



## ARTICLE

# Survey and Educational Research on the National Music Identity of University Students—Taking Three Universities in the Western Part of Guangdong Province as an Example

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### ABSTRACT

The integration and penetration of disciplines is the driving force for innovation. This paper investigates the national music identity of students in three universities in the Western Part of Guangdong Province by questionnaires and interviews, and obtains a series of data related to contemporary university and college students' music literacy. Data and phenomena indicate: University and students have "high degree of identity" and "low participation consciousness" for national music. They are willing to be onlookers, and they are reluctant to join the inheritance and in-depth study, lacking opinions on music appreciation and performance learning; the contact with music only stays at the level of recreation. The artistic and functional nature of music has not played a role in the development of college students' own disciplines; from the choice of music, they can be seen that they have a negative and confused mentality in their academic and social activities, but they can still be released in music, so they adhere to the undisturbed appreciation environment. The campus music popularization education should be strengthened and guided, and appropriate music quality courses should be added to the above phenomena, and experts should be organized to integrate the national music representing the "hometown music" to lay the foundation for the future outstanding talent training.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, under the background of deepening globalization and rapid development of information technology, Western culture has formed a huge impact and challenge on Chinese traditional culture. School education in China has also been influenced by

Western ideology. Especially in music education, the content of national music has not been fundamentally and systematically reflected in educational guiding ideology and practical teaching materials, which has triggered contemporary students' different levels of national music cognition crisis. For some students from rural areas and towns, the folk songs of their home-

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towns have grown up with them, but they are far less attractive than the entertainment media of today. It is their dream to leave their hometowns after graduation and settle down in big cities. The hometown and her music have become increasingly alienated. University and college students who have grown up in this environment often exhibit the following phenomena: lack of faith and opinion, cannot find a sense of belonging; easy to follow the trend, for the pursuit of material; the sense of national rejuvenation is weak and the sense of responsibility is poor. In the field of music education, since the 1990s, several times, the national music education of “Chinese language is the mother tongue” has been advocated, and “every student will sing the song of his hometown”. It is believed that “a nation does not have the foundation of its own music culture. The so-called ‘development’ and ‘revitalization’ can only be an empty talk.” In response to the above phenomenon, from April to June 2019, the author takes non-music university and college students from Guangdong Ocean University, Guangdong Medical University, Lingnan Normal University as the survey objects, and conducts surveys on national music identity in the form of questionnaires and interviews for 1,000 students from different places of origin, different disciplines, different family backgrounds and different personality hobbies.

The western part of Guangdong is located at the junction of Guangdong, Guangxi and Hainan provinces, which borders the Pearl River Delta in the east, the Beibu Gulf Rim Economic Zone in the west, and the Hainan Free Trade Experimental Zone in the south. Over there, the people are simple and honest, the regional cultural characteristics are rich, and the local complex is heavy. The three universities have the characteristics of running a regional economy, regional medical services and local cultural education, and play an important role in the talent reserve in the western Guangdong and Pearl River Delta regions. Through surveys, aiming at the characteristics of the university student group, conduct music courses and activities suitable for their future career development and physical and mental health at the university level, which will raise the awareness of Chinese national music to an important position, help young students fully understand their native language music culture, cultivate national cultural self-confidence, and develop a force for the nation and hometown.

## 2. Questionnaire Sample Statistics

A total of 900 questionnaires were issued in the survey, and 846 copies were effectively recovered. The survey results are detailed in the following tables.

**Table 1.** Types of music that are often listened to

Music types	Japanese, Korean, European and American pop music	Classical, ancient style (sad, lyric)	Pure music, light music	Classic Cantonese song	Rock and roll, rap	Ballad, folk song	Tik tok brainwashing song	slow rock, psychedelic rock
% of people	32%	17%	10%	10%	7%	5%	1%	1%

**Table 2.** Familiar types of national musical instruments

Names of musical instruments	% of people
Guzheng	31%
Erhu	31%
Bamboo Flute	18%
Pipa	12%
Dulcimer	9%
Xiao	9%
Chinese Zither	6%
Drum	6%
Suona	5%
Cucurbit Flute	3%
Morinkhuur	3%
Sheng	2%
Ocarina	2%
Bawu	2%
Xun	2%
Ruan	0.8%
Lusheng	0.8%

**Table 3.** Familiar hometown folk songs

Types of songs	Names of songs
Chaoshan Folk Songs	“Bitter Love”, “Sister Is as Red as March Flowers”
Cantonese Children’s Songs	“The Moonlight Illuminates the Hall”, “Raining Heavily”, “Water Dipping Streets”
Hakka Folk Songs, Ya Songs	None
Salty Water Songs	None
Guangxi Folk Songs	“Welcome Song”, “Third Sister Liu”
Yunnan Folk Songs	“Hi Bro”
Xintianyou	None
Shaoguan Folk Songs	“Grandma’s River”
Jiangxi Folk Songs	“Azalea”, “See the Red Army Out”

**Table 4.** Familiar hometown operas (dramas)

Types	% of people
Cantonese Opera	15%
Leizhou Opera	7%
Chaozhou Opera	6%
Puppet Show	4%
Chinese Shadow Puppetry	3%
Flower-drum Opera	3%
Huazhou Opera	2%
Shaanxi Opera	2%
Tea-Leaf Picking Opera	0.8%
Hakka Opera	0.8%
Boy Drama	0.8%
Huangmei Opera	0.8%
Others	3%

**Table 5.** The degree of identity of popular songs with national musical elements

Students' attitude	Like	Acceptable	Refuse
% of people	42%	18%	11%

**Table 6.** Whether like to enjoy the national concerts on the spot

Students' attitude	Willing to	Unwilling to
% of people	65%	4%

**Table 7.** Learn to play which instruments

Names of musical instruments	% of people
Guitar	31
Harmonica	31
Piano	18
Guzheng	12
Electronic Organ	9
Bamboo Flute	9
Cucurbit Flute	6
Flute	6
Violin	5
Drum	3

**Notes:** Some of the contents of the above-mentioned recycling questionnaire that were not filled out or filled in with unclear words were not counted in the tables.

Among the subjects surveyed, there are nearly 40 majors in 10 disciplines, including mathematics and applied mathematics, elementary education (mathematics), financial mathematics, applied chemistry, biological sciences, physics, electrical engineering and automation, electro-

mechanical technology education, computer software, information management, energy and power engineering, mechanical design and manufacturing and automation, marine and marine, marine fisheries technology, economics, building environment, engineering management, business administration, international trade, pharmaceutical engineering, computer science and technology, environmental science, clinical medicine, medical imaging, anesthesiology, pediatrics, Chinese language and literature, student education, psychology, physical education, history studies, fine arts, law, English, primary education (language), sports human science, public service management, social work, ideological and political education, and 62% of the students are science and engineering majors, and 38% are liberal arts majors.

In the description of the content of the questionnaire, 30% of the students did not sing folk songs in their hometown, and they did not know the operas in their hometown, and 12% of the students did not know Chinese national musical instruments at all. However, 65% of students are willing to enjoy the national musical concerts on the spot; only 4% of students are determined not to go. Among the respondents who refused to enter national music, they included students in ideological and political education, law, clinical medicine and pharmaceutical engineering. All students' leisure activities are accompanied by music, and 60% of students can accept and like to add popular songs of ethnic elements. The music courses that can be selected in the elective courses of the school are very limited. There are only two categories of "Singing with Me, Singing" & "Vocal Music", and "Music Appreciation" & "Music Appreciation", the contents also rarely involve the popularization of national music knowledge.

93.2% of the respondents were from Guangdong Shengyuan, from Zhanjiang, Maoming and Yangjiang in western Guangdong; Jieyang, Shantou, Chaozhou and Meizhou in Eastern Guangdong; Shaoguan in Northern Guangdong; Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Huizhou, Jiangmen, Zhaoqing and Qingyuan in the Pearl River Delta; the students from other provinces are from Guangxi, Yunnan, Hunan, Jiangsu, Gansu, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Chongqing, Jiangxi and other provinces and municipalities. Among them, 42% of the parents' levels of education are under junior high school, and 20% of the families have religious beliefs, from more to less: Buddhist (15%), Taoism (4%), and Christianity (1%). Among the listed folk songs or operas (some students are unclear about the concept of folk songs and operas in their hometowns), there are Hakka Folk Songs, Ya Songs (a kind of Hakka Folk Songs),

Salty Water Songs; Cantonese Opera, Cantonese Songs, Chaozhou Opera (Chaozhou, Guangdong), Leizhou Opera (Zhanjiang, Guangdong), Chinese Shadow Puppetry, Puppet Show, Huazhou Opera (Huazhou, Guangdong), Flower-drum Opera, Body Drama, Huangmei Opera, Xintianyou, Shaanxi Opera, etc., basically cover the types of folk operas (songs) in Guangdong Province. Some students can also clearly write the title of the song and the name of the opera, such as “Raining Heavily”, “Water Dipping Streets”, “The Moonlight”, “Dinv Flower”, and “Separate Flying Swallows” and so on.

In the answers to the last question of the questionnaire, “What are the suggestions for the spread of Chinese national music?”, many of the students’ suggestions are very constructive and feasible, such as: make more use of community conditions, public vision, and open a new media network for public broadcasting; encourage the development of folk music activities, combine with popular music, integrate modern elements, and utilize commercial propaganda and celebrity effects; forms should be more diverse and diverse; the government should be mobilized to support its essence and keep pace with the times; walk into the campus, attract young people to join the ranks of the public, and hold more public performances to promote as cultural and creative products; protect the original ecological music variety.

### 3. Interview Description and Record

The survey process was conducted by means of a random sample survey of stagnation sites. The interviews were in the form of a one-to-one flow. The interviewed students generally politely and actively cooperated. They only slightly avoided the topic of personal and family privacy. A small number of students were reluctant to talk in depth. The narrative content was extremely simple. Obviously, they did not pay much attention to the relationship between the subject and the interview. Most students show a certain national cultural awareness and consciousness in the discourse.

#### 3.1 When Asked “What Kind of Music or Songs Do You Usually Like to Listen to?”

Answer 1: This depends on the mood, generally go online to search for Netease Cloud Music or KuGou music, look at the leaderboard, and select the top ranked to listen.

Answer 2: I prefer Japanese and Korean music. Their music is easy and fun and it will be better to listen to it.

Answer 3: Tik tok brainwashing songs!

Answer 4: Listen to the English song, the melody is good, the singer’s voice is enough to attract.

Answer 5: I usually listen to folk songs more often. I think these songs can express some of their inner feelings, and the melody is simple and easy to sing, like Zhao Lei’s “Chengdu”.

Answer 6: Rock and roll, rap, ancient style.

#### 3.2 When Asked “Which Folk Songs and Operas in Your Hometown Do You Know?”

Answer 1: I can’t sing folk songs, the opera has seen some, but did not go deeper, such as “Chaozhou Opera”.

Answer 2: Understand a little bit, there are some “Ya Song” singers in my hometown.

Answer 3: When I was a child, I saw the “puppet show”, also called “the ghost play”. The scene was very lively.

Answer 4: Cantonese Operas, Cantonese Songs, there are old people who often go together to sing nowadays.

Answer 5: I learned “Dinv Flowers” in high school and can sing a little.

Answer 6: I used to listen to Grandpa singing, but the name of the song is not known.

#### 3.3 When Asked “What Are the Suggestions For the Spread and Inheritance of Chinese National Music?”

Answer 1: It should be combined with modern music.

Answer 2: Don’t stick to the traditional form. Old bottles of new wine can be very attractive. In the past, there was a program in high school that used a “puppet show” to show a fairy tale of a dragon and a princess. Everyone seems to be interested !

Answer 3: There should be more related courses in our elective courses in the university. The campus can carry out more miniature national musical concerts.

Answer 4: The government should support more, invest more in funding, and hold more pure concerts. Don’t be too commercialized, so everyone can understand more.

Answer 5: Integrate with popular music, join the army of ghosts and animals, develop a small video in Tik Tok, and combine with the Chinese cartoon to combine auditory art with visual art. The theme song like “Under the One” should be a fusion of national elements. “The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao”, huh, this kind of animation is very nice!

Answer 6: It should be cultivated from an early age, and popularized national music from childhood.

Judging from their suggestions for the spread and inheritance of Chinese national music, they still have a sense of distance from national music, but they have the desire to integrate into them. Even pop music with a little

bit of national elements can evoke their hometowns and her music. Some students happily sang the folk songs and operas in their hometown. It can be seen that contemporary university and college students do not only admire the cultures of countries such as Europe, America, Japan and South Korea, and do not exclude their national elements. As long as they are emotionally and personally, they can resonate with each other. However, they are still not familiar with the diversity and performance of folk music in China. Many folk music has been far away from the city and faded out of public view.

Many students in the interview were very appreciative of the national elements incorporated in the works of stars such as Jay Chou and Li Yugang. They also have a special liking for the theme music in many Chinese cultural films made by foreign countries, such as “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”, “Mulan”, and “Kung Fu Panda”. The “National Music Festival” and the CCTV National Instrumental Music Competition have also caused great concern.

#### **4. Questionnaire Survey and Interview Results Analysis**

Through the above questionnaires and interviews, we have basically mastered the comprehensive literacy of the students from three universities in the music and the identity index of the national music. The specific analysis is as follows:

##### **4.1 General Needs and Hobbies For Music**

Music has become an indispensable spiritual support for college students in daily life and study. To a certain extent, it has become an art form with functional characteristics (the probability of listening to music at leisure time is 98%). The preference for different music types represents the unique personality and habits of the viewer. The students have strong initiative in the choice of music appreciation, and they have obtained music information through new media and self-media means. They have a wide range of choices, including rock, RAP, folk, lyric, ancient style and other popular music styles. On the other hand, their choices are also random or from the public, and they are generally not actively chosen for Chinese folk music and Western symphony classics. The identity of peers allows them to actively participate in the follow-up of popular music. Moreover, the non-formal, non-educational and non-utilitarian characteristics of pop music bring more emotional support to the younger generation, in line with their psychological and physiological needs.

##### **4.2 Respect and Awe of National Music**

They are awe-inspiring about the folk music in their hometowns and the traditional music of other ethnic groups in our country, although this type of music is not as popular as the popular songs that are closer to their age; however, it is still the symbol of the voice of our nation. These sounds grow with them, and whether they like it or not have been immersed in their lives. In a sense, these sounds are the signals that their ancestors left in the world. Moderate integration of ethnic music elements into popular music is something they are willing to accept and feel fresh. When the elements of national music are combined with the emotions of sincerity, the rhythm of narration, and the rhythm of style, the popular music created will surpass all forms of music to occupy their spiritual world. For example, Cantonese pop songs contain many voices and tunes of Lingnan dialects. Chinese rap music fully combines Chinese pronunciation and rhythm with black pop music. Folk songs are a fusion of local language culture and singer’s emotional experience. Even popular songs sung in Chaoshan and Hakka dialects have a musical personality tension. The tone of ethnic folk songs can also be used as a highlight of lighting a music work. These popular music works with national charm have appeared in the description content of this survey, but the students just passed by and did not touch the hearts of people.

##### **4.3 Neglect and Disregard of Music Practice**

The instruments listed in the survey are almost all kinds of existing national instrumental music in China. Even the ancient Chinese national music instruments such as Ocarina and Xun have entered their attention. However, there are very few students with national instrumental music performances and learning experiences, only 10% of the respondents and only two types of guzheng and bamboo flute, the study time are short, and the learning process is intermittent, during the interview, the interviewee was also unaware of his love for the instruments he studied. It can be seen that students have no common sense for national instrumental music, but only conceptually understand or participate in national music activities in the role of appreciators and bystanders. They are not willing to pay the time and energy to play the role of performer, inheritor and creator of national music, and they have no chance to penetrate into the national music culture, appreciate its profound connotation, and connect with their own profession. Music, a means of entertainment for university and college students, is a means of entertainment. The role of university and college students in music appreciation is

passive. They do not actively create music, but only find identity in other people's music works.

## 5. Educational Reflection Triggered By the Survey Results

### 5.1 Pay Equal Attention to Cognition and Practice

Today's university and college students have "high identity" and "low participation consciousness" for Chinese national music. "High identity" refers to their universal identity and acceptance of national music. "Low participation consciousness" refers to their lack of experience and opportunities for in-depth study. Guangdong Province is a large immigrant province where the four major peoples of Guangfu, Chaoshan, Hakka and Leizhou meet and merge, which is also a famous hometown of overseas Chinese. The number of overseas Chinese is about 20 million. It is a world cultural gathering area such as British culture and Latin culture in Hong Kong and Macao. Guangdong people are more conscious of traditional culture than other provinces and cities in China. However, the spread of professional music and amateur music hobbies is obviously inclined to the western classical and popular music fields. This is the change of the social music culture under the overall situation of economic opening up. With the progress of the construction of the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau Bay Area, the traditional culture of Guangdong will face enormous challenges. The students of the new era will only remain on the surface of their own culture. In this era of multiculturalism, they do not have the advantages of their own resources.

### 5.2 Personal Cultivation and the Society Coexist in Harmony

Chinese national music represents the historical inheritance of Chinese ritual and music culture. The dynasties used "le" as an important means to influence the social order toward harmony. Chinese music aesthetics started from the concept of demanding harmony of sound. Secondly, Chinese national music contains the pursuit of life in the traditional Chinese philosophy of "Tao—Beauty—Realm", enlightening people to look at the past in life from the philosophical height of music, and to the national spirit of various national vocal and instrumental works. In the future, the economy of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will surpass other regions at an unprecedented rate. This generation of college students will face tremendous pressure in their professional fields, clarifying their own pursuit of life and adjusting their mentality into competition so as not to be lost in the career journey.

### 5.3 Disciplinary Development and Cross-parallelism

The integration and penetration of disciplines is the driving force for innovation. Music is the earliest discipline that has become attached to science. The "Scientific Music View" of ancient Greece has influenced the development of Western disciplines for two thousand years, and it has also opened up the important topic of music aesthetics of "number-proportion-harmony" in the West, thereby reveals the origin of all things that reveal the mysteries of the universe, astronomy, nature, and mankind. The famous physicist Li Zhengdao said: "Science and art are like the front and the back of a coin, and they are an inseparable part." Einstein also said: "Our world can be composed of musical notes or mathematical formulas." The famous "The Qian's Doubt" in the education field is an initiative of senior scholars on the ills of Chinese talent cultivation. Mr. Qian Xuesen repeatedly said that "school education should combine science and technology with literature and art. Engineering majors should learn some literary and art, and liberal arts majors should learn some natural science. Otherwise, they will not be able to cultivate top talents."

## 6. Conclusion

Our education must be deeply vigilant; music should not be an independent discipline. It should not only exist in the professional field. When he combines with other natural or social disciplines, the energy is unlimited, which will bring innovative inspiration and firm confidence to all constructions in China? For the university and college students who are about to enter the ranks of builders, they have "high degree of identity" and "low participation consciousness" for music and their national music. We should increase guidance in the basic education stage, create more ethnic music atmospheres, provide more opportunities for public welfare learning, establish more talented models of interdisciplinary disciplines, and guide our education to produce brilliant fruits under the infiltration of music.

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