



**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
MODERN EDUCATION  
(IJMOE)**[www.gaexcellence.com/ijmoe](http://www.gaexcellence.com/ijmoe)**EXPLORING THE MUSICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL  
DIMENSIONS OF QIANG CHILDREN'S SONGS: A  
QUALITATIVE STUDY OF EDUCATOR'S AND MUSICIANS'  
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**Article Info:****Article history:**

Received date: 09.02.2026

Revised date: 19.02.2026

Accepted date: 13.04.2026

Published date: 09.06.2026

**To cite this document:**

Deng, Q., & Shah, S. M. (2026). Exploring The Musical and Pedagogical Dimensions of Qiang Children's Songs: A Qualitative Study of Educator's and Musicians' Perspective. *International Journal of Modern Education*, 8(30), 124-144.

**Abstract:**

This paper discusses the musical features of the song of the Qiang children and its educational benefit in the primary school music education in China. Although the significance of culturally responsive music education is not underestimated, the role of Qiang musical traditions in systematic schooling has not been studied sufficiently. The study adopts a qualitative research design and will be based on semi-structured interviews with five purposively chosen respondents, including Qiang folk musicians and primary school music teachers who have had direct experience in traditional music practices and classroom teaching. The thematic analysis approach based on the strategy suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyse data: familiarisation, coding, theme development, and refinement. This approach has allowed exploring the profound meaning of both musical and pedagogical aspects in the songs of Qiang children. It is found that such songs are defined by pentatonic scales, small pitch ranges, repetitive rhythms, and simple melodies, which coincide with the vocal and cognitive levels of development of children. Other than the structural properties, their contribution to cultural narratives is noted to build on identity and cultural awareness among the young learners. Pedagogically, respondents highlighted their efficiency in increasing student engagement, collaborative learning, and helping to develop basic musical skills. The study, however, also points to situational difficulties such as inadequate access to teaching materials, a lack of training of teachers to teach ethnic music, and the limitation on formal curricula. Offering empirically based information on the musical and educational aspects, this research paper will be useful to the emerging

discussion about culturally inclusive music education and provide practical implications to the inclusion of indigenous musical traditions into the primary school curricula.

**DOI:** 10.35631/IJMOE.830010

**Keywords:**

Classroom Engagement, Cultural Awareness, Ethnic Music, Musical Characteristics, Pedagogical Value, Primary Music Education, Qiang Children's Song



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## Introduction

### *Research Background*

It is a well-known fact that music education is one of the key elements of the holistic development of children, which helps them grow cognitively, demonstrate their emotions, and develop their aesthetic sense. In early education, the role of children's songs is central because of the simplicity of structures, accessibility, and their relationship with the real-life experience of learners. According to Campbell (2004), folk songs of children are not only instructional, but also cultural artefacts, which pass on social values, beliefs, and collective identities across generations. In this respect, the scope of music education is not limited to the technological development of a skill, but it is the cultural learning and identity that is developed in music education.

Over the past few decades, the discussion of multicultural music education has come to focus more attention on the incorporation of culturally diverse musical traditions into the school curricula. This inclusion is said to be crucial in promoting cultural awareness, inclusivity, and international understanding among learners (Abril, 2006). Empirical studies indicate that exposure to various forms of music at an early age has helped students appreciate not only local cultures but also global cultures, hence promoting culturally responsive learning conditions. In the broader context, traditional and ethnic music can be regarded as significant learning tools, which contextualise the learning process and render it valuable to the students.

The ethnic diversity of China creates an excellent pool of musical traditions that can be used in the practices of music education. Qiang music is one of such unique and underrepresented cultural heritages. With its music being based on the real-life labour activities, celebrations,

and scenery, the songs of Qiang children are associated with the strong interdependence between music, culture, and social identity. Their musical characteristics, including pentatonic scales, limited range of pitch, and repetitive rhythmic structures, are close to the vocal and cognitive abilities of children (Nan and Guan, 2023). These properties make them specifically conducive to primary music education since they enable learning, memorizing and being involved easily.

In addition, culturally appropriate music resources have been found to facilitate student engagement and motivation through relating the learning material to the lived experiences of the learners (Wang and Humphreys, 2009). The use of traditional music in classroom learning has not only been effective in the development of musical skills but has also enhanced the sense of belonging and identity to a particular culture among the students (Law & Ho, 2009). Moreover, the traditional music has its moral, social, and cultural implications, which make students grow in a holistic manner with values like cooperation, respect for nature, and belonging to the community (Ho, 2011).

Regardless of these perceived advantages, the current research has mainly used broad-based methods of studying folk and multicultural music, as the culturally specific study of a particular ethnic tradition is often neglected. Locke and Prentice (2016) insist that context-specific research is required and should focus on the ways in which indigenous musical practices can be effectively incorporated into the formal education systems. In this respect, the current research is informed conceptually by a culturally responsive music education that perceives music as a tool of pedagogy, and a cultural transmission means. This framework will help to analyze the three most important dimensions, which include: (1) musical characteristics, (2) cultural meaning, and (3) the application of pedagogy. The study aims at giving a more holistic picture of the role of Qiang children in primary music education by putting their songs in the context of this three-way relationship.

### ***Problem Statement***

Despite the longstanding pedagogical relevance of children's songs and folk music in early education, the literature of using certain ethnic musical traditions, especially the Qiang children's songs in formal music education, is still in a large gap. Current research has paid much attention to the overall positive effect of multicultural or folk music, including the improvement of cultural awareness, student interest, and the development of skills, but it has not adequately considered how the achievement of these goals is influenced by the specific musical forms and cultural meanings of the particular traditions (Fitzpatrick, 2012). Such generalisation restricts the level of insight into the pedagogical possibilities of culturally different music.

Moreover, the experiential views of the major stakeholders, including folk musicians and music teachers, have not been adequately considered in previous research, which is vital in supporting and passing on the traditional music. Their commentaries are indispensable in explaining musical attributes in terms of interpretation, adaptation, and application in classrooms. This lack of such views leads to the disjointed perception of the connection between traditional music and pedagogical practice.

Also, the empirical and qualitative investigation that investigates the interactions between inherent musical characteristics of Qiang children's songs, including melodic simplicity, rhythmic repetition, cultural symbolism, and teaching methods and learning outcomes in primary school is lacking. In the absence of such analysis, there is a high likelihood that the incorporation of such songs in the formal curricula has been theoretical, as opposed to being evidence-based.

The other important problem is scant attention paid to practical and institutional problems that come with the integration of ethnic music in schools, such as the lack of resources, teacher readiness, and the rigidity of the curriculum. These are contextual factors that are paramount in defining the viability and sustainability of practices of culturally responsive music education. Thus, this research will fill these gaps by presenting a qualitative and contextual research on the musical nature and pedagogical importance of the songs of Qiang children with references to the opinion of both folk performers and primary school teachers. In such a way, it seeks to create a subtler and empirically informed knowledge about the ways in which traditional music can be successfully incorporated into the primary school music education, and, at the same time, help to preserve the culture and enhance the educational process.

### ***Research Objectives***

1. To explore the musical characteristics of Qiang children's songs from the perspectives of folk musicians and music educators.
2. To examine the pedagogical value of Qiang children's songs in primary school music education based on teachers' experiences and insights.

### ***Significance of the Study***

The current study is important as it illuminates the little-known musical cultures of the Qiang ethnic group in the context of reserving culture and promoting music education. The study offers information to primary school teachers who require teaching resources that are culturally related since it has analysed the musical features of the songs of the Qiang children. It underscores the pedagogical importance of such songs in developing the musical talent of the students, creativity and culture awareness. Further, the research endorses the incorporation of ethnic folk music into contemporary curriculums to facilitate inclusive and non-discriminative, multicultural education and foster appreciation of the Chinese cultural diversity among the young learners.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Role of Children's Songs in Early Music Education***

The importance of children's songs in early music education is well known to the extent that they promote cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional growth. Meni (2024) states that listening to rhythmic and melodic patterns of sound increases sound perception, the ability to memorize, and language acquisition, whereas Ghanbari and Hashemian (2014) show that songs are extremely effective in enhancing pronunciation and phonological awareness by means of repetition and imitation. On the same note, Nikolić (2024) stresses the importance of songs encouraging the creativity and holistic process of development, making music an integrative method of pedagogy instead of an individual subject matter.

Even though all these studies confirm the developmental value of songs by children, they differ in the focus of the way the advantages are attained. As an illustration, Meni (2024) prefigures cognitive processing mechanisms, whereas Welch (2014) brings up the socio-emotional aspects of group singing, such as confidence, collaboration, and belonging. This deviation indicates that the use of children's songs transcends several developmental areas at once and needs an analytical approach that is more combined. Nonetheless, most of the literature considers these domains separately, and a full picture of the ways in which musical structure, social interaction, and cultural meaning are intertwined in early education is not provided.

Notably, these works conceptualise the songs of children to a large extent as a pedagogical instrument that is not linked to their culture. This exclusion poses a conceptual drawback in that it does not consider the possibility of songs as a developmental instrument as well as a possessor of cultural knowledge and identity. To solve this gap, the children's songs need to be placed in a context of a wider cultural and pedagogical context.

### ***Impact of Folk Music on Cultural Awareness in Primary Schools***

The concept of folk music in primary education has always been associated with the cultural awareness formation and identity. Martin-Sanz et al. (2025) believe that by using culturally embedded music, learners may gain an understanding of diversity and their appreciation, whereas Huilin and Yuxin (2025) are sure that involvement in folk activities will help the students feel a sense of belonging and nationality. Likewise, Jian et al. (2024) also emphasize that folk music has a positive impact on artistic literacy and cultural knowledge on a deeper level than just as a surface-level activity.

Though this is the agreement, scholars have significant differences on the conceptualisation of cultural learning using music. Other researchers focus on the exposure to different traditions of music as the only condition for the development of cultural awareness (Martin-Sanz et al., 2025), but some insist on the active engagement and the perception of the context (Huilin and Yuxin, 2025). Our view is further developed by Jeremić et al. (2025), who connect the socio-emotional development to traditional music, claiming that the cultural involvement through music also fosters empathy and social unity.

This difference represents a theoretical conflict in the theoretical perspectives of considering music as a representational instrument (introducing students to cultures) and music as an experiential practice (actively practicing cultural meanings). The latter view is more in line with the culturally responsive pedagogy that is based on the significance of contextualised and meaningful experiences in learning. Nevertheless, the current literature does not tend to relate these theoretical approaches to certain musical schools and thus restricts their effectiveness in the classroom.

### ***Pedagogical Value of Traditional Songs in Classroom Learning***

Traditional songs have been found to be a useful pedagogical instrument that helps in developing musical skills as well as overall education. According to Gong et al. (2024), folk songs allow people to process cognitively and interpret music by incorporating rhythmic and melodic patterns into culturally significant contexts. On the same note, Elgrably and Leikin (2021) points out their importance in developing creativity and a certain level of problem-

solving abilities, and Cahyaningsih et al. (2025) emphasise their role in value-oriented education and moral growth.

Nonetheless, the literature gives contradictory details about the main role of traditional songs in education. A few researchers view them as a means of instruction in the acquisition of musical skills (Gong et al., 2024), but others present them as cultural artifacts that pass values and identities (Cahyaningsih et al., 2025). Wolffenbueffel (2021) tries to fill this gap by proposing both dimensions to be incorporated into a successful music education so that the students can experience both music as a technical and cultural practice.

In spite of these understandings, very little empirical investigation has been done concerning how these dual roles might be applied in actual classroom settings. Specifically, the connection between certain musical elements (e.g., melody, rhythm, scale) and the pedagogical outcome is usually presumed instead of being systematically investigated.

### *Towards a Conceptual Integration*

The literature has three dimensions under observation: (1) the developmental purpose of songs of children, (2) the cultural sense of folk music, and (3) the pedagogical sense of traditional songs. These dimensions are the ones that are often discussed but rarely are included in a rational analysis framework. The current body of literature will also tend to concentrate on one of the dimensions and ignore the rest, thereby arriving at incongruent views concerning music education.

This paper is informed by these strands by taking a culturally responsive approach to music education, which perceives music as a convergence of musical form, cultural signification, and education. In the given context, the analysis of Qiang children's songs is not only based on their musical properties but also on the discussion of the songs as cultural texts and teaching materials. This integrative process deals with the flaws of the previous studies, as it connects the theoretical knowledge to a particular cultural setting.

### *Research Gaps*

An in-depth literature review indicates that there are a number of interconnected gaps:

**Theoretical Gap:** There is no previous literature that supports a framework of prerequisites to associate musical properties, cultural meaning, and learning practice. The research has tried to look into these dimensions one by one without a full picture on how the traditional songs are serving their purpose in the education of music.

**Methodological Gap:** A large portion of the literature is grounded on the generalised/quantitative approaches to the study, and the application of the qualitative approaches, such as the lived experiences and interpretive perceptions of teachers and musicians, is minimal. As a result, the mechanisms of acquiring and experiencing traditional music are not thoroughly studied.

**Empirical Gap:** The context-specific research on the specific ethnic traditions, in this case, the songs of Qiang children are missing. Most of the research studies are either general or comparative in their study of folk music without providing a comprehensive study of specific types of culture and their implications to education.

### ***Relatedness to the Current Research***

To fill in the mentioned gaps, the study under consideration is a qualitative and context-based investigation of the Qiang children's songs in terms of their musical characteristics and their pedagogical significance in the primary school education. The study will be used to address the gaps in the theory, methods and empirical data and contribute to the more comprehensive perspective of culturally responsive music education using both the knowledge of folk musicians and educators.

### **Research Methodology**

#### ***Research Method***

This paper will be qualitative research design to investigate the musical nature of the songs of Qiang children and to analyze the pedagogical significance of this music in primary school music education. This research would be done using a qualitative approach since it would allow a thorough exploration of the culturally rooted musical practices and the experience that educators have. The research aims to reflect the interpretations, meaning, and professional understandings of the participants concerning both the musical structure of songs performed by Qiang children and the application of this music structure in education. The qualitative approach enables a delicate appreciation of the role of traditional music in the teaching and learning of music in primary schools because it emphasizes on subjective views.

#### ***Research Paradigm and Positionality***

The present study is based on the interpretivist research paradigm that presupposes that reality is socially constructed and that knowledge is co-constructed in the process of interaction between the researcher and participants. Epistemologically, the study takes the constructivist view where the meanings attached to the songs of Qiang children are influenced by the cultural context, personal experience, and professional practice. This stance will be suitable, especially on the subject of the study, which aimed at examining subjective interpretations of musical qualities and pedagogical worth.

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher's role is interpretive in nature. The researcher admits that they are outsiders in the Qiang cultural practices, and this can affect the way they will interpret the views of the participants. In order to reduce possible bias, reflexivity was upheld during the research process through critical reflection on assumptions, through being mindful of the voice of the participants, and ensuring that interpretations were based on the data. This is a reflexive method that increases the credibility and transparency of study.

#### ***Data Collection***

The method employed in collecting primary data was semi-structured interviews whereby structured instructions were used but allowed flexibility. This approach enabled the researcher to cover important research themes besides giving the participants an opportunity to discuss their experiences and perceptions. Interview questions were based on melodic, rhythmic and structural features of the songs of Qiang children, the cultural meanings and the pedagogical importance of these songs in the music education of the primary school.

All the interviews took about 40 to 60 minutes. Audio-recordings of interviews were made to facilitate accuracy in transcription and analysis with the permission of the participants. The use of open-ended questions prompted the participants to consider their experiences with the Qiang children's songs, their application in teaching music, student interest, and perceived student learning outcomes.

## **Research Sample**

To be transparent and full of understanding, the participants were selected through purposive sampling in respect to clear-cut criteria. They included (1) direct experience in the songs of Qiang children, (2) professional experience in music education, or performance of traditional music, and (3) the fact that they are able to provide information about the music and pedagogy in details. In order to find the compromise between the cultural authenticity and the usability of the presented pedagogical concepts, the sample was divided in Qiang folk musicians and primary school music educators.

The sample of used participants may appear to be extremely small, but it falls within the principles of qualitative research in which depth is more crucial than breadth. The sample was deemed to be sufficient based on the notion of data saturation where no new themes were being developed in subsequent data collection stages meaning that they were significant. It means that sufficient in-depth information was reached to answer the objectives of the research.

In addition, the respondents had different professional backgrounds and experience hence contributing to the breadth of information. They were both new-career practitioners and long-term practitioners, and it is these years that allowed them to have many different perspectives regarding both the traditional music practices and classroom practice. This type of variety increases the transferability and the richness of the results analysis.

## ***Participant Profile***

The characteristics of the participants were noted to provide contextual insight of the role of the participant, years of experience, and field of expertise. The sample was made up of Qiang folk musicians who were well conversant with the traditions of the musical practice and the primary school music teachers who had actual classroom experience. The combination of this enabled the research to achieve not only culturally imprinted information, but also pedagogical insights that will be beneficial in achieving a general analysis of the research topic.

## **Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis aided the analysis of the interview data, as it is appropriate in identifying the recurring patterns and meanings of the qualitative data. The analysis was divided into a number of steps. Firstly, data familiarization in the research was done by the researcher checking the transcripts of interviews on multiple occasions. Second, the original codes were aimed at revealing the most important concepts related to musical features, culture, teaching techniques as well as pedagogical significance.

The codes were further divided into broader themes which included melodic and rhythmic features, cultural relevance, classroom relevance and learning outcomes. These themes were reconsidered and narrowed down to make them consistent and relevant to the research

objectives. Coding was performed manually and through iterations and themes also improved as one discover new meaning.

The hematical analysis was performed based on the six-phase paradigm proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) which would give a systematic and rigorous analysis. These steps entailed the familiarisation of the data, initial code generation, theme search, theme review, theme definition and naming and generation of final report. The systematic methodology allowed recognizing significant patterns between the accounts of participants.

Coding was performed manually so as to have a close encounter with the data. Early codes were made inductively out of the data and improved as the analysis went on. Increasing the analytical rigour of the study was also done through peer debriefing in this instance and the emergent codes and themes were discussed with an experienced peer in a bid to provide consistency and reduce subjectivity. Moreover, the coding consistency was also maintained through the comparison of data fragments all the time and revising of thematic categories.

In some cases, member checking was also presented, revealing the essential interpretations to certain selected participants to make sure that the findings were accurate. This procedure made sure that the analysis was genuine to the views of participants. All these measures increase validity and reliability of analytical process.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted following ethical principles. The participants were advised of the intention of the research and given an informed consent before participation. The participation was voluntary, and the participants could withdraw any time. The anonymity of the participants was anonymized to maintain confidentiality and all the data was safely stored in password-protected devices. The research was conducted in accordance with the set ethical standards of qualitative research, which include respect, privacy, and integrity.

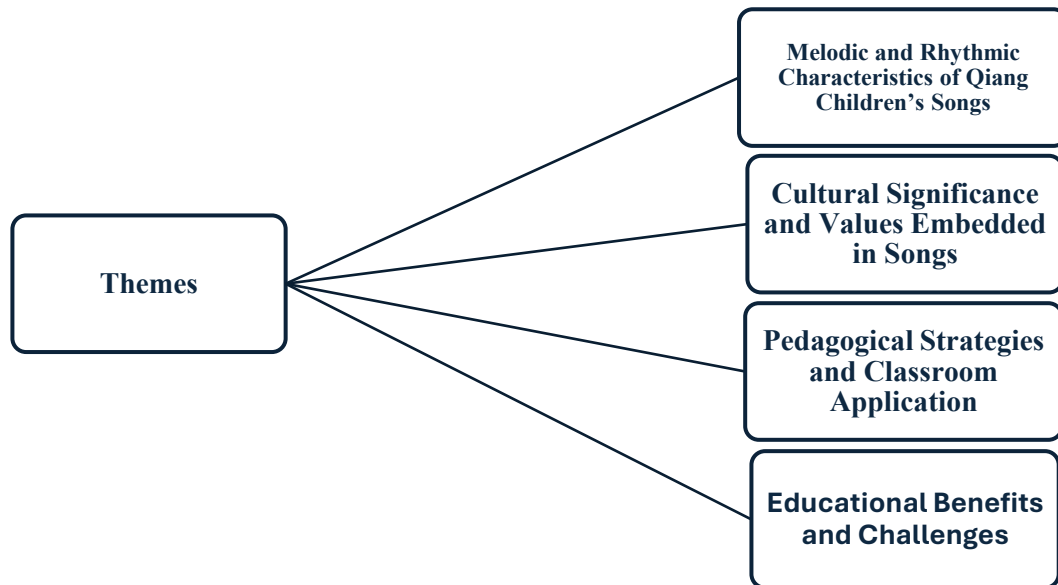
### ***Trustworthiness of the Study***

The rigour of the qualitative research was ensured by meeting the criteria of the established standards of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Long interaction with the data, member checking, and peer debriefing were used to increase credibility in order to capture the views of the participants.

The issue of transferability was resolved by giving detailed and contextual accounts of the research setting, the participants, and the findings so that the reader can be able to decide whether the findings can be applied to other settings. The reliability was achieved due to a clear and systemic research method with a good documentation of data collection and analysis protocols.

The confirmability was ensured with minimal researcher bias due to reflexivity and basing interpretations on the accounts of the participants themselves. Even though methodological triangulation was constrained by the nature of the study design, data source triangulation was successful since both the views of folk musicians and educators were included. All these measures enhance the general validity and reliability of the study.

## Results and Findings



### ***Theme 1: Melodic and Rhythmic Characteristics of Qiang Children's Songs***

This theme concentrates upon the central musical attributes of songs of Qiang children as professed by the interviewees. It highlights these elements of these songs that are suitable to the young learners: melody, rhythm, scale, and structure. The theme has given a focus on the significance of musical simplicity, repetition, and cultural peculiarities to suit children in relation to their vocal abilities and learning in the primary music education. The respondents give various answers as below.

*Respondent 1:*

*Qiang children songs are predominantly pentatonic, that is, with a simple melody. The pitch is limited, and this is appropriate to the children. Rhythms are monotonic and consistent so that they are easy to follow. The brief and repetitive nature will make children memorise the songs and take part in group singing in groups.*

*Respondent 2:*

*The melodies of the songs of Qiang children are uncomplicated and primarily of a stepwise nature. The rhythms are regular and predictable, which assists children to keep time. The songs tend to reiterate musical phrases thereby enabling students to learn faster and feel free to sing along with each other under classroom environments.*

*Respondent 3:*

*These songs are based on simplicity and clarity. The tonal scope is narrow, and beats are monotonous. The songs have repetitive phrases, structurally, which are easy to memorise. This ease of learning makes the songs of Qiang children very usable in group singing and learning early music.*

*Respondent 4:*

*The pentatonic melodies that are apparent in the songs of qiang children are a culture-based practise. Patterns in rhythm are very easy and repetitive, and they may be reminiscent of natural speech rhythm. Reiterating in the structure assists children to memorise musical patterns easily and aid in early music development.*

*Respondent 5:*

*There is a tender melody in the songs without much variation in pitch. Simple and consistent rhythms give the children the chance to sing freely. The short phrases and repetitive motifs allow the songs to be easy to remember and enhance active engagement, as well as children can learn the fundamental ideas of music.*

The responses of Respondent 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 all indicate that the songs of Qiang children are marked by the simplicity of melody, small range of pitches and monotonous repetitive rhythmic modes. These features are in line with the vocal capabilities of children and their cognitive development and hence the songs can be remembered and comprehended easily. The pentatonic scales applied were common to Qiang musical practises and were also useful in memorisation and participation. Although the respondents have different areas of concern, such as cultural identity or pedagogical appropriateness, it is evident that all respondents are of the view that such musical features can be used to enhance the efficacy of songs by Qiang children during lessons in primary school music.

In addition to the simplicity of their structure, these musical characteristics may be viewed as pedagogically applicable, as opposed to being descriptive. The relative simplicity of pentatonic scales, limited range of pitches, and repetitive rhythms indicate a natural appropriateness to the requirements of development, and thus it can be supposed that these songs are not merely coincidentally simple but have been culturally adapted to fit early learning situations. This suggests that musical structure and cognitive accessibility have a functional relationship, in which repetition and predictability as scaffolding mechanisms are mechanisms of musical comprehension. Therefore, the results are not limited to the identification of features, but to the way musical form is actively involved in the process of learning.

## ***Theme 2: Cultural Representation and Identity in Qiang Children's Songs***

This is a theme that emphasizes the role of the songs by Qiang children as the bearers of the cultural identity and traditional values. According to the respondents, these songs reflect the day-to-day life, language, tradition and historical life of the Qiang people. Through the aid of lyrics, melodic patterns and the practises of performance, the songs equip the younger generations with the knowledge of their culture and strengthen their sense of belonging and sense of culture. The reactions of the respondents are different as illustrated below.

*Respondent 1:*

*The songs of qiang children are a keen reflection of the Qiang culture and traditions. Lyrics usually talk about nature, day-to-day life and community life. By singing such songs, children get to know their cultural background and values, which will enable them to form a sense of identity at a tender age.*

*Respondent 2:*

*These songs ensure that some cultural aspects like language expressions and storytelling styles are held down. They are learning music, but they are also*

*internalising cultural meanings when they sing them. This assists children to appreciate their own heritage and feel that they belong to their own society.*

*Respondent 3:*

*Songs of qiang children also have a significant place in the process of cultural knowledge. Local customs and beliefs are manifested in the melodies and the lyrics. The inclusion of these songs in schools aids in making sure that the cultural traditions are not lost and so they are shared across generations.*

*Respondent 4:*

*The songs are a means of Qiang cultural identity in terms of musical scales and themes associated with traditional life. Through singing, children learn their culture. This cultural exposure assists in building pride and respect to their ethnic origin.*

*Respondent 5:*

*The songs of qiang children are usually characterised by cultural elements and narrations. By singing these songs, children get to enjoy their traditions. This assists in continuity of culture and makes learning interesting and engaging to students.*

The responses of Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 suggest that the songs of Qiang children may be considered as the useful tool of cultural passing and identity building. They all agree that the songs use cultural values, traditions and day to day lives in the music and lyrics. Whereas some respondents emphasize on language and narration, some emphasize on music and cultural symbolism. However, it is generally accepted that these differences do not presuppose that the integration of the children of the Qiang songs in the educational process erodes the cultural consciousness of the children, their feeling of pride in their culture and, as a result, causes the continuation of the Qiang cultural traditions in the music education of primary schools.

Notably, the cultural aspect of the songs of Qiang children cannot be perceived as the transmission of content only, but as the process of identity formation. The results indicate that listening to such songs allows the learners to internalise cultural meanings by means of embodied musical practice and not passive reception. This makes music an intermediating device where cultural knowledge is passed on and lived. This means that the songs act as both educational learning materials and cultural artefacts, and this underscores the fact that musical learning and cultural socialisation cannot be separated.

### ***Theme 3: Pedagogical Benefits of Qiang Children's Songs in Primary School Music Education***

The theme is directed to the educational value of the Qiang children's songs to contribute to musical learning and classroom involvement in elementary schools. The participants indicate that such songs enhance singing qualities of the students, their listening quality and rhythmic knowledge and give the students an enjoyable learning experience. They are convenient devices to be used in the teaching process and are familiar with the culture, and therefore they will help in participation, creativity and expression of feelings. The respondents respond differently as indicated below.

*Respondent 1:*

*The songs of qiang children are highly useful in music classes since the children can easily sing and remember them. The accurate melodies also assist students to learn pitch accuracy and confidence without stressing about learning.*

*Respondent 2:*

*Incorporating these songs in the classroom makes the students more engaged. It makes children more comfortable singing cultural songs that they know and hence enhances their interest and motivation in the music lessons.*

*Respondent 3:*

*These songs assist in the training of simple musical abilities like rhythm, melody identification, and listening. Their repetitive nature makes them suitable in practising and reinforcing in primary music education.*

*Respondent 4:*

*The songs of qiang children aid in forming an interactive classroom environment. Students also like to sing in groups, and this enhances collaboration and communication as they acquire musical concepts.*

*Respondent 5:*

*The songs relate music education and cultural knowledge. Such an ensemble assists students in connecting emotionally to materials and makes music lessons more powerful and useful.*

The responses of Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 all indicate that the songs of Qiang children play a high pedagogical role in the music education of primary schools. There is no consensus over the fact that these songs help in the development of the underlying music skills along with the participation and enjoyment. Other respondents are dwelling on technical musical products such as development of rhythm, development of pitch but there are those who focus on emotional engagement and interaction at the classroom. Despite all these emphases, the general opinion holds that the songs of Qiang children are good instructional means that may enhance the learning performance, motivation and classroom interaction among the students in the primary music education.

Although the participants focused on skill growth and interaction, further examination of the discussion shows that these pedagogical advantages are strongly connected with the familiarity with the culture and structural availability of the songs. The success of the Qiang children singing seems to be connected with the fact that they are aligned to both cultural background and developmental needs of learners. This implies that successful pedagogy does not entirely rely on the design of instruction but is also incorporated in the cultural significance of the content. As such, the results criticize narrowly technical methods of music education by highlighting the significance of culturally based pedagogy.

#### ***Theme 4: Challenges and Practical Considerations in Integrating Qiang Children's Songs into Music Education***

This theme deals with the difficulties and practical problems related to the application of the songs of Qiang children in the primary school music classes. Some of the issues that were expressed by the participants include limited teaching materials, lack of familiarity of the teachers with Qiang music and restrictions of the curriculum. However, despite these concerns, the respondents acknowledge that the songs of Qiang children can be incorporated into the music education with the assistance of proper guidance, training, and materials. The respondents give various responses as shown below.

*Respondent 1:*

*One of the issues is the scarcity of written materials and records of songs of Qiang children. The teachers have a problem with limited resources and so it is hard to teach the songs correctly and confidently in the classroom.*

*Respondent 2:*

*There are teachers who do not understand Qiang musical forms and culture. The cultural meaning of the songs may not be easy to explicate to students without proper training.*

*Respondent 3:*

*The school curriculum does not give much room to introduce traditional songs due to time constraints. Teachers of music are usually forced to emphasise standard material, which leaves less room to ethnic music.*

*Respondent 4:*

*Languages may also be an issue, because some of the Qiang lyrics would not be easily articulated by students. Teachers should have a way of making the songs easier or learner friendly in the classroom.*

*Respondent 5:*

*Nonetheless, with the assistance of teachers, e.g., teaching guidelines or professional development connected with ethnic music, the songs of Qiang children can be integrated successfully.*

The responses of Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 have shown that there are generic challenges in teaching the songs of Qiang children during the teaching of music education in the primary school. Despite the fact that they all point to different challenges, such as the scarcity of resources, teacher preparation, curriculum pressure and language barriers, they all acknowledge the educational value of such songs. More importantly, everyone involved states that these barriers can be overcome by the assistance of the appropriate institutional support, the training of the teachers, and curriculum flexibility. This is the same opinion that practical limitation should be taken into consideration by Qiang children in the music education of primary school.

The specified problems demonstrate that there is a structural contradiction between culturally responsive pedagogy and institutional constraints of formal education systems. Even though the participants acknowledged the educational significance of the songs of Qiang children, their

low rates of integration are symptomatic of other issues within the system, including the standardisation of the curriculum and teacher training. This means that traditional music is not pushed to the periphery since it is not pedagogically disregarded, but it is restricted by the contextual factors restricting its use. These problems therefore require not only the provision of resources, but also institutional and policy-level support.

### ***Cross-Theme Synthesis***

A cross-theme analysis shows a consistent correlation of the musical structure, cultural meaning, and pedagogical application. The ease of melodic and rhythmic elements (Theme 1) helps to make it easy to access, whereas cultural embeddedness (Theme 2) helps to make it relevant and establish identity. All of these dimensions help to achieve pedagogical effectiveness (Theme 3), which proves that the learning outcomes are determined by the interplay of structural and cultural factors and not independent factors.

Simultaneously, the problems (Theme 4) indicate the lack of contact between the perceived importance of culturally embedded music and its application in the formal education systems. This synthesis implies that the synthesis of the songs of Qiang children needs a comprehensive system of approach which not only takes in account musical and pedagogical factors but also institutional requirements.

By and large, the results show that the songs of Qiang children are used as an integrated educational tool whose musical form, cultural context, and pedagogical practice is reinforcing. This supports the conceptualization of the study and gives a more in-depth insight into their role in primary music education.

### **Discussion**

The current paper gives a subtle examination of the Qiang children songs by placing them in the points of convergence of musical form, cultural connotation to the pedagogical process. Although the results largely correspond with the literature on the subject of children songs and traditional music in the educational process, they also contribute to the existing knowledge by proving that the dimensions work interdependently and mutually reinforcing as opposed to being independent entities.

In line with the previous studies, the research proves that the simplicity of the structure of the songs used by children, which is marked by repetitive melodic and rhythmic patterns, makes the process of learning and engagement easier (Hargreaves, 2012; Welch et al., 2014). But instead of considering these features as developmentally proper, the results indicate that these kinds of simplicity may be interpreted as functionally pedagogical. Unlike Barrett (2011), who explains the availability of children songs only in terms of its oral and communal communication, this research paper shows that the relationship is more dynamic in that the structure of music actively frames the way people think and engage. This changes the explanation into a descriptive explanation of characteristics of music to a functional explanation of how they allow one to learn.

Moreover, the research contributes to the current debates of the process of cultural transmission in music education. Although both Karlsen (2010) and Cain (2015) theorise that traditional music represents a means to form an identity and preserve a culture, the current results show

that cultural learning is possible when individuals engage in music instead of passively receiving it. This disputes views that understand cultural awareness as a result of representational diversity in isolation (Locke and Prentice, 2016). Rather, the findings reinforce a more practice based interpretative upon which engagement in culturally embedded musical forms helps learners to internalise meanings by experience. In this regard, the songs of the Qiang children can be seen as both cultural texts, as well as performance spaces where the identity is actively created.

These findings also have pedagogical implications that are not covered by the literature. Although Hallam (2010) and Burnard (2012) note that culturally relevant music has motivational and creative advantages, the presented study proves that its effectiveness in pedagogy depends on the correlation of music form, familiarity with the culture, and the context of the teaching process. This implies that culturally responsive pedagogy is not only a content inclusion issue but relies on the compatibility of the developmental abilities of the learners and the inherent characteristics of the material of the music. This interpretation criticises more generalised statements regarding the positive aspects of the traditional music by focusing on the circumstances in which the positive aspects are fulfilled.

Simultaneously, the paper finds a paradoxical conflict between the known educational worthiness of the songs by Qiang children and the low assimilation of them into formal education. Although the earlier studies have found the presence of structural barriers (curriculum restrictions and resource scarcity) (Green, 2017; Roveda et al., 2017), the current results indicate that the barriers are the manifestation of a more profound disproportion between culturally responsive pedagogies and the standardised educational systems. This tension suggests that the marginalisation of traditional music is not a mere practical problem but rather a systemic problem, which would need institutional and policy changes to alter the state of affairs. Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) also share the view that policy support is essential, but the given study goes a step further to prove that the policy should also take into consideration the cultural specifics of musical practices.

Notably, the research study helps in advancing the theory by suggesting a unifying conceptual framework of music education entrenched in the culture. The conceptual model of the Qiang children songs is based on the fact that the songs work in three interrelated dimensions, namely: (1) musical structure that facilitates accessibility and learning of the skills; (2) cultural meaning that facilitates formation of identity and maintenance of the culture; and (3) pedagogical application that facilitates the engagement and learning of the songs in the classroom situations. The dimensions are not separate, and they are dynamically interdependent implying that efficient music education is a product of their congruence. This integrative approach works around one major weakness in current literature, in which these aspects are usually considered independently.

In addition, the study mentions a conceptual quandary of the field, where, despite the fact that multicultural and culturally responsive education suggests the incorporation of different musical traditions, the reality of classroom teaching is overcome by standardisation and resource shortage. Such a lack of connectedness makes the necessity of constructing more context-specific music education more than a tokenistic inclusion and instead a significant integration of cultural practices manifest.

In totality, the paper can make a contribution to the discussion of the sphere of music education by reevaluating the traditional children's songs as a complex educational instrument that combines both the cultural and educational functions. It combines structural, cultural, and pedagogical aspects thus providing a more detailed theoretical insight into how music can be used to aid learning as well as the continuation of culture. This contribution does not only contribute to the existing scholarship but also offers a base of future research to further examine the interaction of culture, music and education in various situations.

## Conclusion

The paper gives a theoretically based and context-specific discussion of the songs of Qiang children and situates them as an all-purpose instrument used in primary music education. In addition to the descriptive stories, the findings demonstrate that the songs do not merely represent cultural artefacts, but they can be pedagogic tools that are affected by the interaction between musical form, cultural interpretation, and teaching activity. This is the conglomeration of the view which is the chief input of the study. The structural characteristics of the songs of the Qiang children such as pentatonic scales, repetitive rhythms, and limited pitch are not accidental as they facilitate the accessibility and involvement of the young learners as it is observed in the analysis. At the same time, the inherent aspect of their culture allows transferring and internalising identity, values and social meaning through the active involvement of music. Importantly, the study continues to hold the fact that the aspects are interdependent in that pedagogical efficacy is not generated as a consequence of individual factors but as a consequence of the correspondence between culturally significant content and developmentally suitable forms of music. The theoretical contribution of the study to the debate on culturally responsive music education is the proposal of an integrative model based on which traditional songs are theorised as operating in the interdependent structural, cultural and pedagogical spaces. This contribution addresses one of the key gaps that have been left by existing literature and often separate the dimensions and concentrate on their dynamic interaction rather than on defining the outcomes of education. The findings, however, also indicate that there has been an old-time confrontation between the perceived value of culturally encoded music and its little usage in the formal education systems. This underscores the need of institutional, curricular, and policy-level changes that will help in the successful integration of the indigenous musical traditions. In conclusion, the songs of the Qiang children are appropriate illustrations of how traditional music may also be incorporated in the process of imparting musical education and maintenance of the culture. This study gives conceptual ground to future research and practice by assuming future studies to develop more context-related and culturally competent approaches to music education.

## Research Limitations

Although the given study provides a great contribution to the musical and pedagogical aspects of the songs of Qiang children, it is possible to state a list of limitations. To begin with, qualitative study is qualitative in nature, which means that it is subject to interpretive subjectivity. In spite of the fact that thematic analysis allowed deep exploration, definitions and interpretations of themes were informed by the analytical lens of the researcher. Although these attempts are made to ensure rigour by reflexivity, peer debriefing, and member checking, there is a risk of subjectivity bias that cannot be completely overlooked.

Second, the researcher, as an outsider to the Qiang cultural practices, has advantages and limitations. Although this outsider view enabled the analytical distance and critical interpretation, it might have deprived the analysis of the rich cultural nuances. Some meanings that are incorporated in musical practices and cultural expressions can be easily interpreted by the cultural insiders. This insider-outsider relationship is also a significant methodological fact that should be noted when interpreting the findings.

Third, the sample is not large, and the choice of the participants was not random; such method, though deserving a qualitative study, limits the range of potential points of view. Although it was possible to achieve data saturation, the results are specific to the experiences and might not be completely descriptive of the variety of practices in various regions and educational settings. Also, self-reported data collected using interviews can be affected by bias in response, where respondents can offer socially desirable or professionally oriented opinions.

Finally, the study did not involve methodological triangulation, such as observations in the classroom or the analysis of documents, which would provide additional validation levels. The unavailability of the actual observation limits the opportunity to examine the performance of the songs of the Qiang children in real-life education contexts.

### **Future Directions**

It is on these limitations that future research should be more diversified and context sensitive to subsequently advance the knowledge in this field. First, the research would be enhanced by making the sample large and diverse, with participants in other areas, institutions, and experience levels to increase the applicability of results. The comparative study of different ethnic musical traditions would also contribute a colossal contribution to the question of how the peculiarities of the culture can influence the results of the pedagogical process.

Second, future research should consider the methodological triangulation of interviews and classroom observations, student feedback, and analysis of the teaching materials. These methods would allow taking a deeper look at the way in which traditional songs are practically realized and experienced in educational settings.

Third, there should be increased attention on the problem of positionality and collaboration of researchers. Cultural insiders can be employed as co-researchers/participatory research designs can be employed to gain a deeper insight into culture and reduce interpretive bias. This would also help in more research that is ethnically based and culturally sensitive.

Finally, the proposed conceptual framework may be followed in future research projects where empirical testing of the relationships between the musical structure and cultural meaning and pedagogical use may be included. The longitudinal or intervention-based research design can also be used to further examine the long-term impact of the addition of Qiang children songs to the growth of music and cultural identity of the students and their participation. These principles would not only aid in the refinement of the theory in the domain of culturally responsive music education, but in the development of practice in the same domain.

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- Acknowledgements:** Special appreciation is extended to colleagues and peers who contributed valuable insights and constructive feedback, which greatly enhanced the quality of this paper.
- Funding Statement:** No Funding
- Conflict of Interest Statement:** The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All authors have contributed to this work and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to the International Journal of Modern Education (IJMOE).
- Ethics Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes.
- Author Contribution Statement:** All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. [Shahanum Binti Md. Shah<sup>2\*</sup>] was responsible for the conceptualization, methodology, and overall supervision of the study. [Qiuyue Deng<sup>1</sup>] handled data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. [Qiuyue Deng<sup>1</sup>, Shahanum Binti Md. Shah<sup>2\*</sup>] contributed to the literature review, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission.
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