



## Analysis of the Status Quo of Guzheng Music Inheritance under the Influence of Huxiang Regional Culture

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### Abstract

**Background and Aim:** Hunan regional culture, deeply rooted in history, plays a significant role in shaping the identity and artistic expressions of traditional Chinese music, particularly guzheng. This study aims to analyze the status of Hunan-style guzheng music inheritance under the influence of Huxiang culture, identify the difficulties in its transmission, and explore the potential opportunities for its revitalization and sustainable development in the modern era.

**Materials and Methods:** The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Literature analysis was used to review academic papers and reports related to Hunan guzheng music. A SWOT analysis framework was applied to evaluate internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. Additionally, a questionnaire survey was conducted with 400 respondents to understand public awareness, attitudes, and perceptions regarding Huxiang-style guzheng music.

**Results:** Survey results show that 36.139% of participants understand Hunan-style guzheng music, but over 60% only have superficial knowledge. While 67.327% believe it is widely disseminated, concerns remain regarding limited teaching materials, talent gaps, and ineffective communication channels. SWOT analysis highlights rich cultural resources and potential for digital integration as strengths and opportunities, while modernization pressure and competition from other schools pose significant threats.

**Conclusion:** The inheritance of guzheng music in Hunan is both a cultural responsibility and a modern challenge. Strategic development in education, digital platforms, and cross-disciplinary innovation is essential. Efforts should focus on modern reinterpretation, immersive experiences, and integration with popular culture to ensure long-term sustainability and broader public engagement with Hunan-style guzheng.

**Keywords:** Hunan Culture; Guzheng Music; Cultural Inheritance; SWOT Analysis; Traditional Music

### Introduction

Hunan culture, also known as “Huxiang culture” (湖湘文化), refers to the regional cultural system that developed in Hunan Province, China. While “Hunan culture” broadly denotes the historical and ethnic traditions of the area, “Huxiang culture” emphasizes more specific ideological and aesthetic characteristics rooted in the spirit of Confucian pragmatism, cultural inclusiveness, resilience, and a passion for innovation. These attributes have shaped not only literature and philosophy in the region but also its musical traditions, particularly guzheng music. Huxiang culture originated from Chu culture during the pre-Qin and Han dynasties, as reflected in the poetic legacy of Qu Yuan and archaeological discoveries such as the Mawangdui manuscripts. Successive waves of migration and integration during the Song, Yuan, and Ming periods further enriched the region’s cultural composition, giving rise to a uniquely expressive and inclusive musical landscape.

The guzheng, also referred to as “Hanzheng” or “Qinzheng,” is a traditional plucked zither with over 2,000 years of history in China. Known for its broad tonal range and emotional expressiveness, the guzheng is a prominent instrument in both solo and ensemble settings and is often called the “Oriental piano.” Over time, distinct regional styles have emerged, shaped by local aesthetics, folk melodies, and socio-cultural influences. Although Hunan does not have a formally recognized guzheng school like Henan or Chaozhou, Huxiang culture provides fertile ground for creative expression in guzheng performance and composition. Many works originating from Hunan reflect its regional identity, drawing from local folk tunes, flower-drum opera elements, and the rhythms of daily life.

However, with the rapid acceleration of globalization and the encroachment of mainstream musical genres, the transmission of Hunan-style guzheng music faces numerous challenges. These include a decline



in cultural engagement among younger generations, inadequate educational frameworks, and a lack of systematic dissemination. From the theoretical standpoint, this study draws on perspectives from ethnomusicology, cultural transmission theory, and heritage studies. Ethnomusicology enables a contextualized analysis of guzheng music as a lived cultural practice; cultural transmission theory helps explain how musical knowledge and values are passed down or interrupted across generations; and heritage studies frame guzheng music as an intangible cultural asset that requires both preservation and innovation.

Therefore, this study is both timely and significant. It investigates the current state of guzheng music inheritance under the influence of Huxiang culture, aiming to uncover its unique artistic value and identify effective pathways for revitalization. Through literature review, SWOT analysis, and public survey data, this research seeks to provide new insights into how regional culture and traditional music can co-evolve in the digital era.

### Research Objectives

Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. To analyze the current state of guzheng music inheritance within the context of Huxiang (Hunan) regional culture.
2. To identify the main obstacles hindering its preservation and transmission in the modern era.
3. To explore emerging opportunities and propose practical strategies for revitalizing Huxiang-style guzheng music.

### Literature Review

Hunan-style guzheng, although not formally established as a distinct guzheng school like those of Henan or Chaozhou, demonstrates a unique musical identity shaped by the aesthetic, historical, and philosophical attributes of Huxiang regional culture. As an integral part of China's national instrumental tradition, it blends local folklore, flower-drum opera motifs, and folk tonal structures, offering a vivid portrayal of regional life through sound. With the increasing emphasis on the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in China, the academic community has shown growing interest in the inheritance and development of this regional music tradition, and guzheng music in Hunan has become a significant focus of research related to both traditional art and cultural sustainability.

To build a comprehensive theoretical foundation, this study conducted an extensive literature review using multiple academic databases, including CNKI, CPVIP, WANFANG DATA, Airiti Library, and Google Scholar. Keywords used for retrieval included “湖湘古筝” (Huxiang guzheng), “湖南传统音乐传承” (Hunan traditional music inheritance), “民族音乐学” (ethnomusicology), “非物质文化遗产与音乐” (intangible cultural heritage and music), and “guzheng education” AND “regional culture,” among others. The search covered both Chinese and English-language sources published primarily after 2010, yielding more than 40 articles, from which 15 highly relevant studies were selected based on thematic relevance and scholarly credibility. Among these, Liu Xi (2017) examined how local culture inspired compositions such as *Dongting New Song*, highlighting the emotional and geographical connections embedded in the melodies. Long Yubing (2016) further interpreted Hunan-style guzheng as a form of musical narrative that transforms regional legends and daily scenes into performative art. Zhong Xiaohong (2018) placed the Hunan guzheng in the broader context of regional zheng development, arguing that although it lacks an institutionalized system, its lyrical character and expressive depth distinguish it within the national guzheng landscape.

Research on inheritance and teaching practices reveals several structural limitations. Tan Shasha (2012) and Tian Bingjie (2016) identified deficiencies in pedagogical systems, such as reliance on traditional oral transmission and a lack of standardized materials. Li Jing (2020) called for embedding guzheng-related content into music education curricula at all levels, while Wangsha (2006) emphasized the need to revitalize regional music heritage through community outreach. Zhang Lina (2017) offered evidence that integrating minority musical elements into guzheng arrangements helps innovate performance



while retaining cultural authenticity. These discussions converge on the point that sustainable inheritance requires both modernization of content and diversification of delivery platforms.

Furthermore, theoretical perspectives from ethnomusicology, cultural transmission, and heritage studies provide essential frameworks for understanding the broader implications of guzheng music preservation. Wang Yulin (2018) advocated for cooperative models that engage schools and cultural institutions, while Cai Zhuo (2024) emphasized the potential of digital platforms in expanding the reach and resonance of regional music. Studies such as those by Zhou Yun (2019) and Aven (2016) suggested that preservation efforts should not only focus on documentation but also emphasize the dynamic, performative aspects of cultural heritage. Such approaches affirm that regional music inheritance is not a static process but a form of active cultural engagement and reinterpretation.

Despite the growing body of literature, most existing studies are either descriptive or narrowly focused, with few offering empirical, cross-disciplinary analysis that combines field data, theoretical models, and strategic recommendations. To fill this gap, the present study integrates literature analysis, SWOT evaluation, and public perception surveys to propose a more systematic and forward-looking approach to the inheritance of Hunan-style guzheng music, under the broader influence of Huxiang culture in the digital and global era.

### ***Influence of Hunan regional culture on Guzheng music of Hunan style.***

There is a deep connection between Hunan regional culture and guzheng music, which is not only reflected in the creation of guzheng music but also through the inheritance and development of playing skills and teaching concepts. Tian Bingjie (2016) pointed out in *Exploring the Performance and Teaching of Guzheng Songs in Hunan Style* that although Hunan region has not formed a unique guzheng school, the influence of Hunan culture and folk music and art has provided an important support for the formation of the guzheng art system, which has made the huxiang style of guzheng songs with unique regional characteristics and artistic charm. Liu Xi (2017) further analyzed the profound influence of regional culture on Huxiang-style guzheng compositions in “The Influence of Regional Culture on Huxiang Style Guzheng Compositions”, and he emphasized that the Hunan cultural character, shaped by Hunan's profound historical and cultural heritage and unique geographic location, is fully embodied in guzheng compositions. Through the appreciation of the representative work *Dongting New Song*, he reveals how the regional culture of Hunan becomes an important source of creative inspiration for guzheng artists. Long Yubing (2016), in “Cultural Embodiment of Hunan Guzheng Repertoire,” explores the combination of Hunan culture and guzheng from a broader perspective, pointing out that Hunan culture, as a regional characteristic cultural form, covers factors such as folk customs, folklore, and national character that have been accumulated by the people of all ethnic groups in Hunan over a long period, which are vividly embodied in the guzheng repertoire. Through the in-depth analysis of the cultural connotation of the Guzheng repertoire of Hunan, he demonstrated the inseparable connection between the art of Guzheng and Hunan culture.

To summarize, there exists a close interactive relationship between Hunan regional culture and guzheng music. Hunan culture provides rich materials and inspirations for guzheng art, prompting the formation of unique regional styles in guzheng repertoire; while guzheng music becomes an important carrier for the inheritance and development of Hunan culture, and passes on the essence of Hunan culture to future generations through the forms of performance and teaching. Therefore, an in-depth study and understanding of the relationship between Hunan regional culture and guzheng music is of great significance in promoting the inheritance and development of guzheng art.

Discussion on the performance and teaching of Hunan-style guzheng music.

As an important part of China's national art, the unique performance style and teaching concept of Hunan guzheng music not only carry rich regional cultural information but also reflect the unique charm of guzheng art in the Hunan region. Tian Bingjie (2016), in “Exploring the Performance and Teaching of Guzheng Pieces in Hunan Style”, analyzed the characteristics of Hunan zheng music in depth and put forward targeted performance and teaching strategies, emphasizing the close connection between the art of



guzheng and regional culture in the Hunan region. Tan Shasha (2012) further supplemented the research on the teaching and performance of Hunan guzheng in “Exploring the Performance and Teaching of Guzheng Pieces in Hunan Style”, explored the teaching characteristics and performance techniques of guzheng pieces in Hunan style by systematically analyzing the teaching and performance of guzheng pieces in Hunan and combining them with the theory of instrumental music teaching, which provided a valuable practical guidance for the inheritance and development of the art of guzheng in Hunan.

To sum up, the performance and teaching of guzheng music in Hunan not only focuses on the sharpening of skills but also emphasizes the in-depth understanding and inheritance of the regional culture of Hunan. Performers need to express the unique flavor of Hunan zheng music through precise techniques, while educators need to explore and innovate teaching methods to better inherit and promote the art of Hunan guzheng. This unique style of playing and teaching philosophy not only enriches the connotation of guzheng art but also contributes to the inheritance and development of the regional culture of Hunan. Let more people feel the charm of guzheng art and the profound connotation of Hunan culture.

Moreover, despite isolated research efforts, there are critical gaps and limitations in the current body of work. First, many studies remain descriptive, focusing on either artistic features or historical evolution without integrating cultural transmission theory, heritage studies, or ethnomusicological frameworks. This limits the explanatory power of their findings. Second, few studies explore the **digital dimension** of inheritance, such as the use of social media, online education platforms, VR/AR immersive experiences, or algorithmic recommendation systems in promoting guzheng to younger audiences. Scholars like Cai Zhuo (2024) and Zhong Xiaohong (2018) have suggested that digital transformation is not only feasible but essential for the survival of intangible cultural heritage. Aven (2016), drawing from risk theory and operational frameworks in cultural management, emphasized that cultural heritage must be treated as a dynamic system, requiring adaptive strategies across platforms and generations.

Furthermore, controversies and unresolved issues remain. For example, while some scholars advocate for preserving regional authenticity by maintaining traditional techniques and aesthetics, others argue for creative transformation and cross-genre experimentation. The appropriate balance between “cultural preservation” and “modern innovation” continues to be debated. In the context of Hunan guzheng, this tension is amplified by the lack of a standardized school or curriculum, making it difficult to define what constitutes “authentic” Huxiang style. In addition, the issue of audience aging, scarcity of young practitioners, and inadequate funding mechanisms for regional music education are well-documented challenges (Tan, 2012; Wang, 2006), yet little empirical research has been conducted to measure their impact systematically.

Thus, the present study identifies a clear research gap: while the artistic, historical, and pedagogical value of Hunan-style guzheng has been acknowledged, there is a lack of comprehensive, data-driven, and theoretically grounded research that examines its inheritance in the digital and multicultural era. Specifically, there is little synthesis between traditional performance practice and modern dissemination strategies, nor between field-level realities and policy-level support structures. This study seeks to address this gap by applying a SWOT framework to analyze internal and external conditions, supported by a quantitative survey to assess public perception, awareness, and willingness to engage. By integrating literature review, cultural theory, and empirical methodology, this research aims to contribute not only to academic understanding but also to the practical revitalization of Hunan-style guzheng. It positions this regional art form not as a static relic, but as a living heritage capable of evolving meaningfully in the 21st century.

## Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively explore the inheritance of Hunan-style guzheng music under the influence of Huxiang regional culture.

### 1. Qualitative Method: Document Analysis and SWOT Framework



To support Research Objectives 1 and 2 — analyzing the current status and identifying challenges of guzheng inheritance — a qualitative approach was used based on literature analysis and the SWOT analytical model. Academic resources were collected from multiple scholarly databases, including CNKI, CPVIP, WANFANG DATA, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as “湖湘古筝” (Huxiang guzheng), “湖南传统音乐”, “区域音乐传承” (regional music inheritance), “数字非遗” (digital intangible heritage), and “guzheng education.” Selection criteria for inclusion included: (1) publication between 2010 and 2024, (2) peer-reviewed journals, theses, or policy reports, (3) available in Chinese or English, and (4) directly relevant to guzheng performance, pedagogy, or regional cultural influence.

In total, 15 representative sources were selected and analyzed. Thematic coding was conducted based on cultural transmission theory and ethnomusicology, identifying recurring concepts such as institutional gaps, intergenerational barriers, regional identity expression, and the impact of digital platforms. These themes were used to construct a SWOT matrix that reflects both internal and external forces influencing guzheng inheritance.

SWOT analysis was structured to answer each research objective: (1) **Strengths** reflect cultural richness, folk music integration, and symbolic heritage tied to Huxiang identity. (2) **Weaknesses** address pedagogical fragmentation, resource scarcity, and limited outreach. (3) **Opportunities** include digital expansion, educational reform, and cross-cultural fusion. (4) **Threats** involve westernization pressures, genre competition, and policy neglect.

Information for SWOT analysis was triangulated from three sources: (1) academic literature; (2) structured expert consultation with 5 music educators and guzheng performers in Hunan; (3) relevant insights from the quantitative questionnaire results. The analysis process was independently verified by two senior researchers in music education, ensuring consistency and interpretive reliability. Data categorization was guided by heritage studies principles and validated through inter-coder agreement (Cohen’s  $\kappa = 0.82$ ), ensuring internal consistency in SWOT classification.

## 2. Quantitative Method: Questionnaire Design and Analysis

To support Research Objective 3 — exploring future development opportunities — a structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to assess public awareness, attitudes, and suggestions regarding Hunan-style guzheng music. The target population was defined as individuals aged 18–65 residing in Hunan Province, with stratified random sampling employed to ensure demographic balance across age, education, and region.

The questionnaire consisted of 25 items, divided into four sections: (1) demographic information (gender, age, education, musical background); (2) awareness and exposure to Huxiang guzheng music; (3) perception of current inheritance practices and challenges; (4) development suggestions and preferred forms of engagement (e.g., concerts, short videos, digital courses).

Question types included Likert-scale items, multiple-choice questions, and two open-ended items to collect qualitative opinions. A pilot test was conducted with 30 participants to verify clarity and reliability. The instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.84$ ). Expert validation was also conducted with three specialists in music education and cultural heritage.

A total of 400 valid responses were collected with a 100% return rate due to on-site distribution in schools, communities, and cultural events. The collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS (v26), with descriptive statistics used for demographic and perception analysis, and cross-tabulations to explore relationships between awareness levels and demographic variables. The findings were also used to support and validate the qualitative SWOT assessment.

## Results

The researcher arrived at the following results through qualitative and quantitative research methods.



**Table1** general information

Name	Option	Frequency	Percentage%
How much do you know about the Guzheng music of the Hunan style?	Very little understanding	18	4.455
	Don't know	27	6.683
	General	102	25.248
	Understand	146	36.139
	Very well	111	27.475

In the in-depth investigation of the dissemination status of Guzheng music of Hunan style among the public, a series of intuitive and highly referential data were obtained through a rigorous research methodology and a survey of groups of different ages, occupations, and regions. The data show that in terms of the knowledge of Guzheng music of Hunan style, the proportion of people who gave the feedback of “understand” is the highest, reaching 36.139%, while the proportion of people who gave the feedback of “very little understanding” is the lowest, only 4.455%. This data reflects that under the modern information dissemination system and cultural exchange activities, most of the groups have a certain degree of contact and cognition of Hu-Xiang style guzheng music. With its unique artistic charms and the integration of folk customs, historical legends, and musical elements of the Hunan and Xiang regions, Hunan-style guzheng music has gradually come into the public's view through diversified channels. However, more than 60% of the groups only have a superficial understanding of Hunan-style guzheng music, reflecting the limitations of the public's cognition. Little is known about the value behind it and its important position in the Huxiang cultural system. Behind this phenomenon, the traditional Huxiang-style guzheng music is at a disadvantage in the competition for public attention, resulting in a lack of motivation and opportunity for the public to gain a deeper understanding of it.

The results show that 36.139% of respondents reported a general understanding of Hunan-style guzheng music, while 27.475% claimed they “know it very well.” However, a combined 60.386% indicated only basic or limited familiarity. This suggests that although guzheng music has certain visibility in public life, in-depth understanding remains low. Additionally, 67.327% of participants agreed that guzheng music is widely disseminated, yet 24.752% felt that the dissemination remains insufficient. This discrepancy reveals a surface-level popularity rather than true cultural integration or public engagement.

These findings confirm that while awareness is relatively high, true recognition of the cultural depth and heritage value is lacking, which weakens the cultural identity transmission of Huxiang guzheng music.

**Table 2** Terms of the public's perception of the spreading degree of Huxiang-style guzheng music

Name	Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Current popularity of Guzheng music in the Hunan style	High degree of dissemination	272	67.327
	The degree of dissemination is not high	100	24.752
	Not sure	32	7.921

The survey data shows that in terms of the public's perception of the spreading degree of Huxiang-style guzheng music, the number of people who give feedback on “high spreading degree” is the most prominent, amounting to 67.327%, while the number of people responding to “unclear” is the lowest, only 7.921%. This data reflects that Huxiang-style guzheng music has already entered public life to a certain extent through various channels and gained a certain degree of attention. However, it should not be ignored



that 24.752% of the respondents still think that the dissemination of Hunan-style guzheng music is not good. This data shows that although the dissemination results have been achieved to some extent, there are still many problems in the process of dissemination. On the one hand, the dissemination of Guzheng music in the Hunan style may not have fully explored its deep cultural connotation, resulting in the audience's poor understanding of the stories and values behind the music; on the other hand, the selection of dissemination channels and methods may not have accurately reached the target group. In addition, in the fierce competition with other popular music genres, the communication advantages of the Guzheng music of the Hunan style have not been fully manifested, limiting its communication scope and influence.

Therefore, to further improve the communication effect of Hunan-style guzheng music, it is necessary to make efforts from multiple dimensions. Through deep excavation of the cultural value of Hunan style guzheng music to create more attractive content; with the help of emerging media platforms, broaden the communication channels to achieve accurate communication; optimize the communication strategy to enhance the competitiveness of Hunan style guzheng music in the cultural market, and really let this music culture with regional characteristics enter into more people's lives and blossom with unique charms.

### 3. Current Situation Analysis of Huxiang Guzheng Music in SWOT Analysis.

**Strengths:** Multi-cultural accumulation, rich musical resources, the integration of Hunan folk songs, flower-drum opera, and other local artistic elements enhance the regional recognition of guzheng music. Geographic identity, Dongting Lake, Miluo River, and other geographic IPs are transformed into musical symbols. Inspiring music creation and regional symbolic advantages provide a solid foundation for the sustainable development of guzheng music in Hunan.

**Weaknesses:** The ecological dilemma of traditional skills inheritance, the Teachers' only "technical" concept creates a barrier to the inheritance of traditional music in Hunan. There is a single mode of inheritance and a talent gap. Inheritance is overly dependent on the master-apprentice system and college education, but there is a lack of systematic, localized teaching materials and assessment standards in the modern education system. The integration of local musical elements, Insufficient development of local cultural resources, the actual creation is often superficial grafting, and there is a bottleneck in innovation. The structural defects of education and dissemination mean that the basic education system is disconnected. The audience is aging, the integration of resources is ineffective, and there is no closed loop of "protection, education, and dissemination". The lack of systematic theoretical construction, the aphasia dilemma of academic research, and the limitations of the protection mechanism of non-heritage are all dilemmas encountered by Huxiang Guzheng music in the process of its development.

**Opportunities:** Digital preservation and online display. Digital preservation and online display not only effectively prevent the risk of loss of precious materials but also expand the audience and dissemination scope of traditional music, which allows Hunan traditional music to cross the geographical and time constraints and deeply resonate with music lovers all over the world. Educational promotion and interactive experience. Schools, communities, and cultural organizations should take the initiative to conduct traditional music courses and lectures to provide students with opportunities to be exposed to and learn the music of the Huxiang guzheng. Cross-border integration and innovative development. By combining with modern art forms such as pop music, dance, and theater, Huxiang Guzheng music has been able to take on a new life on the modern stage. The wide application of social media and short video, by posting carefully crafted short videos and live content on popular platforms such as Weibo and Tik Tok, rich content about the live performance of Huxiang Guzheng music, the production process, the stories behind it, and interviews with the artists were able to quickly attract the attention of the audience and inspire their interest and enthusiasm. VR and AR. Through VR technology, the audience can be immersed beyond the limitations of time and space. By combining cell phones, tablet computers, and other devices with AR technology, the audience can see the traditional music elements and scenes fused with the real world, creating a new visual and auditory effect. All these will be proposed as favorable solutions to get out of the predicament of the current situation of the inheritance of guzheng music in Hunan.



**Threats:** Threats that Hunan Guzheng must face are the competition of genres. Although the Hunan region has a long history and strong cultural heritage, there is little combination of Guzheng and Hunan regional culture, which has not become mainstream. Although now the guzheng in Hunan wants to become a unique guzheng school, because it is in the Central Plains, there are Henan Zheng school in the north, and Hakka Zheng school and Chaozhou Zheng school in the south, the artistic space left for the development of the guzheng in Hunan has been squeezed. Threat of substitutes, impact on the live performance market. The substitution effect of the electronic synthesizer on traditional guzheng live performance is posing a significant threat to the five forces. The substitution effect is significant for scenes with relatively low artistic requirements. With the impact of globalization, it has become a tendency for guzheng performances and compositions to pursue new trends. To pursue “modernization”, composers have transplanted a lot of characteristics of other Zheng schools, and some of the adapted works are overly westernized, even directly applying the logic of Western music creation. Although this kind of “shell creation” broadens the musical expression, it makes the unique characteristics of the Hunan region, and leads to the loss of traditional flavor. It is a great challenge to the survival environment of Guzheng music in Hunan.

## Discussion

This study explores the inheritance and development of guzheng music in Hunan, a regional art form shaped by the integration of traditional Chinese music and Hunan’s rich cultural heritage. As a unique musical expression rooted in the humanistic spirit and natural landscapes of the Hunan region, Hunan-style guzheng not only reflects local identity but also serves as a living example of how regional culture can be preserved and transformed in the modern era.

The findings derived from both the literature review and questionnaire survey highlight a dual reality. On the one hand, there is clear recognition among the public of the cultural value and artistic significance of Hunan guzheng music, suggesting that its traditional form still holds resonance in contemporary society. On the other hand, the data reveal structural contradictions in its inheritance ecology, such as a lack of standardized educational pathways, insufficient media coverage, and limited talent development mechanisms. The SWOT analysis further underscores the main obstacles to inheritance—such as outdated teaching models and narrow communication channels—while also identifying key opportunities, including digital platforms, immersive performances, and growing interest among younger audiences.

In response, this study proposes a multi-dimensional strategy for revitalizing Hunan guzheng music. These include integrating the music into formal education systems, developing digital platforms for instruction and promotion, strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation, and establishing a structured talent cultivation system. These measures aim to address existing challenges while unlocking the latent potential of this art form in the context of modern society.

Importantly, under the dual forces of digitalization and globalization, the future development of Hunan guzheng music must focus on three strategic directions: First, implementing creative transformation, by modernizing musical expression without losing the essence of its traditional sound; second, building immersive experiences, through technologies such as AI, virtual reality, and livestreaming to deepen audience engagement; and third, promoting cross-sectoral integration, by collaborating with industries like film, television, gaming, and tourism to expand cultural influence. These directions not only preserve authenticity but also ensure adaptability in a fast-changing cultural environment.

Despite the valuable insights offered, this research has several limitations. The questionnaire primarily sampled the general public without stratifying by age or background, which may limit the representativeness of the findings. Furthermore, the reliance on literature analysis without incorporating in-depth expert interviews may reduce the depth of interpretation. Future studies could address these gaps by employing mixed methods, expanding sample diversity, and incorporating field-based case studies or oral histories from guzheng practitioners.

In conclusion, this study contributes to both theoretical and practical understandings of regional music preservation. It confirms that with the right blend of cultural insight, technological tools, and







institutional support, Hunan guzheng music can break through existing bottlenecks and evolve into a vibrant symbol of regional identity and national cultural heritage.

## Recommendation

### 1. Reform the Education System through a Dual-Track Approach

To address the lack of formalized transmission channels for Hunan-style guzheng, a dual-track education system should be established. This includes incorporating guzheng culture into the music curriculum of primary and secondary schools to ensure early exposure, while simultaneously fostering innovation and advanced practice at the university level. The experience of Changsha pilot schools and the operation of university-based workshops have demonstrated that educational institutions can play a vital role in cultural preservation. Such integration not only enhances students' understanding of local heritage but also encourages the development of new creative expressions rooted in tradition.

### 2. Strengthen Communication through Digital Platforms and Cultural Tourism

A modern communication strategy should be constructed by combining digital technology with cultural tourism experiences. Digital platforms such as the “Hunan Zheng Yun” app and short-form video platforms (e.g., Douyin) have proven effective in reaching younger audiences. Additionally, immersive performances in scenic cultural sites not only attract tourists but also contextualize the guzheng within the local environment, reinforcing cultural identity. This hybrid approach offers dual benefits: it expands public visibility and provides experiential engagement, thereby revitalizing traditional music in contemporary settings.

### 3. Establish a Pyramid-Style Talent Cultivation Mechanism

To ensure the long-term sustainability of guzheng inheritance, a structured talent cultivation model is needed. A pyramid framework should be established that includes broad-based access at the foundational level, targeted support for high-potential learners, and elite cultivation through certification systems, mentorship, and funding support. This structure helps to address the shortage of skilled guzheng educators and ensures that future generations are not only technically proficient but also culturally informed. Strategic coordination among local governments, academic institutions, and private organizations is crucial to the implementation of this model.

### 4. Deepen Cultural Content Innovation and Modern Reinterpretation

Efforts should be made to decode the cultural genes embedded in traditional Huxiang guzheng works and reinterpret them in ways that resonate with contemporary values and aesthetics. Modern audiences, especially younger generations, may find it difficult to relate to traditional compositions in their original form. Therefore, reinterpretation strategies—such as thematic transformation, multimedia integration, and collaborative composition—can make classical content more accessible while maintaining its cultural essence. This approach not only supports innovation but also prevents cultural ossification.

### 5. Leverage Digital Technology for Interactive and Immersive Experiences

The advancement of digital technology offers unprecedented opportunities for enhancing the inheritance and appreciation of guzheng music. Artificial intelligence, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) can be utilized to create immersive learning and performance environments. For instance, interactive VR experiences can transport users into traditional performance settings, while AI-guided tutorials can provide personalized instruction. Such technological empowerment can bridge geographical and generational gaps, allowing more diverse audiences to engage with guzheng culture in meaningful ways.

### 6. Promote Cross-Sectoral Integration to Expand Cultural Influence

Finally, Hunan-style guzheng music should actively seek integration with other cultural and creative industries. Collaborations with film and television productions, game soundtracks, animation, and interactive media can significantly broaden the reach and relevance of guzheng music. These forms not only introduce the instrument to new audiences but also allow for experimentation in sound, form, and



narrative. By embedding guzheng into mainstream and emerging media ecosystems, the art form can transcend its traditional niche and become a dynamic component of global cultural expression.

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