

## Chinese Opera Literacy of Henan Dadao Quzi in Contemporary Education

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### ABSTRACT

Henan Dadao Quzi is classified as Quyi, a folk art form between song and traditional opera, emphasizing music and narrative more strongly than dramatic performance. This study investigates the role of Henan Dadao Quzi in enhancing Quyi Opera literacy in contemporary Chinese education. Incorporating this traditional art form into school curricula can promote cultural, musical, and ethical literacy among students. Conducted in Nanyang, Henan Province, the study involved two key informants with over 20 years of experience in Henan Dadao Quzi and one general informant, experienced in teaching and performing the art form. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, with thematic analysis used to identify key themes. The findings reveal that Henan Dadao Quzi significantly enhances students' understanding of cultural narratives, musical structures, and ethical values, thus promoting a deeper engagement with Chinese heritage. However, the study also identifies challenges in integrating traditional opera into modern educational frameworks, particularly in adapting the art form to contemporary teaching methods. Suggestions for future research include comparative analyses of other traditional art forms and the development of curriculum models that better incorporate traditional arts into contemporary education.

**Key words:** Henan Dadao Quzi, Traditional Opera Literacy, Cultural Heritage, Chinese Education, Musical Literacy

### INTRODUCTION

Traditional opera has long played a pivotal role in reflecting the nation's historical narratives, societal values, and artistic expressions in the rich tapestry of Chinese cultural heritage. However, Henan Dadao Quzi is classified as Quyi, a folk art form between song and traditional opera. It is less dramatic than traditional opera and focuses more on music and narrative. Among the various forms of traditional Chinese Quyi, Henan Dadao Quzi holds a unique position, particularly within the cultural landscape of Henan Province (Chang et al., 2024; Tang & Sornyai, 2023; Zhang & Natayakulwong, 2024). Unlike traditional opera, Henan Dadao Quzi is less focused on dramatic performance and instead emphasizes music and narrative, making it a living repository of linguistic, musical, and performative literacy passed down through generations. However, with the rapid modernization and globalization of Chinese society, there has been a noticeable decline in the younger generation's familiarity with and appreciation for these traditional art forms (Howard, 2016; Zongui, 2015). This shift poses a significant challenge to the preservation and transmission of Henan Dadao Quzi, especially within the context of contemporary education.

The central problem addressed in this research stems from the decreasing engagement of students with traditional opera

forms, including Henan Dadao Quzi, within the modern educational curriculum. As educational priorities shift towards more globally recognized skills and knowledge, traditional folk arts like Henan Dadao Quzi struggle to find a place in contemporary curricula. This trend raises concerns about the future of cultural literacy, particularly traditional operatic forms that require passive knowledge, active engagement, and performance skills (Abromeit, 2018; Leung, 2024; Tang, 2021). Henan Dadao Quzi, with its intricate combination of music, narrative, and performance, represents a particularly complex form of literacy that is at risk of being lost if not adequately supported by contemporary educational practices. The decline in student engagement with such traditional forms indicates a broader cultural shift that could lead to the erosion of this important aspect of Chinese heritage (Wu, 2019; Zhang et al., 2024).

The significance of this research lies in its potential to provide insights into the role that traditional art forms like Henan Dadao Quzi can play in enhancing cultural literacy among students. By integrating Henan Dadao Quzi into the educational curriculum, schools can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of traditional Chinese Quyi among the younger generation. This integration preserves the art form and enriches the students' cultural experience, allowing them to develop a nuanced understanding of their cultural

heritage. Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader discourse on cultural preservation and education, offering a model for how traditional arts can be effectively incorporated into contemporary educational practices (Kuttner, 2020; Stenberg & Hsin-hsin, 2019; Zhang & Thotham, 2024). In doing so, it addresses the urgent need to bridge the gap between modern educational demands and the preservation of cultural literacy.

This research aims to investigate the role of Henan Dadao Quzi in enhancing Quyi Opera literacy in contemporary Chinese education. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how the inclusion of Henan Dadao Quzi in school curricula can impact students' engagement with and understanding of traditional Chinese opera. By examining the methods and outcomes of integrating this art form into educational settings, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers (Cen et al., 2024; Yu & Choatchamrat, 2024). These recommendations will be based on an analysis of how traditional opera literacy, cultivated through Henan Dadao Quzi, can be leveraged to enrich students' educational experiences while preserving an important aspect of China's cultural heritage. Ultimately, this study aspires to contribute to the revitalization of traditional arts in education, ensuring that future generations continue to value and engage with their cultural roots.

### Research Question

- How does the inclusion of Henan Dadao Quzi in contemporary Chinese educational curricula enhance traditional opera literacy?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of traditional opera literacy, particularly through the lens of Henan Dadao Quzi, is rooted in an understanding of cultural preservation, educational theory, and the role of arts in holistic learning. Theories of cultural transmission and literacy development provide a foundation for analyzing how traditional art forms can be effectively integrated into contemporary educational practices. This literature review explores these concepts through three main sections: cultural literacy and preservation, educational integration of traditional arts, and the specific role of Henan Dadao Quzi in enhancing opera literacy.

### Cultural Literacy and Preservation

Cultural literacy encompasses understanding, appreciating, and participating in a community's cultural expressions and practices. In traditional Chinese opera, cultural literacy involves recognizing the aesthetic and historical value of forms like Henan Dadao Quzi and engaging with the complex narratives, musical structures, and performative traditions embodying these art forms. The preservation of such cultural literacy is critical, particularly in the face of rapid globalization and the homogenization of cultural practices. Theories of cultural preservation argue that education plays a pivotal role in maintaining cultural diversity by passing down traditional

knowledge and practices to younger generations. In this view, schools are key sites for cultural transmission, where students can be exposed to and engage with traditional forms of literacy that might otherwise be lost. By integrating traditional arts into the curriculum, educators can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage among students, thus ensuring the continuity of these practices (Gong et al., 2024; Howard, 2016; Tang, 2021).

### Educational Integration of Traditional Arts

The integration of traditional arts into contemporary education is supported by theories that emphasize the role of arts in holistic learning. Arts education is often linked to developing critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence, all essential for students' overall development. Traditional arts, in particular, offer unique opportunities for experiential learning, where students can engage directly with cultural practices through performance, interpretation, and reflection. The educational value of traditional arts lies in their ability to connect students with their cultural roots while also developing cognitive and social skills. Experiential learning theories suggest that students learn best when actively involved in the learning process, particularly through hands-on activities that require them to apply knowledge in practical contexts. In the case of Henan Dadao Quzi, this might involve students learning to perform or analyze operatic pieces, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the art form and its cultural significance. Moreover, integrating traditional arts into the curriculum can help bridge the gap between students' cultural heritage and modern educational experiences, making learning more relevant and meaningful (Ho, 2018; Li, 2019; Qian, 2024).

### The Role of Henan Dadao Quzi in Enhancing Opera Literacy

Henan Dadao Quzi, with its rich musical and narrative traditions, serves as an ideal vehicle for enhancing traditional opera literacy in contemporary education. Theories of literacy development emphasize the importance of contextualized learning, where literacy is seen not just as the ability to read and write but as the ability to interpret and engage with various forms of communication, including music and performance. In this context, traditional opera literacy involves understanding and appreciating the complex interplay of music, language, and narrative that characterizes forms like Henan Dadao Quzi. By incorporating this art form into the curriculum, educators can provide students with opportunities to develop a specialized form of literacy deeply rooted in Chinese cultural traditions. This approach aligns with the broader goals of arts education, which seeks to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are knowledgeable about their cultural heritage and capable of contributing to its preservation and evolution. Therefore, Henan Dadao Quzi plays a crucial role in enhancing students' traditional opera literacy by providing a direct, immersive experience of one of China's most cherished art forms (Li et al., 2024; Liu & Choatchamrat, 2024; Law & Ho, 2015; Ma & Charanyananda, 2023).

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to investigate the role of Henan Dadao Quzi in enhancing traditional opera literacy within contemporary Chinese education. The qualitative approach is particularly suitable for exploring cultural phenomena, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, interpretations, and the broader social and educational context in which Henan Dadao Quzi is transmitted.

### Research Design

The research design is structured around three main phases: selection of research sites, selection of informants, and data collection. Each phase is carefully designed to ensure that the study captures the complexities and nuances of integrating Henan Dadao Quzi into contemporary educational settings.

### Selection of Research Sites

The primary research site for this study is Nanyang, Henan Province, China. Nanyang was chosen due to its historical significance as a cultural hub for Henan Dadao Quzi and its continued prominence in the preservation and performance of this traditional art form. Nanyang's rich cultural environment provides an ideal setting to observe and analyze how Henan Dadao Quzi is integrated into educational practices and influences traditional opera literacy.

### Selection of Informants

The study includes two key informants and one general informant to gather diverse perspectives. The key informants were recruited based on their extensive experience in the transmission and performance of Henan Dadao Quzi and their active involvement in cultural preservation. One informant was identified through local cultural organizations, and another was referred through professional networks. The general informant, selected for their experience in teaching and performing Dadao Quzi, was recruited through personal connections within the local artistic community. The selection process was designed to ensure that the informants had significant expertise and an understanding of both traditional and modern educational applications of Henan Dadao Quzi. The selection of informants followed specific criteria: more than 20 years of experience in Henan Dadao Quzi, active participation in its transmission, and familiarity with contemporary educational methods. Additional criteria included geographical proximity to Henan Province, fluency in the local dialect, and knowledge of Henan Dadao Quzi's cultural significance, as shown in Table 1.

### Data Collection

Data was collected using three primary methods: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the key and general informants to gather detailed narratives of their experiences with Henan Dadao Quzi. Interview

**Table 1.** Selection criteria for informants

Type	Informants	Selection Criteria
Key Informants	2	Over 20 years of experience in Henan Dadao Quzi, active role in its transmission, in-depth knowledge of both traditional and modern practices
General Informant	1	The resident has experience in teaching and performing Dadao Quzi and an understanding of educational methods and the cultural significance of the art form

questions were designed based on the research objectives and focused on understanding the informants' perspectives on integrating the art form into educational settings. The interviews were audio-recorded, and textual data were collected for analysis. Additionally, participant observation allowed for direct observation of performances, workshops, and educational sessions involving Henan Dadao Quzi, which were documented through field notes, video recordings, and photographs. Document analysis was conducted using curricula, historical records, and teaching materials related to Henan Dadao Quzi, providing a comprehensive view of its role in contemporary education, as shown in Table 2.

### Data Analysis

The data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis were analyzed using thematic analysis following the guidelines outlined by Clarke and Braun (2017). This approach allowed the researcher to identify and interpret patterns and themes related to the integration of Henan Dadao Quzi in education and its impact on traditional opera literacy. The data analysis was conducted in several stages, as shown in Table 3.

## RESULTS

Integrating traditional opera, particularly Henan Dadao Quzi, into contemporary Chinese educational curricula serves as a vital means of preserving and promoting cultural literacy. In a rapidly modernizing society, where global influences often overshadow local traditions, ensuring that younger generations are literate in their cultural heritage becomes increasingly important. However, the integration process is not without challenges, such as resistance from some teachers due to the complexity of adapting traditional opera into modern curricula and limited resources for performance-based teaching.

### Enhancing Cultural Literacy through Henan Dadao Quzi

Integrating Henan Dadao Quzi into contemporary Chinese educational curricula plays a pivotal role in enhancing cultural literacy among students. In this context, cultural

**Table 2.** Data collection methods

Method	Description
Semi-Structured Interviews	In-depth interviews with key and general informants to gather narratives, text data, and insights related to the integration of Henan Dadao Quzi in educational settings
Participant Observation	Direct observation of performances, workshops, and educational sessions, captured through video recordings, pictures, and field notes
Document Analysis	Examination of curricula, teaching materials, and historical records to provide additional context for the study

**Table 3.** Data analysis procedures

Method	Description
Transcription and familiarization	All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and field notes from observations were reviewed to familiarize the researcher with the content
Initial coding	The data was systematically coded by identifying key phrases, actions, or concepts relevant to the research objective. This was done manually and checked using qualitative data analysis software
Theme development	The codes were grouped into broader themes, reviewed, and refined to align with the research questions. Themes such as "cultural transmission in education" and "musical literacy through performance" emerged during this process
Ensuring credibility	To ensure the credibility of the findings, peer review was conducted by sharing the data and analysis with experts in traditional Chinese opera and qualitative research methods. Cross-referencing data from observations, interviews, and documents allowed for triangulation in addition to confirming the accuracy of the findings.

literacy refers to understanding, appreciating, and engaging with the cultural narratives, traditions, and values intrinsic to Chinese heritage, particularly through traditional opera. Henan Dadao Quzi, with its rich historical roots and distinctive cultural expressions, serves as an effective tool for deepening students' connection to their cultural heritage.

One of the key aspects of cultural literacy that Henan Dadao Quzi fosters is the understanding of historical and regional cultural narratives. The historical development of Dadao Quzi, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, highlights the genre's evolution from the Ming and Qing dynasties through to the Republic of China era. This historical trajectory is not merely a chronological account but a reflection of the broader socio-cultural dynamics of the times. By studying the origins and progression of Dadao Quzi, students gain insight into how cultural practices are shaped by and respond to historical events, social changes, and regional influences.



**Figure 1.** Henan folk music in the Qing Dynasty  
Source: Linlin Wei, from fieldwork at Baofeng art center in June 2023



**Figure 2.** Henan Dadao Quzi in the republic of China (1912-1949)  
Source: Linlin Wei, from fieldwork at Baofeng art center in June 2023

Figure 1, which depicts Henan folk music during the Qing Dynasty, illustrates the deep cultural roots of Dadao Quzi in the Central Plains region. This period was marked by the flourishing of various art forms, with Dadao Quzi emerging as a distinctive expression of local cultural identity. Understanding this historical context allows students to appreciate the significance of Dadao Quzi as more than just an art form; it becomes a vehicle through which the cultural and historical identity of the region is communicated and preserved.

Figure 2, showing the development of Henan Dadao Quzi during the Republic of China era, underscores the genre's adaptability and resilience. During this period, Dadao Quzi was a form of entertainment and cultural expression that responded to the rapidly changing social and political landscape. This adaptability is crucial to cultural literacy, as it teaches students how traditional art forms can evolve while retaining their core cultural significance.

Moreover, the integration of Henan Dadao Quzi into educational curricula encourages students to engage with the moral and ethical values embedded in its narratives. Traditional Chinese operas, including Dadao Quzi, often

depict stories that convey lessons on morality, loyalty, filial piety, and social harmony. Through these performances, students are exposed to the cultural values that have been central to Chinese society for centuries. This exposure is vital for fostering a deeper understanding of and respect for these values, which are often overlooked in modern educational contexts.

By engaging with Henan Dadao Quzi, students also develop an appreciation for the linguistic and literary aspects of traditional Chinese culture. The lyrics of Dadao Quzi, often composed in classical Chinese, are rich in poetic expression and linguistic artistry. Understanding and interpreting these lyrics require a certain level of linguistic literacy, which, in turn, enhances students' overall cultural literacy. The ability to appreciate the nuances of language used in Dadao Quzi contributes to a broader understanding of Chinese literary traditions and their role in shaping cultural identity.

### Developing Musical Literacy in Traditional Opera through Henan Dadao Quzi

Integrating Henan Dadao Quzi into contemporary Chinese education plays a crucial role in developing musical literacy among students, particularly in understanding traditional Chinese musical forms, structures, and techniques. Engaging with Dadao Quzi introduces students to a rich musical tradition that enhances their appreciation for traditional Chinese music and deepens their musical literacy.

One of the primary ways Dadao Quzi contributes to musical literacy is through its intricate use of traditional Chinese musical forms and structures. As students learn to perform and analyze Dadao Quzi, they encounter various musical elements unique to this genre, such as specific scales, rhythms, and melodic patterns deeply rooted in

Chinese musical traditions. For instance, using “yin yang ju” (阴阳句) and other melodic structures helps students understand how traditional Chinese music differs from Western music in scale, tonality, and phrasing. Challenges in teaching these structures, particularly the complexity of traditional scales and the required vocal control, were observed, highlighting the need for specialized resources and training for educators. These structures offer a distinct auditory experience and serve as a gateway to comprehending the broader framework of Chinese music theory, which illustrates the transformation of the piece “Er Sao Mai Chu” (二嫂买锄) from a basic melody to one enriched with ornamental techniques, are key examples of how musical literacy is developed through the study of Dadao Quzi, as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

In Figure 3, the unornamented version of the melody presents a straightforward yet foundational musical line. However, in Figure 4, the ornamented version reveals the complexity and expressive depth added through traditional techniques such as sliding, trilling, and pitch embellishments. This ornamentation process not only enhances the beauty of the performance but also teaches students about the nuanced ways in which traditional Chinese music communicates emotion and narrative.

Moreover, interpreting and performing these musical ornaments requires students to develop a keen ear and precise vocal control, further contributing to their musical literacy. As they navigate the challenges of accurately reproducing the ornamentation, students gain insight into the interpretative flexibility that is a hallmark of traditional Chinese music. This experience fosters a deeper understanding of how musical expression in Chinese opera is closely tied to linguistic and cultural contexts, making the learning process both a musical and cultural education.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Er Sao Mai Chu". It consists of two staves of music in 2/4 time. The melody is simple and unornamented. The lyrics are written in Chinese characters and Pinyin below the notes. The first line of lyrics is: 买上一件如意的物。二嫂子一边走来 (mai shang yi jian ru yi de wu. er sao zi yi bian zou lai). The second line is: 一边看哟! 农付产品上的实在是 (yi bian kan yo! nong fu chan pin shang de shi zai shi).

**Figure 3.** The music score of Er Sao Mai Chu has no ornamentation  
Source: Linlin Wei, transcription from fieldwork in June 2023

The image shows the same musical score as Figure 3, but with traditional Chinese musical ornaments. The melody is more complex and expressive, featuring techniques like sliding, trilling, and pitch embellishments. The lyrics are the same as in Figure 3: 买上一件如意的物。二嫂子一边走来 (mai shang yi jian ru yi de wu. er sao zi yi bian zou lai) and 一边看哟! 农付产品上的实在是 (yi bian kan yo! nong fu chan pin shang de shi zai shi).

**Figure 4.** The music score of Er Sao Mai Chu has ornamentation  
Source: Linlin Wei, transcription from fieldwork in June 2023

The development of musical literacy through Henan Dadao Quzi is not limited to the technical aspects of music. It also encompasses a broader cultural literacy as students learn to appreciate the historical and social significance of the music they perform. By understanding the context in which Dadao Quzi was created and evolved, students can better grasp the cultural values and historical narratives the music embodies. This holistic approach to music education ensures that students develop technical proficiency and profound respect for the cultural heritage that Dadao Quzi represents.

### **Strengthening Musical Literacy in Educational Contexts**

Including Henan Dadao Quzi in educational curricula offers a unique opportunity to strengthen musical literacy among students by immersing them in the traditional Chinese musical landscape. This section explores how the study and performance of Dadao Quzi contribute to students' understanding of traditional Chinese musical structures, rhythms, and melodies, thereby fostering a deeper appreciation for this rich cultural heritage.

However, integrating Dadao Quzi into the curriculum has faced resistance from students and teachers unfamiliar with the genre. Many schools lack the resources to teach this form adequately, leading to inconsistent learning experiences. Overcoming these barriers requires investment in teacher training and resource development.

One of the key aspects of musical literacy developed through Dadao Quzi is the students' familiarity with traditional Chinese musical structures. Unlike Western music, which often follows a standardized pattern of scales and harmonies, Chinese music, as exemplified in Dadao Quzi, is characterized by its distinctive use of pentatonic scales, modal variations, and melodic flexibility. Students learn to recognize and appreciate traditional Chinese music's unique architectural framework by engaging with these structures. This understanding is crucial for students to develop a comprehensive musical literacy that transcends cultural boundaries and encompasses a global perspective on music.

Moreover, the rhythmic complexity of Dadao Quzi plays a significant role in enhancing students' musical literacy. The rhythm in Dadao Quzi is often intricate, with various tempo changes, syncopations, and irregular meters that challenge conventional rhythmic patterns. As students practice and internalize these rhythms, they develop a heightened sense of timing, coordination, and rhythmic interpretation, essential to musical literacy. This rhythmic literacy improves their performance skills and deepens their ability to engage with and interpret complex musical pieces, whether in a traditional or contemporary context.

Melodic literacy is another critical component strengthened through the study of Dadao Quzi. The melodies in Dadao Quzi are often ornamented and require a nuanced understanding of pitch, tone, and inflection. As students learn to navigate these melodic lines, they become more adept at interpreting the subtle variations that give traditional Chinese music its distinctive character. This melodic literacy is further reinforced by the cultural narratives embedded in

the music, which often dictate the emotional tone and expression of the melodies. By understanding the interplay between melody and narrative, students gain a more holistic approach to music, where technical proficiency is complemented by cultural and emotional insight.

The educational context in which Dadao Quzi is taught also plays a crucial role in strengthening musical literacy. Instructors who are well-versed in traditional Chinese music can guide students through the intricacies of Dadao Quzi, offering insights into the technical and cultural aspects of the music. This mentorship is vital in helping students internalize the musical concepts and apply them in their performances. Additionally, the collaborative nature of learning Dadao Quzi, where students often perform in groups, fosters a communal learning environment where musical literacy is developed through shared experiences and peer learning.

Furthermore, the inclusion of Dadao Quzi in the curriculum aligns with broader educational goals of preserving and promoting cultural heritage. By integrating this traditional art form into contemporary education, schools preserve a significant aspect of Chinese culture while providing students with the tools to engage with and appreciate their cultural roots. This approach enhances musical literacy and reinforces cultural literacy as students learn to value and uphold the traditions that have shaped their cultural identity.

### **Promoting Ethical and Moral Literacy through Opera Narratives**

Henan Dadao Quzi, as a traditional Chinese opera form, is rich in narratives that convey profound ethical and moral lessons. Deeply rooted in Chinese cultural and historical contexts, these stories serve as a vehicle for imparting traditional values to students. This section explores how the inclusion of Dadao Quzi in educational curricula contributes to developing ethical and moral literacy among students, providing them with a framework to understand and internalize traditional Chinese values.

The narratives in Dadao Quzi often revolve around loyalty, filial piety, righteousness, and integrity—core values central to Chinese moral philosophy for centuries. By engaging with these stories, students are exposed to ethical dilemmas and moral decisions that character's face, allowing them to reflect on these situations and apply the lessons learned to their lives. This process of ethical reflection is a key aspect of ethical literacy, as it encourages students to consider the consequences of actions and the importance of adhering to moral principles. Teachers reported that while students initially found these stories outdated, they became more engaged when the moral lessons were related to contemporary societal issues. This feedback highlights the need to contextualize traditional narratives within modern ethical discussions to enhance their relevance to today's students.

For instance, many Dadao Quzi performances depict characters facing difficult choices, such as sacrificing personal gain for the greater good or upholding family honor despite personal loss. These narratives provide concrete examples of traditional Chinese values applied in various contexts, making abstract concepts more tangible for students.

As they analyze the motivations and actions of characters, students develop a deeper understanding of the ethical frameworks that guide behavior in traditional Chinese culture. This understanding is crucial for fostering ethical literacy, as it equips students to navigate moral complexities in their own lives.

Moreover, the didactic nature of many Dadao Quzi narratives reinforces the moral lessons being conveyed. These operas often conclude with a clear moral message, explicitly highlighting the virtues of honesty, loyalty, and respect for elders. Such direct moral instruction effectively promotes ethical literacy, informing students about what is considered right and wrong and encouraging them to embody these virtues in their daily interactions. The repetitive exposure to these narratives through performances and classroom discussions helps reinforce these values, making them an integral part of students' moral compass.

In addition to the content of the narratives, the performative aspects of Dadao Quzi also contribute to promoting ethical literacy. The portrayal of characters through expressive singing, gestures, and facial expressions enhances the emotional impact of the moral lessons, making them more relatable and memorable for students. This emotional engagement is important for ethical literacy, as it helps students empathize with the characters and internalize the moral values being portrayed. Students are likelier to adopt these values by connecting with the characters' emotions, strengthening their ethical literacy.

Furthermore, the collaborative nature of learning and performing Dadao Quzi fosters community and shared values among students. As they work together to bring these narratives to life, students learn the importance of cooperation, mutual respect, and collective responsibility—values central to ethical literacy and traditional Chinese culture. This collaborative learning environment enhances their understanding of the narratives and encourages them to practice the moral lessons they have learned in their interactions with others.

Integrating Dadao Quzi into the educational curriculum also aligns with preserving and promoting traditional Chinese values in contemporary society. Schools play a crucial role in maintaining the ethical foundation of Chinese culture by ensuring that students are familiar with these narratives and the moral lessons they convey. Preserving traditional values through education is essential for fostering an ethically literate and culturally rooted generation.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study's findings highlight Henan Dadao Quzi's significant role in enhancing traditional opera literacy within contemporary Chinese education. Integrating this traditional art form into the educational curriculum serves as a tool for preserving cultural heritage and developing various forms of literacy among students, including cultural, musical, and ethical literacy. These findings align with the theoretical principles discussed in the literature review, emphasizing the importance of cultural transmission and integrating traditional arts in education to foster a holistic learning experience (Gong et al., 2024; Ho, 2018; Li, 2019).

One of the central themes emerging from the results is the enhancement of cultural literacy through the study and performance of Henan Dadao Quzi. The analysis showed that students who engage with this traditional opera gain a deeper understanding of historical and regional cultural narratives, aligning with theories of cultural preservation that underscore the educational system's role in maintaining cultural diversity (Howard, 2016; Tang, 2021). This finding is consistent with previous research, which suggests that integrating traditional arts into education can effectively bridge the gap between modern educational practices and the preservation of cultural heritage (Kuttner, 2020; Stenberg & Hsin-hsin, 2019). By incorporating Henan Dadao Quzi into the curriculum, educators can foster a nuanced appreciation of cultural heritage, which is critical in a rapidly globalizing world where local traditions are at risk of being overshadowed.

Musical literacy is another critical area in which Henan Dadao Quzi has shown a profound impact. The study found that students' engagement with the intricate musical structures, scales, and ornamentations unique to this genre significantly enhances their understanding and appreciation of traditional Chinese music. This aligns with the theories of experiential learning, which suggest that hands-on engagement with traditional arts can deepen students' cognitive and emotional connections to the material (Ho, 2018; Qian, 2024). The development of musical literacy through the study of Henan Dadao Quzi also resonates with the broader goals of arts education, which aim to cultivate well-rounded, technically proficient, culturally and emotionally literate (Li, 2019; Ma & Charanyananda, 2023).

Promoting ethical and moral literacy through the narratives of Henan Dadao Quzi is another significant finding of this research. The study found that the moral lessons embedded in operatic stories, such as loyalty, filial piety, and righteousness, provide students with a framework for understanding and internalizing traditional Chinese values. This finding is consistent with previous research that highlights the role of traditional narratives in moral education, suggesting that exposure to such stories can effectively promote ethical literacy among students (Liu & Choatchamrat, 2024; Wu, 2019). Furthermore, the performative aspects of Dadao Quzi, which involve expressive singing and gestures, enhance the emotional impact of these moral lessons, making them more relatable and memorable for students. This aligns with the theoretical principles that emphasize the importance of emotional engagement in ethical literacy development (Abromeit, 2018; Stenberg & Hsin-hsin, 2019).

However, the challenges of integrating Henan Dadao Quzi into modern educational environments were also evident throughout the study. Many educators reported difficulties adapting the traditional art form into the standardized curriculum, citing limited time, resources, and training as primary obstacles. Teachers expressed concerns about balancing the complexity of traditional music with the demands of modern educational standards, prioritizing skills more aligned with global trends. Additionally, some students and teachers initially resisted incorporating traditional opera,

perceiving it as outdated or irrelevant to contemporary culture. This resistance reflects broader societal issues related to preserving cultural heritage as younger generations become more influenced by global cultural norms.

Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, such as teacher training programs that equip educators with the skills and resources needed to effectively teach traditional arts and curriculum adjustments that allow for the integration of Henan Daidiao Quzi without overburdening students or teachers. Increasing the availability of resources, such as digital materials or supplementary learning aids, could also help overcome some of these barriers.

This study has demonstrated that Henan Daidiao Quzi, as a traditional Chinese opera form, plays a crucial role in enhancing various forms of literacy among students, including cultural, musical, and ethical literacy. Integrating this art form into contemporary Chinese educational curricula provides a valuable opportunity for students to engage with and appreciate their cultural heritage while developing a comprehensive understanding of traditional Chinese music and values. These findings are consistent with theoretical principles that emphasize the importance of cultural transmission and the role of arts in holistic education.

In conclusion, the integration of Henan Daidiao Quzi into the educational curriculum shows immense promise in enhancing traditional opera literacy and preserving cultural heritage. However, overcoming the practical challenges of its incorporation requires a concerted effort from educational policymakers, teachers, and cultural institutions. Further research is needed to compare it with other traditional Chinese operatic forms, assess its long-term impact, develop curriculum models that incorporate traditional arts, and understand the perspectives of students and educators on its integration. These insights could help identify strategies to overcome resistance and enhance the effectiveness of arts education in China.

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