



A Study on the Cultural Inheritance Conservation of Folk Song Transmission in Hebei Province

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Received 20/03/2025

Revised 09/04/2025

Accepted 15/05/2025

Abstract

Background and Aim: As a vital component of China's intangible cultural heritage, Hebei folk songs encapsulate historical narratives, regional identity, and collective memory. However, globalization, urbanization, and shifting cultural consumption patterns threaten their transmission, with declining engagement among younger generations and aging inheritors. This study examines the significance, challenges, and strategies for the cultural inheritance of Hebei folk songs, aiming to (1) study the significance and problems existing in Hebei folk songs in the cultural inheritance dimension and (2) to study the methods and suggestions for Hebei folk songs transmission in the cultural inheritance dimension.

Materials and Methods: A qualitative approach integrating structured interviews, participant observation, and non-participant observation was employed. Interviews with scholars and practitioners provided insights into cultural significance and institutional challenges. Observations at festivals, competitions, and community activities documented spontaneous and organized transmission practices. Data were analyzed by content analysis.

Results: Hebei folk songs hold multidimensional cultural significance, serving as vehicles for emotional expression, historical preservation, community bonding, and regional identity formation. However, critical challenges include reliance on oral transmission, aging inheritors, weak theoretical frameworks, fragmented talent management, and insufficient policy support. Proposed strategies emphasize three pathways: (1) revitalizing mass cultural activities (e.g., community competitions, hybrid performances); (2) integrating digital platforms into education (e.g., online resource databases, hybrid teaching models); and (3) fostering university-community collaborations to build cultural resource bases and train inheritors.

Conclusion: The study underscores the urgency of adaptive strategies to bridge tradition and modernity. By leveraging community-driven initiatives, digital innovation, and institutional partnerships, Hebei folk songs can evolve dynamically while preserving their cultural essence. Policymakers, educators, and cultural organizations must prioritize systemic support, funding, and interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure the songs' viability in a globalized era.

Keywords: Hebei Folk Songs; Cultural Inheritance; Significance; Problems; Methods and Suggestions

Introduction

Hebei folk songs, as an essential component of China's intangible cultural heritage, have been passed down through generations, embodying the historical narratives, regional characteristics, and collective identity of local communities (Zhang et al., 2022). However, in recent decades, the rapid advancement of globalization, urbanization, and digital entertainment has significantly impacted the transmission of traditional folk music (Guang & Hui, 2014). Studies indicate that younger generations are less engaged with folk traditions, and the number of active performers and inheritors of Hebei folk songs is steadily declining (Jin, 2021; Wang, 2019). Additionally, the restructuring of rural communities and the transformation of cultural consumption patterns have led to a diminishing presence of folk songs in everyday life. These trends raise concerns regarding the sustainability of Hebei folk songs and their role in contemporary cultural landscapes (Jing, 2022).

Existing research on Hebei folk songs has primarily focused on their musical characteristics, historical evolution, and ethnographic documentation (Qi, 2022; Xue & Jin, 2021). While these studies provide valuable insights into the artistic and historical significance of Hebei folk songs, there remains a lack of systematic inquiry into their cultural inheritance mechanisms, the specific challenges hindering their transmission, and the strategies necessary for their sustainable preservation. Additionally, limited attention has been given to the role of modern educational initiatives, technological interventions, and policy



frameworks in revitalizing Hebei folk songs for contemporary audiences (Shi, 2013). Addressing these gaps is crucial to ensuring that this rich cultural heritage continues to thrive in the 21st century.

Furthermore, while cultural policies at both national and local levels have increasingly emphasized the protection of intangible cultural heritage, the practical implementation of these initiatives remains inconsistent (Song, 2022). Challenges such as insufficient funding, a lack of integration into formal education, and a limited engagement with digital media further constrain the effective transmission of Hebei folk songs. Understanding how these external factors influence the inheritance process is essential for formulating targeted solutions that align with both cultural preservation goals and evolving societal needs (Hou, 2021).

To bridge these gaps, this study aims to achieve two key objectives: (1) to study the significance and problems existing in Hebei folk songs in the cultural inheritance dimension, and (2) to study the methods and suggestions for Hebei folk songs transmission in the cultural inheritance dimension. By integrating theoretical perspectives from folklore studies, cultural heritage management, and musicology, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on intangible cultural heritage preservation. The findings will not only enhance scholarly understanding of Hebei folk songs but also offer practical implications for policymakers, educators, and cultural practitioners striving to maintain and revitalize this invaluable tradition.

Objectives

1. To study the significance and problems existing in Hebei folk songs in the cultural inheritance dimension.
2. To study the methods and suggestions for Hebei folk songs transmission in the cultural inheritance dimension.

Literature review

Existing studies on the preservation and transmission of Hebei folk songs predominantly focus on macro-level policy frameworks and institutional strategies. Wang (2023) employs a case study methodology complemented by collective interviews to elucidate the current state of Hebei folk songs, identifying systemic challenges and underlying causes. The analysis addresses the various dimensions of protective measures—including legislative reinforcement, financial investment, talent cultivation, and international exchanges—provides a critical foundation for understanding the overarching framework within which Hebei folk songs are transmitted. This study serves as an essential reference point for assessing the significance of these traditional art forms in the context of cultural inheritance.

Recent national policy shifts, particularly those associated with the 14th Five-Year Plan, have underscored the urgency of preserving intangible cultural heritage. Song (2022) examines the impact of mass culture on the dissemination and transmission of Hebei folk songs, arguing that popular cultural practices play a vital role in both artistic creation and public performance. This research highlights how modern communication channels and mass participation can serve as dynamic vectors for revitalizing Hebei folk songs. It underscores a research gap in understanding how grassroots and community-based approaches can complement top-down policy measures, thereby enriching our knowledge of the intrinsic value of Hebei folk songs within contemporary cultural discourse.

In the domain of education, scholarly efforts have increasingly focused on integrating Hebei folk songs into formal teaching frameworks. Zhang et al. (2022) investigate the development of a novel talent cultivation system that leverages inter-level educational resources to nurture inheritors of Hebei folk songs. Similarly, Li (2018) advocates for the integration of traditional folk songs into music curricula, promoting experiential learning through field trips and the “oral transmission via embodied teaching” approach. These studies contribute to the academic discourse by demonstrating that educational systems can serve as effective platforms for transmitting cultural heritage, while also highlighting the challenges associated with bridging traditional practices with modern pedagogical methods.



Moreover, the interplay between cultural tourism and media has emerged as a promising frontier for the reinvigation of Hebei folk songs. Guo (2022) explores the synergistic relationship between Hebei folk songs, cultural tourism, and digital media, revealing how these elements can interact to revitalize traditional art forms. The research illustrates that integrating Hebei folk songs into broader cultural and economic initiatives not only enhances their visibility but also generates new cultural capital. Such interdisciplinary approaches provide innovative avenues for addressing the challenges of cultural transmission and preserving the artistic heritage for future generations.

Despite the breadth of existing research addressing policy, educational, and media dimensions of Hebei folk songs' preservation, significant research gaps remain. There is a need for a more nuanced exploration of the intrinsic cultural significance and the inherent challenges of transmitting Hebei folk songs, particularly at the grassroots level. Furthermore, systematic analyses that integrate various protective measures into a cohesive, sustainable transmission strategy are scarce. To address these shortcomings, the present study aims to (1) provide a comprehensive evaluation of the cultural significance of Hebei folk songs and identify the specific challenges encountered in their transmission, and (2) propose a set of effective, sustainable strategies for the cultural inheritance of Hebei folk songs. By synthesizing insights from folklore studies, cultural heritage management, and musicology, this research endeavors to contribute both theoretically and practically to the preservation of this invaluable tradition.

Conceptual Framework

This study integrates Muñoz-Viñas's (2023) cultural heritage theory and Tindall's (1976) cultural transmission theory to explore the challenges and strategies in the transmission of Hebei folk songs. Both theories offer a comprehensive perspective on the significance, problems, methods, and recommendations involved in the preservation and transmission of cultural traditions like Hebei folk songs.

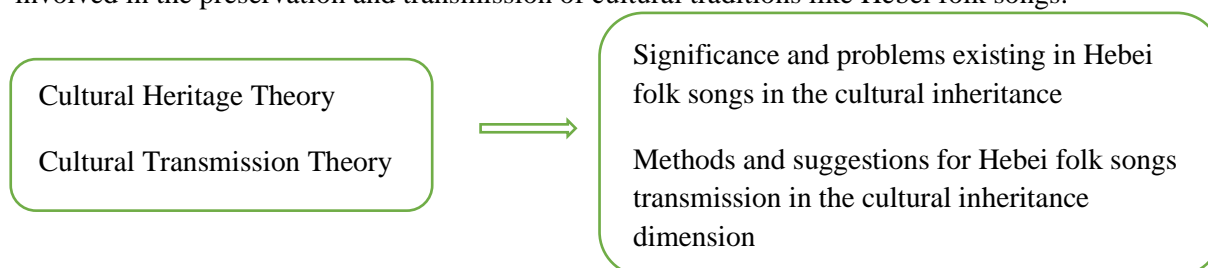


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, combining structured interviews, participant observation, and non-participant observation, to systematically explore the issues related to the cultural transmission of Hebei folk songs and their dissemination strategies. The qualitative approach facilitates an in-depth examination of the challenges faced in the inheritance of Hebei folk songs, offering targeted strategic recommendations to address gaps in the existing literature.

1. Structured Interview

Participants: This study conducted interviews with two experts, both of whom hold significant academic standing or practical experience in the field of folk music and cultural studies. The participants include Associate Professor Song Yongquan from Langfang Normal University, who specializes in the application of Hebei folk songs in popular culture and education, and Professor Hu Xiaoman from Hebei Normal University, who focuses on the transmission methods and strategies of Hebei folk songs. The selection of these experts was based on their extensive experience in the research and cultural dissemination of Hebei folk songs, ensuring that the sample represents both academic and practical perspectives.



Interview Content: The interviews aimed to explore the significance and challenges of Hebei folk songs in the context of cultural inheritance, as well as the methods and suggestions for the transmission of these songs within this dimension.

2. Participant Observation

This study employed participant observation to explore the performance and teaching processes of Hebei folk songs within cultural practice contexts. This phase aims to investigate the dissemination patterns of these folk songs in real-world applications, contributing to a deeper understanding of their cultural significance and modern relevance.

Research Field and Observational Subjects:

(1) Guo Wende (Folk Song Researcher in Eastern Hebei)

Guo has been a prominent figure in the adaptation and training of Eastern Hebei folk songs, promoting their modernization. The researcher attended his lecture at Langfang Normal University, documenting cases of folk song adaptation.

(2) Liu Yanxin (Director of Langfang Mass Art Museum)

Liu has extensive experience in mass cultural training and has explored integrating Hebei folk songs with community culture. The researcher analyzed the cultural activities organized by Liu and observed how Hebei folk songs function in community events.

(3) The Third Hebei Folk Song Singing Competition (June 2023)

This competition provided insight into the modern performance of Hebei folk songs. The researcher closely observed groups such as Jidong Folk Songs and "Shibu Xian", documenting audience interaction and cultural reception.

Data Recording and Analysis:

The researchers used standardized observation forms to record key factors such as performance style, audience response, and cultural context. Data was analyzed using content analysis to identify cultural dissemination characteristics and assess the songs' adaptability to modern society.

3. Non-Participant Observation

To minimize researcher interference with natural cultural expressions, this study utilized non-participant observation to examine the spontaneous cultural transmission of Hebei folk songs, ensuring the objectivity and ecological validity of the research.

Observational Settings

(1) Festivals and Temple Fairs (Spring Festival, Pushcart Festival, Dahu Festival)

Objective of observation: to document the spontaneous performance of Hebei folk songs during traditional festival events.

Observational setting: the researcher observed residents singing Hebei folk songs during temple fairs and other cultural activities, noting their integration with traditional arts such as dance and theater.

Community Cultural Activities

Objective of observation: to explore the transmission pathways of Hebei folk songs within modern urban environments.

Observational setting: the researcher recorded the application of Hebei folk songs in community cultural activities, analyzing their role in fostering neighborhood relationships.

Data Recording and Analysis:

For non-participant observation, the study also utilized standardized observation forms, primarily recording the spontaneous transmission of Hebei folk songs in natural cultural environments, cultural interactions, social responses, and their integration with other art forms.

Content analysis was employed to identify instances of Hebei folk songs integrating with modern music, and to propose potential methods and suggestions for Hebei folk songs transmission.

4. Reliability and Validity

To ensure the content validity of the research tools, both the interview guide and the observation sheet underwent expert review. The interview guide was assessed using the Item-Objective Congruence



(IOC) method, with the results showing that all items had a high level of congruence with the study's objectives. The IOC values for each item ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, indicating strong alignment and relevance to the research objectives. Following this, the interview guide was piloted with two preliminary interviews to further refine the questions for clarity and appropriateness. Similarly, the observation sheet was reviewed by relevant experts, and a pilot observation was conducted to ensure that the items on the sheet were effectively capturing the key aspects of the research.

Results

This study firstly aimed to study the significance and problems existing in Hebei folk songs in the cultural inheritance dimension. Through structured interviews, participant observation, and non-participant observation, the research systematically explored significance and problems existing in Hebei folk songs in the cultural inheritance context.

1. Significance of Hebei Folk Songs in Cultural Inheritance

Hebei folk songs are deeply embedded in the region's culture and play a crucial role in preserving the traditions, customs, and emotional expressions of the local community. These songs represent the collective memories of the people, reflecting important social and cultural practices. Based on the expert interviews and observation studies, the following key dimensions of cultural significance were identified:

Table 1 Significance of Hebei Folk Songs in Cultural Inheritance

Dimension	Interpretation
1. Cultural Expression	Hebei folk songs serve as a medium for emotional expression, conveying love, hardship, and daily life.
2. Historical Preservation	The songs preserve stories of historical events and local customs, maintaining the cultural heritage of the region.
3. Community Bonding	These songs are used in community gatherings, festivals, and rituals, strengthening social cohesion.
4. Identity Formation	Hebei folk songs contribute to the formation of a regional identity, helping people feel connected to their heritage.

Table 1 outlines the significance of Hebei folk songs in the cultural inheritance dimension. These folk songs serve multiple functions that contribute to preserving and promoting the region's culture.

Firstly, Cultural Expression is an important dimension of Hebei folk songs. These songs act as a medium for expressing emotions, including love, hardship, and daily life. They allow people to communicate personal and collective experiences, becoming an emotional outlet for the community.

Secondly, Historical Preservation plays a key role in the songs' function. They preserve stories of historical events, local customs, and traditions. By passing down these narratives through song, the folk songs become an oral history that maintains the region's cultural heritage, ensuring that important events and practices are not forgotten.

The third dimension is Community Bonding. Hebei folk songs are commonly performed in community gatherings, festivals, and rituals. These events provide an opportunity for social interaction and unity. The songs help to strengthen social ties within the community by bringing people together through shared cultural practices.

Lastly, Identity Formation is another significant role of Hebei folk songs. They contribute to shaping a regional identity, allowing people to feel connected to their cultural roots. The songs help individuals affirm their sense of belonging to the region and its history, reinforcing the importance of maintaining and celebrating local heritage.

2. Problems in the inheritance dimension of Hebei folk songs

According to the results from Table 2, Hebei folk songs have the following problems in the inheritance dimension, such as a single way of inheritance, aging and shrinking pool of inheritors,

outstanding singing ability, weak theoretical foundation, and low creativity, Lack of systematic management of inheritance talents, and insufficient policy support and resource investment.

Table 2 Problems in the inheritance dimension of Hebei folk songs

Problem	Description
1. Single way of inheritance	Hebei folk songs mainly rely on oral transmission and traditional folk activities, limiting their spread to a narrow audience. This may result in the loss of valuable songs.
2. Aging and shrinking pool of inheritors	Modernization and fast-paced life have led to a decline in the younger generation's interest in Hebei folk songs, which, combined with an aging group of inheritors, risks a break in the generation-to-generation transmission.
3. Outstanding singing ability, weak theoretical foundation and low creativity	While inheritors have strong singing abilities, there is a lack of systematic music records and theoretical understanding, limiting their ability to innovate or create new works.
4. Lack of systematic management of inheritance talents	There is no formal system to manage the inheritance talents, leading to inefficient, disorganized efforts, a lack of professional growth, and a failure to provide proper support to deserving inheritors.
5. Insufficient policy support and resource investment	Although national policies exist, they are often insufficient or not well implemented, leading to a lack of clear guidance, policy support, and resource investment in the preservation and development of Hebei folk songs.

The following content presents the details of the results.

2.1 Single way of inheritance

Historically, the inheritance of Hebei folk songs has primarily relied on oral transmission and traditional folk activities, such as older generations passing down the songs to younger generations through verbal instruction. However, this narrow channel of inheritance and reliance on traditional methods have significantly constrained the spread of Hebei folk songs, limiting their reach to a small audience. This has resulted in the potential loss of some valuable folk songs over time.

2.2 Aging and shrinking pool of inheritors

With the acceleration of modernization, changes in people's lifestyles and aesthetic preferences have had a profound impact on the living inheritance of traditional music. Due to the fast-paced nature of modern life, the younger generation has shown a declining interest in Hebei folk songs, a traditional music form. This has led to a shrinking audience base, exacerbating the challenges of passing down Hebei folk songs. The cultural life of young people has become more diverse, with little interest in folk songs, and the pool of inheritors is gradually aging, with some unable to participate in performances. As a result, there is a risk that the inheritance of Hebei folk songs could be severed between generations.

2.3 Outstanding singing ability, weak theoretical foundation, and low creativity

As most Hebei folk songs are transmitted orally, there is a lack of systematic musical documentation and foundational theory, which hampers the transformation of these songs into theoretical research. While inheritors may possess strong vocal abilities and performance skills, they often lack the necessary theoretical training to further develop and innovate Hebei folk songs. Moreover, the creation of new Hebei folk songs is limited, reflecting the relatively low creative capacity and skill level of inheritors, posing an obstacle to the innovative development of the genre.

2.4 Lack of systematic management of inheritance talents

In many areas, music inheritors have not been integrated into formal institutional systems, leading to the loss of Hebei folk song inheritance talent. The absence of systematic management prevents the expansion and improvement of professional skills. Furthermore, the current organization of Hebei folk song inheritance is inadequate, lacking a dedicated, systematic body responsible for coordination and



management. This has led to fragmented, uncoordinated efforts that hinder the formation of synergy. Additionally, unclear criteria for selecting inheritors mean that some exceptional talents fail to receive the necessary recognition and support. The lack of systematic management can also result in duplication and inefficiency in inheritance work, wasting valuable resources and energy.

2.5 Insufficient policy support and resource investment

Regarding policy support, although national-level policies and regulations for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage have been issued, the implementation of these policies for Hebei folk songs remains insufficiently detailed, lacking strength and full enforcement in this specific area. As a result, there is an absence of clear policy guidance and strong policy guarantees in the inheritance process, which hampers efforts to fully engage and motivate all stakeholders.

In terms of resource investment, the inheritance of Hebei folk songs faces significant shortages in funding, talent, and infrastructure. Limited financial resources have made it difficult to carry out crucial preservation efforts, such as recording, research, and heritage performances. The shortage of professional talent, including inheritors, researchers, and promoters, further restricts the development and transmission of Hebei folk songs. Additionally, inadequate and outdated facilities hinder the effective inheritance and promotion of Hebei folk songs, limiting their potential to exert a broader influence in modern society.

3. Methods and suggestions for Hebei folk songs transmission in the cultural inheritance dimension

Finally, Table 3 presents the methods and suggestions for Hebei folk songs transmission in the cultural inheritance dimension according to the data analysis from expert interviews and observation studies. The details are shown in the following sections.

Table 3 Methods and suggestions for Hebei folk songs transmission in the cultural inheritance dimension

Section	Method and Suggestions
3.1 Dissemination and inheritance of Hebei folk songs in mass cultural activities	Active formation of social mass cultural activities Creating folk songs that align with the aesthetic tastes of the public
3.2 Promoting Hebei folk songs in schools through the internet and information technology	Building a teaching resource base for folk songs using network technology Enriching the form of folk songs in campus information promotion
3.3 Collaboration between universities and local communities to promote the inheritance	Create a cultural resource base of Hebei folk songs. Joint cultural activities between universities and localities Joint efforts to build Hebei folk song inheritance talents

The transmission of Hebei folk songs within the cultural dissemination framework can be approached from several perspectives, including mass cultural activities, the integration of the internet into primary and secondary school curricula, and the collaboration between higher education institutions and local communities in promoting the inheritance of Hebei folk songs. The following sections will discuss these methods in detail.

3.1 Dissemination and inheritance of Hebei folk songs in mass cultural activities

As a vital component of Hebei's traditional music culture, folk songs vividly encapsulate the cultural life, emotions, and thoughts of the people of Hebei. These songs reflect the open-mindedness of the populace, their positive outlook on life, their timeless aesthetic pursuits, and the rich development of national culture. Mass culture, as a form of cultural practice aimed at the public, offers a robust platform



for the creation and performance of Hebei folk songs. Thus, leveraging mass cultural activities to enhance the cultural dissemination of Hebei folk songs can significantly contribute to their inheritance.

3.1.1 Active formation of social mass cultural activities

Communities serve as the primary venue for public participation in cultural activities and play a crucial role in the dissemination and inheritance of Hebei folk songs. Effective planning and organization of social and cultural events can have a positive impact on the cultural transmission of these songs. Communities should establish cultural organizations that bring together individuals with an interest in Hebei folk songs, offering them a platform for discussion, exchange, and practice. This would strengthen the folk song inheritance through vibrant cultural activities. Communities could also organize folk song competitions or talent shows to encourage broader participation. Such events would attract individuals with vocal talent, fostering professional singing groups and enhancing folk song performances. Additionally, by opening these cultural activities to the public, the masses can engage with folk song art as both participants and appreciative audiences, further enriching the cultural impact of Hebei folk songs.

3.1.2 Creating folk songs that align with the aesthetic tastes of the public

With the passage of time, many traditional folk songs no longer align with the contemporary realities of society or the aesthetic preferences of the public. Therefore, an important method to promote the transmission and inheritance of Hebei folk songs is to adapt and create new music that resonates with modern tastes. This process involves analyzing the musical preferences and aesthetic pursuits of the public and incorporating relevant themes into the creation of new folk songs. The innovation of these songs should combine traditional melodies with contemporary lyrics and performance styles. Furthermore, mass cultural activities can serve as a platform for collaboration with other art forms, such as dance or instrumental music, to enrich the folk song experience and stimulate greater public enthusiasm for the creation of Hebei folk songs.

3.2 Promoting Hebei folk songs in schools through the internet and information technology

The protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, particularly folk songs, have seen significant progress in schools. These efforts not only contribute to the cultural development of the campus by fostering a strong cultural atmosphere but also expand the channels through which Hebei folk songs are transmitted. By incorporating modern information technologies into the practice of artistic inheritance, the teaching and development of Hebei folk songs can be significantly invigorated.

3.2.1 Building a teaching resource base for folk songs using network technology

Hebei's folk songs are abundant but dispersed across the region, and not all of them are suitable for educational purposes. Therefore, relevant cultural and educational bodies should utilize the resources available in the information age to create a centralized repository of folk songs suitable for school teaching. This resource base should be organized and made accessible through an online platform, which would enable schools to share and access folk song resources more efficiently. Such a platform could include folk songs from various regions of Hebei, offering schools a convenient way to incorporate these songs into their curricula. Additionally, this database could serve as an evaluation tool to assess the quality of folk song teaching, further promoting their dissemination and preservation within educational settings.

3.2.2 Enriching the form of folk songs in campus information promotion

Incorporating Hebei folk songs into school curricula with the aid of information technology can enhance their role in cultural inheritance. On the one hand, schools should introduce rich teaching resources and adopt a hybrid online-offline teaching model. This could involve inviting local folk song artists to record micro-lectures or conduct online teaching via cloud platforms, thus providing students with both the technical skills to perform folk songs and an appreciation for their cultural significance. On the other hand, schools could collaborate with local cultural centers and theaters to offer students more opportunities to engage with live performances of folk songs. Such collaborations could include virtual visits to folk song performances or even encouraging students to participate in these activities, fostering a deeper connection with the art form.

3.3 Collaboration between universities and local communities to promote the inheritance





The sustainable development of Hebei folk songs hinges on the exploration of effective inheritance strategies. Collaborative efforts between universities and local communities are crucial in promoting the transmission and development of Hebei folk songs.

3.3.1 Create a cultural resource base of Hebei folk songs

Hebei is abundant in folk song resources, with each region within the province offering distinct cultural characteristics and artistic styles that reflect the region's heritage. These songs, which originate from the everyday lives and emotions of the local people, are deeply rooted in life itself. To further strengthen the integration of Hebei's diverse folk song types, styles, and artistic features, it is essential to establish a comprehensive resource database that encapsulates the cultural characteristics of Hebei folk songs. This database would not only integrate the folk song content from various parts of the province but also serve as a platform for the discovery and access to folk song resources, enabling enthusiasts and researchers to acquire detailed and reliable information. Additionally, this database would provide a variety of channels and platforms for the preservation and dissemination of Hebei folk song art.

In this regard, universities and local communities must collaborate to build and maintain the Hebei folk song cultural resource base, positioning themselves as the key contributors to its development. Universities, with their strong academic and research faculties, are well-equipped to offer professional support in the creation of the resource base. They can play a crucial role in the collection, cataloging, and organization of folk song materials, ensuring the accuracy and authenticity of the information. Local communities, which serve as the birthplace of folk song artists, possess firsthand knowledge and invaluable materials related to Hebei folk songs. These communities, with their direct connection to the living heritage of folk songs, contribute significantly to the preservation and transmission of folk song traditions.

The collaboration between universities and local communities enriches the Hebei folk song cultural resource base by blending the folk aspects with academic disciplines, thus enhancing its comprehensiveness and relevance. This initiative holds substantial significance for the advancement of local traditional cultural systems, providing a solid foundation for the sustainable inheritance and promotion of Hebei's folk song heritage.

3.3.2 Joint cultural activities between universities and localities

Hebei folk songs originate from the local community, making them a direct representation of the region's most authentic cultural traditions. While recent years have seen efforts to incorporate folk song culture into university campuses, most music teaching in higher education institutions is still managed by internal faculty members. Despite the diversity and vibrancy of folk song-related activities, there is often a perceived absence of local flavor, which hinders the development of students' artistic sensibilities. In the collaborative framework between universities and local communities, universities can offer platforms for the promotion and display of Hebei folk songs, while local communities contribute essential resources such as materials and educators for teaching folk songs. Furthermore, encouraging folk artists to visit universities and actively engage in the teaching process can bring a more profound local authenticity to the subject matter. Students, immersed in a rich folk art environment, will be exposed to a different artistic style, fostering a deeper understanding of the content and performance of Hebei folk songs. As a result, students will not only develop an appreciation for these songs but also cultivate an interest in exploring folk traditions beyond the classroom. Additionally, universities should facilitate student exposure to local culture by organizing visits to rural areas, rural performance venues, and community events such as weddings and festivals. Through these experiences, students will gain firsthand knowledge of the diverse cultural attributes of Hebei folk songs and experience their charm in various environmental contexts.

3.3.3 Joint efforts to build Hebei folk song inheritance talents

Colleges and universities, as hubs for cultivating artistic talent, possess not only professional faculty but also advanced teaching methodologies, which can significantly contribute to the professionalization and systematization of Hebei folk song inheritance talent development. Therefore, the synergistic collaboration between universities and local communities can be viewed as a mutually beneficial strategy. On one hand, universities can incorporate local folk artists into their teaching teams as part-time





instructors, thus enhancing the academic staff and providing students with an opportunity to receive professional folk song education. In this process, folk artists can identify and nurture students with vocal talent and artistic potential, who could then be developed into future inheritors of Hebei folk songs. On the other hand, local communities can invite university faculty to assist in training local folk song practitioners, many of whom may have limited formal education and insufficient knowledge of music theory. Through the guidance of university teachers, these individuals can receive comprehensive training in music literacy and aesthetic understanding, thereby improving the overall quality of local folk song talent. Additionally, university instructors can engage with Hebei folk song inheritors to explore contemporary approaches to folk singing, fostering innovation in Hebei folk song performance. This collaboration can help produce new vocal talents capable of contributing to the creation of new works and contemporary interpretations of Hebei folk songs.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate the dual aspects of Hebei folk songs in the context of cultural inheritance. First, regarding the significance and problems of these folk songs, the results indicate that Hebei folk songs serve as vital mediums for cultural expression, historical preservation, community bonding, and identity formation. Hebei folk songs encapsulate the collective memories of the local community by expressing daily emotions such as love and hardship, recording historical events and local customs, and reinforcing social cohesion during community gatherings and festivals. This is consistent with the notion that intangible cultural heritage functions as a vehicle for collective memory and identity, as argued by Zhang et al. (2021) and supported by UNESCO's framework for safeguarding living heritage (UNESCO, 2003). However, our study also reveals significant challenges in the transmission of Hebei folk songs. The results show that the inheritance process predominantly relies on oral transmission and traditional folk activities, which restricts the spread of these songs and heightens the risk of cultural loss. Moreover, modernization has led to an aging and shrinking pool of inheritors, echoing observations by Wang (2023) in similar cultural contexts. Although inheritors exhibit strong singing abilities, their lack of systematic musical documentation and theoretical grounding limits innovation and creative development—a finding that resonates with Guo's (2022) discussion on the disconnect between practice and theory in traditional music transmission. Additionally, the absence of a formal management system for inheritance talents and inadequate policy support further exacerbate these issues, a situation similar to the challenges in intangible cultural heritage management highlighted by Li (2024).

Second, with respect to the methods and suggestions for Hebei folk songs transmission, this study proposes actionable strategies to overcome these challenges. The recommendations include the active promotion of Hebei folk songs through mass cultural activities, as detailed in the findings. This approach emphasizes the organization of community events and festivals to revitalize and broaden the audience for these folk songs, a strategy that has been successfully implemented in various cultural contexts (e.g., Jin, 2021; Hou, 2021). Additionally, our findings advocate for integrating modern information technologies into the educational framework. By developing online teaching resource bases and adopting hybrid online-offline teaching models in schools, Hebei folk songs can be introduced to younger generations in a format that aligns with contemporary digital consumption patterns—a suggestion that mirrors initiatives in digital heritage preservation (Kim et al., 2025). Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of fostering collaboration between universities and local communities. Such partnerships can help build comprehensive cultural resource bases, facilitate joint cultural activities, and cultivate future inheritance talents, thereby bridging the gap between academic research and practical cultural transmission. This model is supported by the successful experiences observed in similar settings, such as in Taiwan's efforts to preserve traditional ballads (Xue & Jin, 2021), and is in line with the participatory approaches recommended by Song (2022).

Overall, the study confirms the crucial role of Hebei folk songs in cultural preservation while also highlighting the systemic challenges posed by modernity. Innovative and participatory strategies—encompassing community-driven events, digital integration in education, and university-community





collaborations—are essential for ensuring the sustainable transmission of this intangible cultural heritage in the face of ongoing social and technological transformations.

It should be noted that this study primarily relies on interviews and observations, with data sourced from specific regions of Hebei, which, to some extent, limits the generalizability of the conclusions. Future research could consider employing cross-regional comparisons and quantitative surveys to further explore the transmission of traditional folk songs in different socio-cultural contexts, and to assess the impact of policy support and resource investment on transmission outcomes using more systematic indicators. Overall, this study provides both theoretical and empirical evidence for the transmission of Hebei folk songs in the context of modernization, while also offering guidance for relevant policymakers and practitioners on potential areas for improvement.

Conclusion

Hebei folk songs stand at a crossroads: their cultural significance is indisputable, yet their survival hinges on adaptive strategies that bridge tradition and modernity. This study advances the discourse by framing transmission not merely as preservation but as dynamic reinvention. By implementing the proposed solutions—rooted in community empowerment, digital innovation, and institutional collaboration—Hebei can model a pathway for safeguarding intangible heritage in an era of globalization. Policymakers, educators, and cultural organizations must act collectively to ensure these songs remain a living, evolving testament to the region's identity.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, this study has two parts of suggestions as follows:

1. Suggestions for practical application

Efforts should be made to cultivate inheritors of Hebei folk songs, enhance their theoretical knowledge, increase government funding, and establish a comprehensive talent management system. Relevant agencies are encouraged to take action by promoting the inheritance of Hebei folk songs within mass culture. This could include leveraging the internet and modern technology to introduce Hebei folk songs into school curricula and organizing activities that promote folk song preservation within colleges and local communities.

2. Suggestions for future research

Future research could focus on expanding the scope of investigation through a cross-regional comparative study. By selecting multiple regions or provinces, researchers can uncover regional differences in the transmission of traditional folk songs and analyze how local cultural, economic, and educational factors influence the effectiveness of folk song inheritance. Furthermore, integrating quantitative research methods, such as surveys and experimental designs, would provide a more objective and broad-based assessment of the transmission status of traditional folk songs, particularly regarding the younger generation's willingness to inherit these songs and their actual participation.

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