflection:** The final reflection phase acknowledged the comprehensive growth of students in both musical and cultural dimensions. The culminating performance not only showcased their skills but also served as a testament to the effectiveness of integrating traditional music into contemporary music education. Feedback from students and audience members underscored the value of preserving and promoting traditional genres like Jiangnan Sizhu.

The implementation of teaching cycles in integrating Jiangnan Sizhu music into the folk music ensemble curriculum at college demonstrated the potential for action research to foster meaningful learning experiences. Through iterative planning, action, observation, and reflection, the teaching strategies were continuously refined to meet the students' needs effectively. This process not only enhanced the students' musical skills and cultural understanding but also contributed to the broader objectives of cultural preservation and education innovation. The successful integration of Jiangnan Sizhu music into the college curriculum serves as a model for future endeavours in traditional music education, highlighting the importance of adaptability, engagement, and a deep respect for cultural heritage.

The action research aimed at integrating Jiangnan Sizhu music into the folk music ensemble curriculum yielded significant insights into the development of students' ensemble skills, cultural understanding, and interest. These results were gleaned from performance assessments, student surveys, classroom observations, and reflective journals, providing a multifaceted view of the impact of the teaching intervention.

### **Performance Skills**

The study's quantitative aspect focused on assessing improvements in students' musical skills through pre- and post-intervention performance assessments. These assessments evaluated technical proficiency, ensemble cohesion, and musical expression. Statistical analysis revealed significant improvements across all measured parameters.

**Technical Proficiency:** Students demonstrated marked improvement in their ability to navigate the complexities of Jiangnan Sizhu instruments. Initially, many students struggled with the unique techniques required but showed considerable progress by the end of the teaching cycles. For instance, average scores on technical proficiency assessments increased from 2.5 (on a 5-point scale) in the initial assessment to 4.2 in the final assessment.

**Ensemble Cohesion:** The cohesion within the ensemble, as measured by the synchronicity of performance and balance of instrumental voices, also saw substantial improvement. Initial average scores of 2.7 improved to 4.5, reflecting the effective adaptation of ensemble skills and collaborative music-making.

**Musical Expression:** Students' ability to express the emotional and cultural nuances of Jiangnan Sizhu music grew, with average scores increasing from 2.8 to 4.3. This improvement underscored the deepening connection between students and the repertoire, allowing for more expressive and authentic performances.

### **Cultural Understanding**

Qualitative data from student surveys and reflective journals highlighted an enhanced understanding and appreciation of Jiangnan Sizhu music's cultural significance. Before the intervention, many students had limited awareness of the genre's historical and cultural contexts. Post-intervention responses, however, indicated a broadened knowledge base and a genuine interest in further exploration of traditional Chinese music.

**Awareness and Knowledge:** There was a notable increase in students' ability to articulate the historical origins, cultural implications, and aesthetic values of Jiangnan Sizhu music. Reflective journals contained detailed accounts of how this newfound knowledge impacted students' perception of the music and its performance.

**Engagement with Cultural Contexts:** Classroom observations and student surveys showed a heightened engagement with the cultural discussions introduced through the teaching cycles. Students actively participated in discussions, sharing insights and drawing connections between the music and its cultural roots.

### **Interest in Jiangnan Sizhu Music**

The intervention sparked a marked increase in students' interest in Jiangnan Sizhu music. This interest was not only academic but also personal, with many students pursuing additional learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

**Increased Personal Engagement:** Students reported spending more time listening to Jiangnan Sizhu recordings, attending live performances, and even exploring related genres of traditional Chinese music. This engagement indicates a successful instillation of appreciation for the genre beyond the confines of the curriculum.

**Desire for Continued Learning:** Surveys conducted at the end of the study revealed a strong desire among students to continue their studies in Jiangnan Sizhu music, with many expressing interests in advanced courses or extracurricular activities focused on traditional Chinese music.

The results indicate that the integration of Jiangnan Sizhu music into the folk music ensemble curriculum effectively enhanced students' ensemble skills, cultural understanding, and interest in the genre. The significant improvements in technical proficiency, ensemble cohesion, and musical expression demonstrate the pedagogical value of the teaching interventions. Furthermore, the deepened cultural understanding and increased interest in Jiangnan Sizhu music among students underscore the importance of cultural context in music education.

The reflective nature of the action research methodology allowed for the continuous refinement of teaching strategies, contributing to the positive outcomes observed. The incorporation of cultural education alongside practical ensemble training proved instrumental in fostering a holistic appreciation of Jiangnan Sizhu music.

The study's findings affirm the potential of integrating traditional music genres like Jiangnan Sizhu into contemporary music education frameworks. By focusing on both the technical and cultural dimensions of music learning, educators can provide students with a more enriching and meaningful educational experience. The positive impact on students' ensemble skills, cultural understanding, and interest highlights the importance of such integrative approaches in preserving and promoting cultural heritage through music education.

### **The Satisfaction Toward Teaching Model**

Learner satisfaction with the Jiangnan Sizhu music integration into the folk music ensemble curriculum was notably high, as evidenced by the study's findings. Students reported significant enhancements in their technical abilities and ensemble cohesion, appreciating the balanced focus on both practical skills and cultural insights. The deepened cultural understanding and heightened interest in the genre underscored the success of incorporating cultural context into music education. The action research methodology's reflective nature allowed for ongoing adjustments to teaching strategies, further enhancing student satisfaction. Overall, the integration of Jiangnan Sizhu music provided a more enriching and meaningful educational experience, fostering a holistic appreciation of the genre and promoting its cultural heritage.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The implementation of Jiangnan Sizhu music within the college folk music ensemble curriculum yielded profound educational and cultural impacts. The significant improvements in students' performance skills, cultural understanding, and engagement with the genre underscore the effectiveness of the tailored teaching strategies that were employed throughout the action research cycles.

**Enhanced Technical Proficiency and Ensemble Cohesion:** The marked improvements in technical proficiency and ensemble cohesion align with research indicating that ensemble settings can enhance musical skills through collaborative practice (Bernard, 2012). This finding validates the pedagogical approach that emphasized both individual technical mastery and collective ensemble dynamics, echoing the work of Vasko (2022) who highlighted the benefits of ensemble teaching for fostering musicianship.

**Deepened Cultural Understanding:** The increase in cultural understanding among students reflects the importance of contextual learning in music education, as advocated by scholars like Elliott (1995). By integrating cultural discussions and historical contexts into the teaching of Jiangnan Sizhu, students were able to connect with the music on a deeper level, underscoring the significance of cultural immersion in fostering an appreciation for traditional music genres.

**Increased Interest in Jiangnan Sizhu Music:** The surge in students' interest in Jiangnan Sizhu music, demonstrated through increased engagement outside of classroom settings, underscores the capacity of education to inspire curiosity and lifelong learning. This phenomenon supports the contention of Custodero (2024) that exposure to diverse musical traditions within an educational framework can catalyze a broader exploration of musical genres and cultures.

The outcomes of this study have several implications for music education, particularly in the context of integrating traditional music into contemporary teaching practices.

**Curriculum Design:** The successful integration of Jiangnan Sizhu music highlights the importance of a well-rounded curriculum that encompasses both technical skill development and cultural education. Music educators should consider incorporating diverse musical traditions into their curricula to enrich students' learning experiences and promote cultural competence.

**Teaching Strategies:** The use of action research as a methodology for refining teaching strategies emphasizes the value of reflective practice in education. Educators are encouraged to adopt an iterative approach to teaching, continuously assessing and adjusting their methods to meet the needs of their students and enhance learning outcomes.

**Cultural Preservation:** The study's impact on students' cultural understanding and interest in Jiangnan Sizhu music demonstrates the potential of education to contribute to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Educators have a unique opportunity to play a role in safeguarding traditional music genres for future generations by embedding them within educational programs.

While the study provides valuable insights into the integration of Jiangnan Sizhu music into folk music ensemble teaching, it is not without limitations. The research was conducted within a single institution and with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope of the study to include multiple institutions and a broader demographic of students to further validate the results.

Additionally, the study primarily focused on short-term outcomes. Longitudinal research is needed to assess the lasting impact of such pedagogical interventions on students' musical development and cultural appreciation. Investigating the effects of integrating other traditional music genres into music education programs would also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of education in cultural preservation.

The integration of Jiangnan Sizhu music into the college-level folk music ensemble curriculum has demonstrated significant educational benefits, enhancing students' musical skills, cultural understanding, and interest in the genre. The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on music education and cultural preservation, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach to teaching that encompasses both technical proficiency and cultural context. By embracing the richness of traditional music genres like Jiangnan Sizhu, educators can provide students with a more diverse and meaningful musical education, fostering an appreciation for cultural heritage and encouraging lifelong engagement with the arts.

The successful implementation of this teaching intervention, characterized by iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, demonstrates the efficacy of action research in music education. By closely monitoring students' progress and adapting teaching strategies in response to observed challenges and opportunities, the study facilitated a dynamic learning environment where students could thrive musically and culturally. This approach not only resulted in marked improvements in students' performance skills and ensemble cohesion but also ignited a passion for Jiangnan Sizhu music, as evidenced by their increased engagement with the genre beyond the classroom.

Importantly, this study contributes to the broader discourse on the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through education. In a global context where traditional art forms face the threat of obsolescence, educational initiatives like the one explored in this research play a crucial role in safeguarding cultural treasures for future generations. By embedding Jiangnan Sizhu music within the folk music curriculum, the study has shown how music education can serve as a powerful vehicle for cultural preservation, enabling students to connect with and contribute to the living tradition of their cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the increased interest and engagement with Jiangnan Sizhu music among students underscore the capacity of music education to inspire curiosity and foster a deeper understanding of cultural diversity. This outcome resonates with the call for educational curricula that reflect a plurality of musical traditions, promoting inclusivity and broadening students' musical horizons. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the ability to appreciate and engage with diverse cultural expressions becomes ever more critical. Through initiatives like this, music education can equip students with the skills and sensitivities needed to navigate and celebrate the world's rich cultural tapestry.

The implications of this study extend beyond the specific context of Jiangnan Sizhu music, offering insights into the integration of other traditional music genres into music education

programs. Educators are encouraged to explore similar pedagogical approaches, adapting the principles and strategies outlined in this research to their unique cultural and educational contexts. By doing so, they can contribute to the vital work of cultural preservation while enriching their students' educational experiences.

Despite its contributions, this study acknowledges its limitations, including its relatively small sample size and single institution setting. These constraints highlight the need for further research that expands the scope of inquiry to include a broader demographic of students and multiple educational contexts. Longitudinal studies would also provide valuable insights into the long-term impacts of integrating traditional music into music education on students' musical development and cultural understanding.

In conclusion, the action research project on integrating Jiangnan Sizhu music into college-level folk music ensemble teaching has affirmed the transformative potential of traditional music education. By bridging the gap between the past and present, such educational initiatives not only enhance students' musical skills but also instill a profound respect for cultural heritage. As educators continue to explore and refine approaches to integrating traditional music genres into their teaching, they contribute to a legacy of cultural preservation and educational innovation that enriches students' lives and the broader cultural landscape.

## References

- Guodong, W. A "Basin" with Two "Centers": *The Origin and Formation of Jiangnan Sizhu. Music Research*, 2006.
- Hong, R. A General View of the Similarities and Differences in the Evolution, 2006.
- Jiangxi, Y., Ping, H., Xiaoguang, Q., & Ruirui, C. *Jiangnan Sizhu*. Zhejiang Photography Press, 2012.
- Yu, C., & Meng, C. Teaching Design of "Rich Folk Instrumental Music - Harmony of Silk and Bamboo". *Chinese Music Education*, 07 (2015), 26-30.
- Jinping, X. *Xi Jinping on Governance*, Volume II. Foreign Language Press, 2017.
- McNiff, Jean. *Action research: Principles and practice*. Routledge, 2013.
- O'Neill, Susan A. "Mind the gap: Transforming music engagement through learner-centred informal music learning." *The Recorder: Journal of the Ontario Music Educators' Association* 56, no. 2 (2014): 18-22.
- Rutkowski, Joanne, Keith P. Thompson, and Yi-Ting Huang. "Cited quantitative research articles in music education research journals, 1990-2005: A content analysis of selected studies." In *Advances in social-psychology and music education research*, pp. 169-183. Routledge, 2016.
- Liu, J., and X. Wang. Expansion and Differentiation in Chinese Higher Education *International Higher Education* 60 (2015): 7-8.
- Liu, Y., & Daoruang, K. (2024). Music of Panwang Festival ceremony in northern Guangdong Province China. In *SHS Web of Conferences* (Vol. 183, p. 03010). EDP Sciences.

- Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R. Participatory action research. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn. London: Sage, (2000) : 567– 603
- Bernard, Rhoda. "Finding a place in music education: The lived experiences of music educators with “non-traditional” backgrounds." *Visions of Research in Music Education* 22, no. 1 (2012): 4.
- Vasko, Benjamin H. "An exploration of the benefits to student musicianship and wellbeing of the collegiate tuba/euphonium ensemble." PhD diss., Boston University, 2022.
- Elliott, David J. "Another perspective: Music education as/for artistic citizenship." *Music Educators Journal* 99, no. 1 (2012): 21-27.
- Custodero, Lori A. *Before We Teach Music: The Resonant Legacies of Childhoods and Children*. Oxford University Press, 2024.