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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC INTEGRATION IN MUSIC TEACHING PRACTICES IN KYRGYZSTAN AND CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to analyse and compare the characteristics of incorporating elements of traditional music into formal music education in China and Kyrgyzstan. Methodologically, the study is based on a systematic analysis of educational documents from both countries, including state standards, curricula, higher and secondary school programmes. Analytical reports by international organisations and projects documenting the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through education were also studied. The results of the study showed that in China, the integration of traditional music is institutionalised and covers all levels of education, from primary

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school to specialised music institutions. Implementation mechanisms included the use of digital technologies, the creation of massive open online courses, interdisciplinary approaches, and the adaptation of the traditional “master-student” system to a modern format. Active support from government agencies and the involvement of prominent cultural figures have contributed to the growing popularity of traditional music among young people. In turn, Kyrgyzstan has seen a growing role for local initiatives, including projects implemented with the participation of universities and public foundations. However, the integration of traditional music into formal education remains fragmented, uneven in terms of regional distribution, and largely dependent on the individual activity of teachers. The main challenges in Kyrgyzstan are related to material and technical constraints, insufficient staff qualifications and the absence of a centralised cultural and educational policy. The practical significance of the work lies in the development of recommendations for the effective integration of traditional music into educational programmes.

Keywords: Cultural identity, pedagogical strategies, interactive learning, authentic practices, musical heritage.

KIRGIZİSTAN VE ÇİN'DE MÜZİK ÖĞRETİM UYGULAMALARINDA GELENEKSEL MÜZİK ENTEGRASYONUNUN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ANALİZİ

ÖZ

Çalışmanın amacı, Çin ve Kırgızistan'da geleneksel müzik unsurlarının resmî müzik eğitime dahil edilmesinin özelliklerini analiz etmek ve karşılaştırmaktır. Metodolojik olarak çalışma, devlet standartları, müfredat, yüksek ve ortaokul programları dahil olmak üzere her iki ülkeden eğitim belgelerinin sistematik bir analizine dayanmaktadır. Uluslararası kuruluşların analitik raporları ve eğitim yoluyla somut olmayan kültürel mirasın korunmasını belgeleyen projeler de incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçları, Çin'de geleneksel müziğin entegrasyonunun kurumsallaştığını ve ilkokuldan uzmanlaşmış müzik kurumlarına kadar tüm eğitim seviyelerini kapsadığını göstermiştir. Uygulama mekanizmaları arasında dijital teknolojilerin kullanımı, kitlesel açık çevrimiçi derslerin oluşturulması, disiplinlerarası yaklaşımlar ve geleneksel "usta-öğrenci" sisteminin modern bir formata uyarlanması yer almıştır. Devlet kurumlarının aktif desteği ve tanınmış kültürel figürlerin katılımı, geleneksel müziğin gençler arasında yüksek popülaritesine katkıda bulunmuştur. Buna

karşılık, Kırgızistan'da üniversitelerin ve kamu vakıflarının katılımıyla uygulanan projeler de dahil olmak üzere yerel girişimlerin rolü giderek artmaktadır. Ancak geleneksel müziğin resmi eğitime entegrasyonu parçalı, bölgesel dağılım açısından eşitsiz ve büyük ölçüde öğretmenlerin bireysel faaliyetlerine bağlı kalmaktadır. Kırgızistan'daki temel zorluklar, maddi ve teknik kısıtlamalar, yetersiz personel nitelikleri ve merkezi bir kültür ve eğitim politikasının eksikliğiyle ilgilidir. Çalışmanın pratik önemi, geleneksel müziğin eğitim programlarına etkili bir şekilde entegre edilmesi için öneriler geliştirmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültürel kimlik, pedagojik stratejiler, etkileşimli öğrenme, özgün uygulamalar, müzik mirası.

INTRODUCTION

Music, as an integral part of the cultural code of a nation, not only reflects the historical experience of the people, but also serves as a means of shaping national consciousness and intercultural dialogue. In this context, the integration of traditional music into the educational process becomes a key factor in preserving cultural identity and developing the creative potential of the younger generation.

China and Kyrgyzstan, despite their geographical proximity, have different approaches to introducing traditional music into the education system. China has a systematic approach to integrating traditional music into the educational process. For example, a study by Zu and Wang (2025) found that in the period from 2020 to 2023, traditional music was actively introduced into compulsory education, and noted that the main areas of integration were the inclusion of folk songs and the use of traditional instruments in music lessons. However, the authors overlooked the challenges faced by schools in remote areas where resources for such programs are limited.

In the study by Liu, Asipova, Lu and Wu et al. (2024), which focuses on culturally appropriate strategies in art education in China and Kyrgyzstan, found significant differences between the educational models of the two countries. The study emphasises that the Chinese educational system actively incorporates traditional art into general curricula through the introduction of multidisciplinary approaches and institutional support. In Kyrgyzstan, however, such practices are often reduced to informal initiatives by individual teachers or ethnocultural enthusiasts. Nevertheless, the study lacks a deeper exploration of how socio-political factors influence the implementation of traditional music education in these countries.

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A certain alternative perspective was proposed in the study by Zhi and Thoe (2024), which examines the combination of digital technologies and traditional music in primary and secondary education in China. The findings of the study show that the combination of traditions and innovations made it possible to increase students' involvement in the study of national heritage and formed a deeper understanding of its cultural content. The authors, however, did not sufficiently address the potential negative impacts on the quality of oral traditions and live mentorship in music education.

Particular attention to the specifics of teaching traditional music in higher education was paid by Sun (2021), who analysed the integration of traditional music culture into vocal training courses at Chinese universities. The author concludes that only a comprehensive approach can achieve a true pedagogical effect in the field of national music education. Although the study lacks a focus on the actual outcomes for students' long-term engagement with traditional music.

In turn, Yang and Welch (2022) conducted a systematic review of research on Chinese music education from 2007 to 2019. They found that most studies focus on pedagogical methods of teaching traditional music, in particular on the combination of modern technologies with traditional forms of education. This demonstrates the desire of Chinese educators to modernise music education without losing national identity. The scholars, though, failed to sufficiently examine the barriers to consistent implementation across the diverse educational landscape of China.

Zhou, Guo, Ying and Oubibi (2023) analysed the development of local music teaching materials in China from 1934 to 2022. The authors noted the gradual evolution of textbooks that reflect the country's regional characteristics and cultural diversity. This demonstrates the desire to preserve and promote local musical traditions through educational resources. The study could benefit from a more critical analysis of how these materials are received and used in contemporary educational settings.

In Kyrgyzstan, the situation is somewhat different. The study by Jodas (2020) emphasised that traditional music plays an important role in the daily life of the Kyrgyz people, but its integration into the educational process remains limited. The author noted that although traditional music is an integral part of cultural identity, its teaching in schools often depends on the initiatives of individual teachers or enthusiasts. However, the author did explore how effectively these practices are being integrated into formal education or how they might be standardized for broader implementation.

In the study by Kenzhebaiova, Mamatova, Nurmamatova, Tolubaeva and Isaeva (2024) examined the role of intercultural exchange in teaching folk poetry in an ethnopedagogical context. The authors emphasised that the integration of traditional culture into the educational process contributed to the development of cultural literacy and intercultural understanding among students. However, they also noted that the lack of a systematic approach to teaching traditional music and poetry limited the effectiveness of such initiatives. Nevertheless, the study lacks an analysis of the effectiveness of these exchanges in actual educational practice or their impact on students' cultural awareness.

Thus, the analysis of existing research shows that there is considerable experience in integrating traditional music into the educational process, especially in China. However, in the context of Kyrgyzstan, there is a lack of systematic approaches and methodological developments, which limits the effectiveness of introducing traditional music into educational practice. In this regard, the relevance of this study lies in the need for a comparative analysis of approaches to the integration of traditional music into the educational process in China and Kyrgyzstan.

The aim of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of approaches to the integration of traditional music into the educational process in China and Kyrgyzstan in order to identify effective practices and develop recommendations for their implementation. To achieve this goal, the following research objectives were set: to identify the key similarities and differences between the models of integrating traditional music into the educational process in China and Kyrgyzstan, in particular in terms of the level of state support, institutionalisation and educational approaches; to identify challenges and prospects for expanding the practice of teaching traditional music in formal education, taking into account the experience of intercultural exchange and modern educational reforms.

METHOD

The study was conducted in March 2025 and was based on the analysis of official regulations, curricula, scientific publications, educational initiatives and reports of international organisations covering the state and features of music education in both countries. The methodological foundation of the study was a systematic and comparative analysis of official sources, allowing for the identification of similarities, differences, and effective practices in integrating elements of traditional music into formal education in China and Kyrgyzstan.

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The initial stage of the research involved analysing national educational documents, particularly China's National Standards for Music Education (Yang, 2023; Wenyan, Pattananon and Chareonsrimueang, 2023), which regulate the study of both Western and traditional Chinese music in schools. The second stage was focused on reviewing the curricula of higher education institutions, particularly the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. The analysis also incorporated data from the EduRank platform (EduRank, 2025), which indicated that 52 Chinese universities had active research programmes in music as of 2025. The study also took into account the strategic cultural documents of the People's Republic of China (PRC), including the Chinese government's guidelines for the preservation and development of traditional culture, adopted in 2017 (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2017). These principles formed the basis for the development of state programmes aimed at integrating cultural components into general education, particularly in music.

The third stage involved analysing the implementation of digital educational technologies. The "Keys of Inspiration" programme, initiated by pianist Lang Lang (The Times, 2024), was examined. The programme involves the use of digital keyboard instruments, tablets, and multimedia platforms in primary schools.

The fourth area of research focused on Kyrgyzstan. An analysis was conducted of the state standards for general education, Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 616/1 "On Approval of Basic Curriculums of General Educational Organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic for the 2019-2020 Academic Year" (2019). Academic courses and programmes implemented within institutions such as the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, which houses a department of music art, were studied. Particular attention was paid to local initiatives, including the textbook "Solfeggio Based on Kyrgyz Melodies and Songs" (University of Central Asia, 2022), developed by the University of Central Asia based on archived field recordings. The activities of the "Kyrgyz Traditional Music" foundation were also investigated; this organisation arranges the Traditional Music Week of the Kyrgyz Republic, which combines educational, scientific, and artistic components. In the fifth stage, reports from international organisations were processed, notably the "Joint Education Sector Review" (Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2022), which provides data on the qualification levels of arts teachers in Kyrgyzstan.

In the final stage of the research, a comparative analysis was conducted on the technical infrastructure, the accessibility of educational resources, the level of digitisation, and the involvement of oral tradition bearers in the educational process. In this context, state and public initiatives were analysed, including projects involving the digital archiving of traditional music (PRC) and the creation of digital libraries as part of preserving the oral tradition of Akyns (Kyrgyzstan).

RESULTS

Integration of traditional music into the Chinese music education system

The Chinese government pays considerable attention to the preservation and promotion of traditional music through educational initiatives and government policies. In January 2017, the Chinese central government issued guidelines for the preservation and development of outstanding traditional culture, with the aim of achieving a “significant increase” in the international influence of Chinese culture by 2025 (State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2017). Educational guidelines serve as important tools for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, in particular musical traditions, such as Si Zhu Yue, which is a traditional genre of Chinese folk music that features the use of stringed and bamboo wind instruments (Li, Onlamul, You and Yang, 2024). This highlights the importance of educational initiatives in passing on cultural knowledge and practices to future generations.

Traditional music is integrated into the curricula of primary and secondary schools in China. China's national standards for music education include four main components (Figure 1). This demonstrates the government's desire to balance the study of both Western and traditional Chinese music in the educational process.

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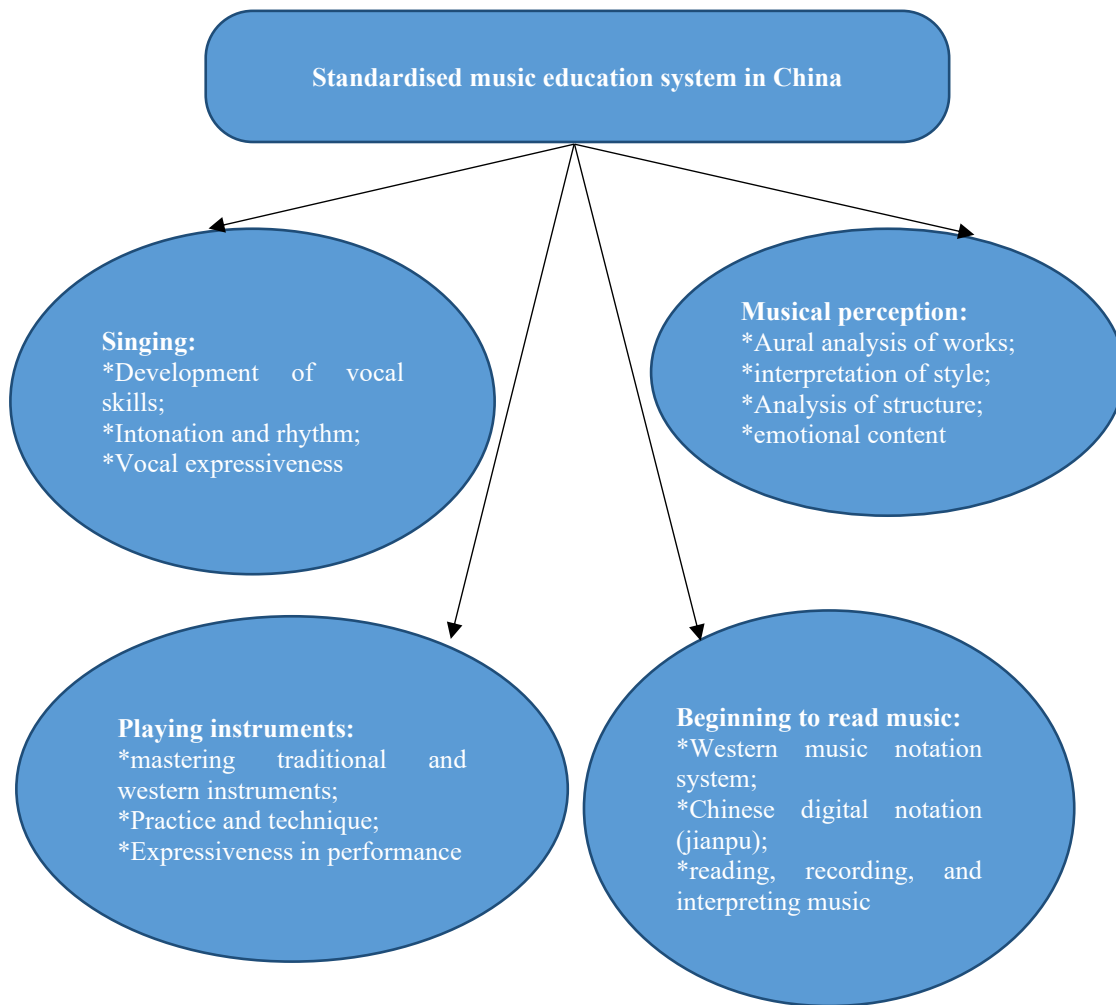


Figure 1. National standards of music education in China. Source: compiled by the author based on Yang (2022); Wenyan et al. (2023).

Singing enhances vocal abilities and musical sensitivity through both solo and group performances, emphasizing precision in pitch, rhythm, word clarity, and expressive interpretation. The varied repertoire promotes awareness of musical diversity and cultural traditions. Musical perception involves honing analytical skills to interpret musical pieces, recognizing stylistic elements, structure, and emotional content (Lu, 2022), which contributes to critical thinking and a more profound understanding of music.

Instrumental training includes both Western and traditional Chinese instruments, such as the piano, violin, guitar, and instruments unique to Chinese culture, aiding in the preservation and popularization of the nation's musical legacy while fostering coordination, technical skills, and musical expressiveness. Music literacy training encompasses both Western staff notation and

Chinese numerical notation (jianpu) (Ho, 2025), allowing students to read, write, and interpret musical pieces, which is crucial for their further musical growth.

Institutions of higher learning, such as the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, play essential roles in both preserving and advancing traditional music through specialized programs in traditional Chinese instruments, along with departments dedicated to musicology, composition, conducting, piano, vocal and opera studies, orchestral instruments, and traditional Chinese instruments.

The incorporation of traditional Chinese instruments like the guqin, erhu, and pipa (Figure 2) is a significant educational component. The guqin, a seven-stringed plucked instrument with over three thousand years of history, connects students to philosophical ideas and cultural sophistication. The erhu, a two-stringed bowed instrument known for its expressive tone, enhances auditory skills and technical abilities through both solo and orchestral performances. The pipa, a four-stringed plucked instrument that demands advanced technical training, features a repertoire that ranges from traditional melodies to modern compositions (Du and Liang, 2024). These instruments are incorporated through individual and group sessions, ensemble practice, and concert involvement. Contemporary technologies significantly improve the preservation and popularization of Chinese folk music. Multimedia resources create engaging and accessible learning experiences, while Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) widely distribute knowledge. Studies indicate that online courses in Chinese folk music have a positive effect on students' academic performance (Li, 2022), enhancing their performance abilities and boosting their motivation to learn.



Figure 2. Chinese traditional instruments: a) guqin b) erhu c) pipa.

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The traditional "master-student" educational model remains essential in Chinese music learning, characterized by a close mentor-student relationship that imparts technical skills while encouraging an in-depth cultural understanding and emotional expressiveness (Wan, 2022). This model is evolving to incorporate modern educational methods by merging traditional mentorship with digital tools, thus maintaining personalized education while broadening access to learning resources. Nevertheless, the challenge of fostering intensive individual interactions in large classes and academic groups is compounded by the shortage of teachers skilled in both traditional techniques and modern technologies (Spaska et al., 2025).

In Chinese music education, there are both positive trends and serious challenges that affect the integration of traditional music into the learning process. These aspects include the popularisation of traditional music among young people, the influence of globalisation and Western music, and difficulties in adapting traditional methods to modern educational formats. In China, there is a growing interest among young people in traditional music, largely due to its inclusion in contemporary popular culture (Wang, 2021). In particular, the “Zhongguo feng” genre combines elements of Chinese folk music with pop music, rap, and electronic sounds. An example is the work of Jay Chou, whose song “Blue and White Porcelain” uses guzheng and erhu motifs. Similar compositions not only become popular among young people but also enter educational programmes as examples of modern interpretations of traditional forms.

It is also worth mentioning the “Keys of Inspiration” programme, launched by Chinese pianist Lang Lang (The Times, 2024), which aims to encourage children to learn music by integrating classical and traditional works into a multimedia environment. The interactivity of such programmes helps overcome the barrier of perceiving traditional music as outdated, which is especially important when working with younger generations. However, at the same time, globalisation and the dominance of Western music have a powerful influence on music education in China. Western musical styles, such as rock, hip-hop, jazz, and classical, enjoy significant popularity in the higher education system, where Western curricula often prevail (Sheikh, 2018). Studies indicate that in university programmes, the volume of subjects dedicated to traditional Chinese music remains limited, and students demonstrate a strong orientation towards Western technical standards and aesthetic models (Zhao, 2023).

In response to the threat of marginalisation of traditional music in the context of globalisation, state initiatives aimed at systemic support of intangible cultural heritage have begun to form in China. Specifically, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the PRC supports the creation of digital archives of traditional music and initiates the inclusion of musical heritage objects in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) list. In 2009, Chinese opera “Kunqu” was recognised by UNESCO as a masterpiece of oral and intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Another promising direction is the interdisciplinary combination of traditional music with history, literature, theatre, and fine arts. Some schools in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Sichuan provinces are experimenting with courses where students are taught not only performance but also contextual analysis of musical works (Yin, 2023). This approach promotes critical thinking and strengthens interdisciplinary links in humanities education. However, the development of music education remains uneven. In remote regions with a strong ethnocultural component – for example, in Guangxi or Inner Mongolia – the absence of instrumental facilities, schools, and personnel makes it impossible to implement even basic educational initiatives (Guan et al., 2024). Local traditions (epics, ritual songs, regional instruments) risk being lost due to the lack of proper representation in curricula.

Media and digital culture are also beginning to fulfil an educational function (Nurakenova and Nagymzhanova, 2024; Kozub et al., 2024). Online platforms such as Bilibili and Douyin have become an important arena for presenting traditional music in modern formats. For example, young amateur musicians create videos performing classical works on the erhu accompanied by electronic rhythms, thereby updating the audience’s perception of folklore (Guliyeva and Kopanitsa, 2024). This contributes to the transformation of traditional music from a “museum” element into a dynamic cultural product. Festivals and competitions of traditional music, such as the “Beijing Traditional Music Festival” (Nan, 2024), play an important role in cultural exchange, supporting young performers, and disseminating knowledge about music among a wide audience. Their participation in the learning process as a practical component ensures a combination of academic and stage training.

Incorporating elements of traditional music into the music education system of Kyrgyzstan

After gaining independence, Kyrgyzstan faced the task of forming its own cultural policy. This policy not only had to counteract the consequences of Soviet unification but also ensure the preservation and reproduction of its unique spiritual heritage. In this context, traditional music is seen as a key element in building national identity (Kelmendi, 2024). The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic identifies the inclusion of elements of intangible cultural heritage into formal education as one of its priorities. This approach aligns with broader global trends that emphasize the importance of preserving cultural diversity in education, responding to both national and international calls for the safeguarding of traditional knowledge.

The integration of traditional music into formal education is achieved by incorporating musical elements into core subjects and offering elective courses dedicated to Kyrgyz folk traditions. Students are introduced to instruments such as the komuz, prima kyyak, and chopo chor, while also exploring their cultural significance within traditional rituals and folklore (Junussova, Utegalieva, Shugay, Abdinurov and Medeubek, 2024). Additionally, this integration enables students to understand the interplay between music and other forms of cultural expression, fostering a more comprehensive appreciation of Kyrgyz heritage. A central component of this educational approach is the inclusion of the Manas epic in school curricula. Recognised for its fusion of literary, musical, and historical dimensions, the “Manas”, an oral epic exceeding half a million lines, transmits key aspects of Kyrgyz history, ethnography, philosophy, and moral values. It also teaches students the art of oral recitation and introduces them to the archaic intonation patterns of Kyrgyz oral tradition (Döblin, 2019). Incorporating the Manas into the curriculum helps students develop their critical thinking and interpretive abilities in addition to learning about their cultural heritage.

An illustrative example of national strategic implementation is the University of Central Asia’s Ethno-Solfeggio project, which produced a textbook rooted in archival field recordings of traditional Kyrgyz songs and instrumental works. This resource equips students with foundational skills in musical analysis, interpretation, and notation using Kyrgyz folk music as the core material (University of Central Asia, 2022). The project also serves as a model for the integration of archival research into contemporary pedagogical practice, ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage in modern education.

Instruments like the komuz and kyl kyyak (Figure 3) are deeply embedded in Kyrgyz musical heritage. The komuz, a three-stringed fretless lute, is commonly used to accompany epics, folk melodies, and dances, while the kyl kyyak, a two-stringed bowed instrument, reflects long-standing traditions in Kyrgyz culture (Central Asia Guide, 2025). These instruments embody the very essence of Kyrgyz musical expression, with each note carrying historical and cultural significance. They are part of the curriculum in all 87 state music schools throughout Kyrgyzstan (Jodas, 2020). Moreover, the focus on practical engagement with these instruments in schools promotes a deeper emotional connection to Kyrgyz traditions, transforming students into active participants in cultural preservation.

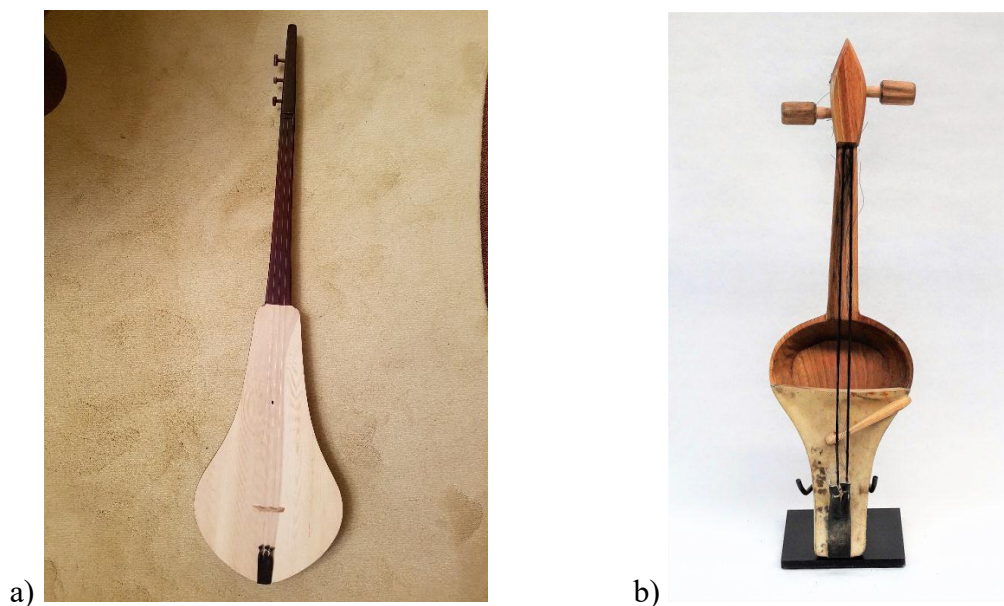


Figure 3. Kyrgyz traditional instruments: a) komuz; b) kyl kyyak.

Oral tradition bearers, particularly akyns, play a pivotal role in preserving and transmitting intangible cultural heritage. The Bilim Aitysh initiative, launched in 2022, reflects this role by enhancing media literacy among youth through the involvement of akyns in educational content creation. This initiative includes workshops, competitions, and live performances that promote traditional culture. This not only revitalises the profession of akyns but also introduces younger generations to the storytelling tradition that forms a vital part of Kyrgyz social life. Broader preservation efforts include reviving the prestige of the akyn profession and supporting knowledge transmission through training sessions, technical assistance, and the development of digital archives. In addition, a growing number of community-driven projects are emerging, aimed at

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creating digital platforms where traditional music and performances can be accessed globally, expanding their reach far beyond Kyrgyzstan's borders.

However, the effective integration of traditional music into education is hindered by significant challenges (Karamyshev et al., 2024). These include inadequate material and technical resources, reliance on individual teacher initiatives, and a lack of updated pedagogical approaches that still respect cultural authenticity. Many music schools, particularly in rural areas, suffer from shortages of instruments and necessary teaching tools (Imangaliyeva et al., 2018). For instance, in Razzakov city, instruction in instruments such as the daire, dutar, and rubab was discontinued after 2014 due to limited resources (Sartbekova, Dyushenalieva, Jiang and Wang, 2024). Moreover, the absence of modern educational materials contributes to unequal learning conditions across regions, thereby restricting student development opportunities in traditional music education. The regional disparity is further exacerbated by limited access to professional development programs for teachers, which hinders the dissemination of updated teaching methods.

The development of traditional music education in Kyrgyzstan largely depends on the enthusiasm and initiative of individual teachers and educational institutions. The lack of systemic support and coordination from state bodies leads to fragmentation in approaches to teaching traditional music. For example, the “Kyrgyz Kairyk” project (University of Central Asia, 2024), initiated by a group of young professional musicians, aims to create, study, and reproduce new examples of traditional music. Over the past six years, five musical experimental camps and one international art residency have been organised, involving over 50 young musicians. These initiatives, though commendable, remain insufficient without the support of a cohesive national strategy that prioritizes the long-term sustainability of such efforts. They are isolated and are not integrated into the nationwide education system. This reliance on individual initiatives creates a risk of losing valuable knowledge and practices if such projects cease operations or if there is no succession among teachers. Moreover, the short-term nature of many projects limits their capacity to create lasting impacts on the national education system. A more structured approach to funding, curriculum development, and teacher training could ensure the continuity of such efforts, creating a more sustainable educational model for traditional music.

Modern methods of teaching traditional music in Kyrgyzstan require updating to ensure the effectiveness of the learning process and the preservation of the authenticity of the musical

heritage. The traditional “ustad-shagird” system, which involves the direct transfer of knowledge from master to apprentice, is gradually losing popularity due to a lack of adequate support and adaptation. This decline in the traditional system of mentorship points to the need for an integrated pedagogical model that combines modern teaching methodologies with the timeless wisdom of the ustad-shagird relationship.

Comparative analysis of the approaches of China and Kyrgyzstan

A comparative analysis of the integration of traditional music into educational practices in Kyrgyzstan and China reveals both common features and significant differences due to the historical, cultural and political contexts of both countries (Table 1).

Category	China	Kyrgyzstan
The aim of integrating traditional music	Raising cultural awareness, global promotion of national art	Preservation of national identity and authentic musical tradition
Level of state support	High: active state involvement, funding, national programmes	Low: mostly local initiatives, limited funding
Institutionalisation of the process	High institutionalisation in the formal education system (universities, schools)	Fragmented integration in some educational institutions
Teaching formats	Combination of academic and non-formal approaches	Traditional forms of education, personal transmission of knowledge
Use of digital technologies	Wide: online courses, platforms, digital tools	Limited: mostly offline formats, sometimes projects with international support
Involvement of tradition bearers	Institutionalised engagement of traditional music performers and researchers	Involvement of media in the format of workshops and festivals
Types of educational programmes	School programmes, university courses, international platforms	Initiatives of individual schools and cultural centres
Level of technical support	High level: modern equipment, multimedia resources	Low level: lack of modern equipment
Availability of resources	State libraries, digital platforms, research centres	Limited number of music schools, lack of literature and recordings
Main challenges	Threat of loss of authenticity due to widespread popularisation	Insufficient funding, lack of a centralised strategy
Development prospects	Integration of the latest technologies while maintaining authenticity	Opportunities for international cooperation, exchange of experience

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of educational approaches to traditional music in China and Kyrgyzstan. Source: compiled by the author based on Yang (2022); Sartbekova et al. (2024).

In China, music education encompasses a wide range of programmes, from primary school to higher education institutions. Notably, reforms introduced in the 1990s fostered the development of music education in higher education institutions. Before 1990, only 111 colleges and universities offered specialisations in music education (Xiang, 2018). These programmes include both academic courses and practical training in traditional music. As of 2025, according to the EduRank platform (EduRank, 2025), at least 52 universities in China have active research programmes in

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music, indicating the presence of relevant academic fields in these institutions. These 52 universities are located in various regions of China, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Nanjing, and other cities. They include specialised music conservatoires, such as the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, as well as large universities with a broad range of disciplines that include music programmes.

As of the 2023-2024 academic year, 9 universities in Kyrgyzstan offer Bachelor's programmes in the arts that include music disciplines (Abazbek et al., 2024). Among the prominent institutions with music specialisations is the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, where the Faculty of Arts has a Department of Music. This department trains performers in pop vocals and traditional musical arts, as well as teachers and music editors. In accordance with the National Curriculum, music education is a compulsory component of the primary school programme, enshrined in the state standards for general education approved the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 616/1 "On Approval of Basic Curriculums of General Educational Organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic for the 2019-2020 Academic Year" (2019). The aim of including music in the basic curriculum is to develop artistic and aesthetic thinking, emotional culture, and cultural identity in schoolchildren.

However, research by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and international educational organisations indicates that a number of schools in Kyrgyzstan face uneven resource provision for comprehensive teaching of arts disciplines, including music. For example, according to the "Joint Education Sector Review" report (Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2022), only 14% of teachers in rural schools had completed professional development courses in arts disciplines over the past five years, which significantly affects teaching quality. In many schools, music specialists are absent, so responsibility for conducting lessons falls to primary school teachers who do not always have the relevant education or training. This leads to a formal teaching of the subject or the substitution of music lessons with other activities, which contradicts the requirements of the basic curriculum. In the context of limited material resources, there is also a shortage of musical instruments and teaching materials. In most schools, particularly in the regions, music lessons are conducted without instrumental accompaniment, which reduces the level of aesthetic impact on pupils and diminishes the practical component of learning. Thus, despite the regulatory framework guaranteeing music's place in Kyrgyzstan's school education, its actual

implementation depends on human and material resources, which are often limited. This creates challenges for the preservation of traditional musical culture within formal education, especially in rural areas. Improving teacher qualifications, providing schools with necessary materials, and developing modern programmes that integrate national musical heritage are essential steps to enhance the effectiveness of music teaching in secondary schools (Chang, 2023).

The integration of traditional music into educational practices in China and Kyrgyzstan demonstrates significant differences in the level of state support. In China, there is systematic government support and a large scale of state initiatives for the integration of traditional music into education. For example, the “Keys of Inspiration” programme (The Times, 2024), initiated by the renowned pianist Lang Lang and the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, aims to introduce music education in primary schools using digital tools such as tablets and keyboards. In Kyrgyzstan, programmes are more localised, focusing on individual initiatives without nationwide coordination. For example, the publication of the music encyclopaedia “Solfeggio Based on Kyrgyz Melodies and Songs” (University of Central Asia, 2022) aims to preserve and popularise Kyrgyz musical heritage.

In China, a combination of academic and informal approaches to teaching traditional music is applied, with active use of digital platforms. This includes online courses, video tutorials, and interactive programmes that allow students to learn traditional instruments and compositions in a convenient format (Ibrayeva et al., 2018). In Kyrgyzstan, the emphasis is on authenticity and traditional teaching methods, with a lower level of technical provision. Learning often takes place through masterclasses, meetings with folk musicians, and participation in cultural events, which fosters a deeper immersion in musical culture (Zhang, 2023).

In Chinese higher education institutions, there is a high level of inclusion of traditional music in curricula. This is ensured through specialised courses, research programmes, and state support. In Kyrgyz institutions, the integration of traditional music is partial or fragmented, often depending on the initiatives of individual teachers or institutions. However, there are examples of successful integration, such as the work of Roza Amanova, who actively works to preserve and popularise Kyrgyz musical heritage. In 2004, she founded the public foundation “Kyrgyz Traditional Music”, which annually organises the Week of Traditional Music of the Kyrgyz Republic starting from April 25th. This event includes lectures, masterclasses, music competitions, film presentations,

international scientific conferences, and gala concerts, aimed at transmitting ethnocultural heritage to the younger generation and popularising traditional music among youth.

One of the problems in China is the preservation of the authenticity of traditional music when it is popularised through modern media and digital platforms. There is a risk of commercialisation and simplification of complex musical forms. In response, China can increase the focus on developing digital preservation tools and platforms that allow for both the widespread dissemination and careful safeguarding of traditional music. In Kyrgyzstan, the main challenges are a lack of resources and the absence of centralised support. However, there is potential for experience exchange between countries and the adaptation of best practices. Cooperation within initiatives such as “One Belt One Road” could contribute to the development of music education and the preservation of cultural heritage (Wang, Karabalaeva, Zhao, Zhou and Ding, 2024).

The integration of traditional music into the educational systems of China and Kyrgyzstan demonstrates different approaches to the types of educational programmes, the level of technical provision, and the availability of resources. These aspects significantly affect the effectiveness of preserving and transmitting musical heritage in both countries. The results of the comparative analysis indicate that China has a more developed music education system with a high level of technical provision and resource availability. This contributes to the effective integration of traditional music into the educational process. In Kyrgyzstan, conversely, the preservation of musical heritage depends on individual initiatives and is limited by a lack of resources. To improve the situation, it is necessary to develop strategies aimed at increasing technical provision and resource availability, as well as implementing modern educational programmes that consider the specifics of traditional music.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research confirm that integrating traditional music into the educational process helps students not only gain a cognitive understanding but also develop a deep appreciation for folk music as a vital element of cultural heritage. This process allows not only to acquire musical knowledge, but also to develop an emotional and semantic connection with national traditions, which is especially important in the context of growing globalisation and cultural unification. According to the study by Chen, Bayalieva, Zheng, Duan and Fan (2024), a similar trend has been

observed in various cultural contexts, including educational institutions in China and Central Asia, where the study of folk music positively influenced the formation of national identity, enhanced students' cultural sensitivity, and promoted their socio-cultural integration. The authors emphasised that incorporating traditional musical content created a favourable environment for developing patriotic sentiments and strengthening intergenerational ties. However, a key distinction lies in the focus: while this study highlights the importance of pedagogical strategies, technologies, and methods – especially multimedia resources and digital platforms – as tools for actively engaging young people, Chen et al. primarily focused on the socio-cultural context influencing the effectiveness of integrating folk music into education.

In the context of using digital technologies in music education, the results of this study confirm that combining traditional music with interactive teaching methods positively influenced the level of material comprehension, student motivation, and the development of their performance skills. This approach not only preserved authentic elements of cultural heritage but also adapted them to the modern educational environment. The results align with the conclusions of Zhang (2024), who demonstrated that integrating traditional musical culture into an interactive learning system improved students' vocal abilities, deepened their interpretative skills, and raised their overall level of musical training. Specifically, Zhang highlighted the potential of optimisation algorithms, such as teaching-learning-based optimization (TLBO), to individualise learning paths, taking into account initial knowledge levels and learning speed. This study's approach differs in its broader focus on the overall integration of digital platforms into music education – including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), video tutorials, and virtual instrument simulators.

The over-reliance on technology, however, could be a disadvantage of this strategy since it could cause students to rely too much on digital resources instead of honing their own abilities via practice and face-to-face communication. Wan (2022) asserts that although digital resources like virtual instruments and online courses are convenient, they may not provide the same depth of learning as in-person, hands-on experience with traditional music. The importance of live performances and in-person mentoring, which are essential for developing both technical skill and cultural awareness, may be diminished by this dependence on technology. Another major disadvantage is the possible loss of the oral tradition element that has long been essential to traditional music transmission. The authenticity and emotional depth of musical practices are preserved in large part through the oral, in-person interactions between master and apprentice.

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Although they are good at spreading knowledge, digital tools run the risk of excluding students from this kind of face-to-face interaction. According to Zhang et al. (2024), such a change might jeopardise the cultural diversity that results from studying oral traditions and musicians' real-world experiences, both of which are crucial for preserving the integrity of traditional music education. Regarding the problem of Western influence on music education, the findings of this research indicate that integrating elements of traditional music into curricula is an effective mechanism to counter Westernisation processes, which often lead to the marginalisation of local cultural heritage in educational settings. Such integration fosters cultural resilience, strengthens students' national self-awareness, and revitalises interest in authentic musical practices. In this context, the study's results align with the conclusions of Cai (2024), who noted that in contemporary Chinese primary education, there is a tendency for traditional music to be displaced by Western genres, which could lead to the erosion of cultural identity in the long term. Cai linked this situation to a general orientation towards Western educational standards and the pursuit of competitiveness in the global academic sphere. However, unlike this study, Cai primarily focused on diagnosing the causes and consequences of the lack of traditional content. Thus, the results obtained not only complement the existing discussion but also specify ways to counteract cultural unification in the education system. In the field of preservation and protection of folk music, the results of the study confirmed that the effective integration of traditional music into the education system should be based on clearly formulated educational and methodological recommendations. Such recommendations should take into account both the characteristics of the national cultural tradition and the requirements of modern pedagogy. Preserving the intangible musical heritage in formal education requires concerted action between educational institutions, government agencies and representatives of local communities. In this context, the findings of Meng and Chuangprakhon (2024) were consonant, as the authors also emphasised the need to develop comprehensive educational strategies aimed at preserving Mongolian folk songs in Qinghai Province in China. The peculiarity of their approach was the combination of formal education with extracurricular activities. Unlike the present study, which is generalised and aimed at the systemic level of educational policy, the study by Meng and Chuangprakhon demonstrates an example of a regional initiative based on interdisciplinarity and cultural participation.

In the context of the impact of digital technologies on music education, the results of this study showed that the use of digital tools, including online platforms, multimedia content, and interactive programmes, significantly increased students' interest in traditional music, promoted the development of performance skills, and improved overall academic achievement. These findings aligned with the results of the study by Wen, Zhang and Wang (2024), who emphasised that smart technologies, including mobile applications, adaptive simulators, and virtual environments, contributed to the formation of a sustainable motivation to study music among young people. At the same time, it should be noted that the approach of Wen et al. (2024) was much narrower in the methodological sense, as it was based on an experimental study of the effectiveness of individual digital tools within a clearly defined training module. Instead, the present study considers digital transformation as a systemic phenomenon that encompasses the entire educational infrastructure and promotes the integration of traditional music into a broader socio-cultural context.

With regard to music education for children, the results of this study confirm that the integration of digital technologies into the educational process can significantly improve the learning of musical material in the early stages of educational development. In particular, it was found that multimedia programmes, interactive gaming platforms, video lessons and music applications helped children to develop basic musical skills, ear training, rhythmic sense, and increased their motivation to learn. In addition, digital tools provide flexibility and adaptability of the learning process in accordance with the age characteristics of children (Amangazykyzy et al., 2025; Rebenok et al., 2024). These results agreed with the findings of Wang (2025), who found that the use of digital educational technologies in preschool music education has a positive effect on the level of musical literacy, concentration, creativity and social interaction among children. The author investigated the impact of specific methods, such as the use of digital keyboard instruments, touch panels, and specialised artificial intelligence-based programmes, which contribute to the formation of sustainable cognitive interests. In contrast to the present study, which focuses on the overall impact of digital technologies in the context of traditional music, Wang focused on the micro-level of pedagogical influence in kindergarten settings. Despite these differences, both approaches prove the importance of digital transformation in music education as a means of improving its quality and effectiveness.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm the importance of integrating traditional music into the educational process, the use of digital technologies to enhance learning, and the need to preserve

cultural heritage through education. These findings are consistent with previous studies in this area, although each has its own unique approaches and emphasis. Further research could focus on developing specific methodologies for integrating traditional music into modern education and examining the long-term impact of such approaches on preserving cultural identity.

CONCLUSIONS

The study confirms traditional music integration into education systems is crucial for preserving intangible cultural heritage, shaping national identity, and developing young people's artistic thinking. Analysis of China and Kyrgyzstan reveals common educational policy elements alongside profound differences in state support, institutional infrastructure, and technical capabilities.

China demonstrates high institutionalisation through national standards, specialized programmes, and digital instruments. Systemic state policy promotes the inclusion of traditional instruments (guqin, pipa, erhu) and provides access through multimedia platforms and mass online courses. Kyrgyzstan's integration occurs primarily through individual local initiatives and enthusiasts' efforts. Despite regulatory frameworks for music study, implementation depends on individual teachers' and public organizations' personal efforts. Most regions face shortages of teaching materials, instruments, qualified personnel, and uneven access, especially in rural areas.

The traditional "master-student" knowledge transfer system remains effective but requires modern adaptation. In China, this model is supported by digital technologies, allowing for a more individualised approach in the context of mass education. In Kyrgyzstan, however, this system is in decline due to a lack of systemic support and limited resources.

The study also confirmed that the digital transformation of the educational environment is an important condition for the modernisation of music education. In China, digital technologies are successfully used to support young people's interest in traditional music. At the same time, in Kyrgyzstan, digital practices remain limited due to the lack of technical facilities, which creates a gap in opportunities between regions.

The study found that preserving the authenticity of traditional music requires special attention in the context of its widespread popularisation. In China, the commercialisation of traditional genres

through their adaptation to modern music formats is relevant, while in Kyrgyzstan, the main challenge is the lack of resources for systemic support and continuity.

Thus, the results of the study provide a number of practical conclusions and recommendations. Firstly, the integration of traditional music into educational programmes should be accompanied by institutional support and investment in the technical base. Secondly, interdisciplinary educational models should be supported to deepen students' cultural understanding. Third, the involvement of oral tradition holders in the educational process should be reinforced to ensure the authenticity and continuity of knowledge. Fourth, modern teaching and learning materials adapted to the digital environment should be developed that can be used in rural and urban schools.

One limitation of this study is the lack of longitudinal data, which restricts the ability to assess the long-term impact of integrating traditional music into formal education systems. Prospects for further research are seen in analysing the effectiveness of specific pedagogical models of teaching traditional music, comparing approaches to music education in Central Asian countries, and studying the role of digital culture in the reproduction of traditional forms of music among young people.

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Web References

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Somut olmayan kültürel mirasın eğitim sistemleri aracılığıyla korunması, özellikle küreselleşmenin nesiller boyunca aktarılan geleneksel müzik pratiklerini aşındırma tehdidi oluşturduğu bir dönemde, çağdaş kültür politikalarında kritik bir endişe kaynağı haline gelmiştir. Geleneksel müzik, yalnızca sanatsal bir ifade aracı olarak değil, aynı zamanda ulusal kimliğin, kültürel sürekliliğin ve gençler arasında estetik gelişimin temel bir bileşeni olarak da hizmet etmektedir. Bu müzik geleneklerinin resmi eğitim sistemlerine entegre edilmesi, kültürel mirasın korunmasına yönelik stratejik bir yaklaşımı temsil ederken aynı zamanda eğitim deneyimlerini zenginleştirmekte ve kültürlerarası anlayışı desteklemektedir.

Bu araştırmanın önemi, her biri resmi eğitim çerçeveleri içinde kültürel korumaya farklı yaklaşımlar sunan iki farklı eğitim ve kültür bağlamının “Çin ve Kırgızistan” karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmesinde yatmaktadır. Çin, kapsamlı kurumsal altyapısı ve kültürel korumaya yönelik önemli devlet yatırımlarıyla sistematik bir entegrasyon modeli sunarken; Kırgızistan, geleneksel müziğin korumasının büyük ölçüde bireysel girişimlere ve yerel çabalara dayandığı zıt bir senaryo

sunmaktadır. Bu karşılaştırmalı analiz, geleneksel müziğin çağdaş eğitim sistemlerine entegrasyonunu karakterize eden çeşitli mekanizmalar, zorluklar ve fırsatlar hakkında değerli bilgiler sunmaktadır.

Çalışmada, devletlerin eğitim standartları, resmi müfredatlar ve yükseköğretim ve ortaöğretim düzeylerinde uygulanan özel programlar da dahil olmak üzere her iki ülkenin eğitim dokümanları incelenerek kapsamlı bir sistematik analiz yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Metodolojik çerçeve hem ulusal hem de yerel eğitim girişimlerini kapsayarak uygulama pratiklerine ilişkin çok katmanlı bir anlayış sağlamıştır. Ayrıca, araştırma, özellikle eğitim mekanizmaları aracılığıyla somut olmayan kültürel mirasın korunmasına odaklanan uluslararası kuruluşlardan ve projelerden analitik raporları içermiş ve böylece ulusal yaklaşımları daha geniş küresel çerçeveler içinde düzenlenmiştir.

Analitik kapsam, yalnızca belge analizinin ötesine geçerek pratik uygulama stratejilerinin, dijital teknoloji entegrasyonunun ve geleneksel pedagojik modellerin çağdaş eğitim ortamlarına uyarlanması incelenmesini de kapsamıştır. Bu kapsamlı yaklaşım, geleneksel müziğin resmi eğitim sistemlerine başarılı bir şekilde entegre edilmesini etkileyen hem yapısal hem de operasyonel faktörlerin belirlenmesini sağlamıştır.

Araştırma, Çin ve Kırgızistan'ın geleneksel müziği kendi eğitim sistemlerine entegre etme konusunda benimsedikleri yaklaşımlarda temel farklılıklar olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Çin, sistematik devlet desteği, kapsamlı ulusal standartlar ve geleneksel müzik eğitimine adanmış özel üniversite programlarıyla karakterize edilen oldukça kurumsallaşmış bir yaklaşım sergilemektedir. Çin modeli, geleneksel müzik bilgisini daha geniş bir öğrenci kitlesine erişilebilir kılarken, eğitim kalitesini ve özgünlüğünü de koruyarak, büyük çaplı açık çevrimiçi dersler ve multimedya platformları da dahil olmak üzere dijital teknolojileri etkili bir şekilde kullanmaktadır.

Guqin, pipa ve erhu gibi geleneksel enstrümanların, önemli devlet yatırımları ve tanınmış kültürel figürlerin katılımıyla desteklenen resmi müfredata entegrasyonu, geleneksel müziğin Çinli gençler arasında popülerliğine önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunmuştur. Dahası, Çin, dijital inovasyon yoluyla geleneksel "usta-öğrenci" pedagojik modelini çağdaş eğitim bağlamlarına başarıyla uyarlamış ve kitle eğitimi çerçeveleri dahilinde bireyselleştirilmiş eğitime olanak sağlamıştır.

Bunun aksine, Kırgızistan'ın geleneksel müzik entegrasyonuna yaklaşımı büyük ölçüde parçalı kalmış ve bireysel öğretmen girişimlerine ve yerel örgütsel çabalara bağımlı kalmıştır. Okul müfredatı dahilinde müzik eğitimini teorik olarak destekleyen düzenleyici çerçevelerin varlığına rağmen, pratik uygulama bölgeler ve kurumlar arasında önemli ölçüde farklılık göstermektedir.

Araştırma, yetersiz öğretim materyalleri, yetersiz enstrüman kaynakları, sınırlı nitelikli personel ve özellikle kırsal alanları etkileyen müzik eğitime eşitsiz erişim gibi önemli zorluklar tespit etmiştir. Çalışma, geleneksel "usta-öğrenci" bilgi aktarım sisteminin her iki ülkede de etkili olmaya devam ettiğini, ancak korunmasının farklı adaptasyon stratejileri gerektirdiğini doğruladı. Çin'de dijital teknoloji, kitle eğitimi bağlamında bu modeli desteklerken, Kırgızistan'da sistem, yetersiz sistemsel destek ve kaynak kısıtlamaları nedeniyle gerilemeye karşı karşıya kalmaktadır.

Araştırma, dijital dönüşümün müzik eğitimini modernize etmede ve öğrencilerin geleneksel müzikle etkileşimini sürdürmede oynadığı kritik rolü vurgulamaktadır.

Çin'in dijital teknolojileri başarılı bir şekilde entegre etmesi, gençlerin geleneksel müziğe olan ilgisini destekleyen ve eğitim kaynaklarına yaygın erişimi kolaylaştıran etkileşimli öğrenme ortamları yaratmıştır. Multimedya platformlarının ve çevrimiçi kursların geliştirilmesi, coğrafi ve kurumsal sınırları aşarak geleneksel müzik eğitime erişimi demokratikleştirmiştir.

Öte yandan, Kırgızistan'ın sınırlı dijital altyapısı, bölgeler arasında eğitim fırsatlarında önemli eşitsizlikler yaratmakta ve geleneksel müzik eğitimi desteklemek için teknik yatırımın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Dijital uçurum yalnızca eğitim kaynaklarına erişimi etkilemekle kalmamakta, aynı zamanda geleneksel müzik öğrenme deneyimlerini geliştirebilecek yenilikçi pedagojik yaklaşımların potansiyelini de sınırlamaktadır.

Çalışma, geleneksel müziği resmi eğitim sistemleri aracılığıyla teşvik ederken özgünlüğü korumayla ilgili kritik zorlukları tespit etmiştir. Çin'de, geleneksel türlerin modern formatlara uyarlanarak ticarileştirilmesi, özgünlüğün korunması için riskler oluşturmakta ve erişilebilirlik ile kültürel bütünlük arasında dikkatli bir denge gerektirmektedir. Bu arada Kırgızistan, geleneksel müzik uygulamalarının sürekliliğini ve bilgi aktarımını tehdit eden temel kaynak kıtlığı sorunuyla karşı karşıyadır.

Araştırma, etkili geleneksel müzik entegrasyonu için birkaç temel öneri sunmaktadır. İlk olarak, başarılı bir uygulama, Çin'in sistematik yaklaşımının da gösterdiği gibi, önemli kurumsal destek ve teknik altyapı yatırımı gerektirmektedir. İkinci olarak, öğrencilerin daha geniş kültürel bağlamlarda geleneksel müziğe ilişkin kültürel anlayışlarını ve takdirlerini derinleştirmek için disiplinlerarası eğitim modelleri geliştirilmelidir. Üçüncü olarak, sözlü gelenek sahiplerinin eğitim süreçlerine aktif katılımı, özgünlüğün sağlanması ve bilgi sürekliliğinin sağlanması için elzemdir. Dördüncü olarak, dijital ortamlara uyarlanmış modern öğretim materyallerinin geliştirilmesi hem

kentsel hem de kırsal eğitim ortamlarına etkili bir şekilde hizmet vermek için hayati önem taşımaktadır.

Bu karşılaştırmalı çalışma, geleneksel müziğin resmi eğitim sistemlerine etkili bir şekilde entegre edilmesinin, devlet desteği, kurumsallaşmış programlar, modern dijital teknolojiler ve geleneksel bilgi taşıyıcılarının anlamlı katılımını birleştiren çok yönlü bir yaklaşım gerektirdiğini göstermektedir. Çin ve Kırgızistan'ın zıt deneyimleri, eğitim yoluyla kültürel korumanın hem potansiyelini hem de zorluklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Gelecekteki araştırmalar, belirli pedagojik modellerin etkinliğini analiz etmeye, karşılaştırmalı analizi diğer Orta Asya ülkelerine genişletmeye ve çağdaş genç nüfus arasında geleneksel müzik formlarının yeniden üretilmesinde dijital kültürün rolünü araştırmaya odaklanmalıdır.