

# The role of education in the transmission of Northern Henan Zhuizi Chinese Opera: A case study of Cui Zhixia

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of education in the transmission of Northern Henan Zhuizi Chinese Opera through the case study of Cui Zhixia, a provincial-level inheritor and educator. Northern Henan Zhuizi, a lyrical and narrative art form deeply rooted in the Henan region's cultural identity, has faced challenges of declining transmission due to modernization and shifting cultural interests. The research aims to explore how education influences the preservation, transmission, and revitalization of Zhuizi through structured pedagogical models and community engagement. Conducted in Anyang City, Henan Province, the birthplace of the Northern Zhuizi tradition, this qualitative case study involved five key informants, including senior artists, students, and cultural officers. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed thematically across dimensions of structured education, intergenerational learning, digital innovation, and cultural sustainability. Findings reveal that Cui Zhixia's educational approach transforms the traditional master-disciple model into a systematic framework integrating formal and informal education. Her innovative use of digital platforms extends Zhuizi's reach beyond local communities, while intergenerational programs strengthen cultural continuity. The study concludes that education serves as both a preservation mechanism and an adaptive tool for sustaining folk opera in modern society. It recommends integrating traditional arts into institutional curricula and digital learning platforms to ensure enduring cultural vitality.

**Keywords:** Northern Henan Zhuizi, cultural transmission, educational innovation, folk opera preservation, intangible cultural heritage.

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## INTRODUCTION

Northern Henan Zhuizi is a traditional Chinese opera that combines the beauty of lyrical singing, rhythmic storytelling, and expressive dialectal performance into one art form. It originated in the Central Plains of China and reflects the social, linguistic, and emotional characteristics of the Henan region. For centuries, Zhuizi has served not only as entertainment but also as a vessel for moral lessons, cultural values, and community cohesion. Its performance style integrates spoken narrative and song, often accompanied by a simple bowed string instrument, creating a distinct art form that bridges music, literature, and theater (Pu et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024; Zhang and

Sornyai, 2025). However, the combined forces of globalization and modernization have disrupted the cultural ecosystem that once supported Zhuizi. The spread of mass media and changing lifestyles has displaced local folk arts, leaving many young people unaware of this traditional form of opera (Iftikhar et al., 2023; Zonggui, 2015). This growing cultural gap threatens the continuity of Northern Henan Zhuizi and challenges the intergenerational transmission of its artistic heritage.

The central problem addressed in this study is the weakening of Northern Henan Zhuizi's intergenerational transmission. Historically, the art form relied on the

“master-to-disciple” model of oral and observational learning deeply rooted in family and community networks. This traditional model, though effective in the past, struggles to survive in today’s urban and commercial environment. As rural populations migrate to cities and younger generations engage less with traditional culture, fewer learners undertake the long training required to master Zhuizi. Moreover, limited public exposure and modest financial incentives have further discouraged new practitioners. Without organized educational support, both the skills and cultural meanings of Northern Henan Zhuizi risk being lost (Blaug, 2019; Ren and Thotham, 2023; Wojnowski, 2020). Addressing this issue requires an educational framework capable of preserving the authenticity of the tradition while adapting to contemporary pedagogical and cultural contexts.

Education plays a vital role in safeguarding traditional performing arts like Northern Henan Zhuizi. It bridges historical knowledge and modern learning, transforming heritage into a living practice. Formal education programs in schools and cultural institutions now provide structured ways to teach, preserve, and revitalize folk traditions (Huang et al., 2025; Sakyi, 2017; Zhang, 2025). By integrating Zhuizi into music and cultural curricula, young learners gain both technical skills and cultural identity rooted in regional heritage. Educational institutions also create opportunities for interdisciplinary learning linking music, language, and history so that Zhuizi is seen not as an isolated art form but as part of a broader cultural system. Informal practices such as community workshops and intergenerational mentorship remain equally important, providing authentic experiences beyond the classroom (Campbell, 2017; Mitana et al., 2018; Žnidaršič, 2020). The case of Cui Zhixia, a provincial-level inheritor of Northern Henan Zhuizi, demonstrates how education can transform fragile oral traditions into sustainable learning systems. Her lifelong teaching, performance, and innovation illustrate how educational leadership sustains cultural heritage in a changing society.

Previous research highlights that preserving intangible cultural heritage requires integrating traditional arts into structured learning environments. Scholars emphasize education as a mechanism for maintaining social values, creative skills, and collective memory (Brown, 2018; Zhao, 2025). Studies of Chinese folk traditions such as Pingtan, Yu Opera, and Guqin show that institutional support strengthens both community participation and national identity. Furthermore, the rise of digital learning platforms has expanded the reach of traditional arts, enabling global access and modern reinterpretation (Burnett et al., 2017; Song and Thotham, 2024; Wu, 2023; Zhang and Karin, 2024). Within this context, Cui Zhixia’s integration of university teaching, community performance, and online dissemination represents a pioneering educational model. Her approach demonstrates how heritage preservation can coexist with creative innovation, positioning the educator not merely as an instructor but as a cultural

leader and bridge between generations.

This study is based on the hypothesis that education serves as a transformative mechanism in the transmission of Northern Henan Zhuizi Chinese Opera. It assumes that structured, inclusive educational engagement fosters cultural sustainability, learner participation, and innovation while maintaining authenticity. Through a qualitative case study of Cui Zhixia’s teaching practices and community activities, this research explores how education functions as both a preservation tool and a creative process. By analyzing her educational methods, the study demonstrates that teaching can redefine how traditional performing arts are learned and appreciated in modern society. Ultimately, this research aims to highlight the educational strategies that balance cultural continuity with innovation, ensuring that Northern Henan Zhuizi remains a living, evolving art form in today’s educational landscape.

### **Research objective**

To investigate the role of education in the transmission of Northern Henan Zhuizi Chinese Opera through the case study of Cui Zhixia.

### **Research question**

How does education influence the preservation, transmission, and revitalization of Northern Henan Zhuizi Chinese Opera through the teaching practices and cultural activities of Cui Zhixia?

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research employed a qualitative case study design to investigate how education influences the preservation, transmission, and revitalization of Northern Henan Zhuizi Chinese Opera through the teaching and cultural practices of a master performer. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the participants’ lived experiences, teaching strategies, and educational interactions within their authentic cultural context (Huang et al., 2024; Qiu et al., 2024; Uluöz, 2020; Zhao and Deepresert, 2025). The study site was Anyang City, Henan Province, a region known as the birthplace of the Northern Zhuizi tradition. The research focused on how educational frameworks, both formal and informal, contribute to the sustainability of this traditional art form, particularly through community participation, classroom instruction, and performance-based learning.

### **Research design**

A case study methodology was used to capture the

complex dynamics of teaching, learning, and cultural inheritance within a real-world educational environment. The design focused on observing and interpreting the social, artistic, and pedagogical processes that underpin the transmission of Northern Henan Zhuizi. This case-centered strategy enabled a holistic understanding of how educational mechanisms operate within the broader framework of cultural heritage preservation. Additionally, the study incorporated the preparation of supplementary materials to document the data collection process, including sample interview prompts designed to guide participant responses.

## Participants

The study included five key informants, all directly engaged in Zhuizi performance, education, and promotion. Participants were purposefully selected based on their expertise and active participation in the art form's transmission. The group consisted of one senior artist, three learners at different stages of training, and one cultural officer responsible for heritage promotion in the community. This combination provided a well-rounded perspective from both the educational practitioners and policy-supporting institutions, ensuring the data reflected multiple layers of the transmission process, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Key Informants.

No.	Role in study	/	Data contribution
1	Senior practitioner and educator	Teaching, performing, leading workshops	Provided insight into educational philosophy and pedagogy
2	Student at intermediate level	Learning and performing	Shared perspectives on instructional experiences
3	Student at beginner level	Learning and participating in workshops	Provided understanding of early-stage education
4	Advanced student and assistant	Teaching assistant in community performances	Offered reflection on mentoring and applied learning
5	Cultural officer	Coordinating heritage education programs	Provided institutional and administrative perspectives

## Data collection procedures

Data were collected between January 2024 and January 2025 through three qualitative instruments: observation, interview, and document analysis. Each method was designed to ensure depth, accuracy, and cultural sensitivity.

### Observation

Direct observations were conducted in classrooms, rehearsal spaces, and public performances. The researcher recorded teaching strategies, student participation, audience interaction, and overall performance structure. These observations highlighted the integration of traditional and modern teaching methods and revealed how emotion, expression, and dialect form part of Zhuizi's educational process.

## Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with all five key informants. Each session lasted approximately 45–90 minutes. The questions explored participants' teaching experiences, learning motivations, and perceptions of education's role in heritage preservation. Follow-up interviews were conducted when clarification or deeper insight was needed. Responses were recorded, transcribed, and translated into English for analysis. To enhance methodological transparency, a set of sample interview questions was included as supplementary material, outlining prompts related to teaching philosophy, learning challenges, cultural meaning, and perceptions of educational impact.

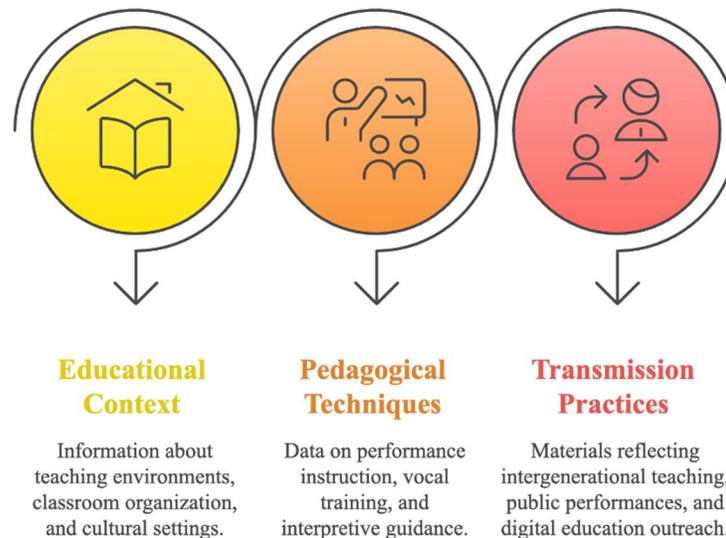
## Document analysis

Archival and contemporary materials, including training

syllabi, lesson notes, performance scripts, and social media teaching videos, were reviewed to contextualize the data. This process provided supplementary information on teaching content, course structures, and digital dissemination strategies.

### Data management

All qualitative data were systematically organized into three categories corresponding to the study's main focus areas. The data were coded manually and stored securely in both digital and print formats. Each source was labeled with the date, participant number, and data type to ensure accuracy during analysis, as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Data collection procedures.

### Data analysis

After collecting data, the researcher used thematic content analysis to find patterns and relationships. The process involved transcribing and verifying interviews, coding data into categories related to cultural, digital, and educational

dimensions, and synthesizing results into key findings. This facilitated understanding of the intersection of digital innovation and educational frameworks in preserving ancient musical heritage, ultimately informing the interpretation of the Yang Jiao Zhong as both a cultural artefact and a pedagogical tool, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Data analysis steps.

Step	Procedure	Description of process
1	Data familiarization	Repeated reading of interview transcripts, field notes, and documents to gain an overall understanding of educational dynamics.
2	Initial coding	Highlighting key phrases and ideas related to pedagogy, learning, and transmission. Codes were grouped into preliminary categories such as "teaching strategies," "learner motivation," and "cultural values."
3	Theme development	Codes were refined into major themes, including "structured education," "intergenerational learning," "digital innovation," and "cultural sustainability."
4	Data triangulation	Cross-verifying information obtained from observations, interviews, and documents to ensure consistency and credibility.
5	Interpretation and synthesis	Integrating all findings to explain how educational mechanisms influence the transmission of Zhuizi and how these insights contribute to the broader field of heritage education.

## Ethical considerations

All participants gave informed consent before the interviews and observations. The study respected confidentiality and cultural sensitivity, ensuring that data were used solely for academic purposes. Ethical approval was obtained from the research committee prior to data collection.

Additionally, participants were informed that anonymized excerpts from their interviews might be included in supplementary materials, such as sample interview questions and indicative responses, to enhance methodological clarity.

## RESULTS

Data triangulation revealed four major themes: 1) structured educational systems, 2) intergenerational learning, 3) educational innovation, and 4) cultural sustainability. Each theme demonstrates how educational practices enable this traditional art form to adapt and flourish in contemporary cultural and institutional contexts. To improve clarity and reduce redundancy, overlapping descriptive elements have been streamlined while preserving the analytical depth of each theme.

## Structured educational systems

The research found that one of the most significant contributions of Cui Zhixia's educational approach lies in the systematic structuring of learning processes for Zhuizi opera. Traditionally, Northern Henan Zhuizi was transmitted through informal mentorship between masters and apprentices, emphasizing oral instruction and imitation. However, under Cui Zhixia's leadership, the process has evolved into a semi-formal educational framework that mirrors institutional learning models while preserving its artistic authenticity.

Through interviews, participants explained that her teaching follows a curricular sequence that moves from technical mastery to expressive artistry. The initial stage emphasizes voice production and control, including breathing, tone stability, and dialect articulation. Students are introduced to the "three correctness" principles: correct word, correct accent, and correct body, which serve as the foundation for later interpretive performance. According to one informant, "She always says that learning Zhuizi is not only learning to sing but to breathe, move, and think like the character. Every tone and movement must be aligned." This streamlined sequence is reflected in Table 3, which presents the core stages without unnecessary repetition.

**Table 3.** Overview of Cui Zhixia's structured educational framework.

Learning stage	Core components	Teaching activities	Expected outcomes
Stage 1: Foundation	Voice training, breathing control, dialect articulation	Daily vocal drills, tongue-twister pronunciation, rhythm exercises	Mastery of tonal and phonetic precision
Stage 2: Expression	Emotional interpretation, physical expression	Role simulation, mirror-based feedback, duet rehearsals	Integration of emotion and movement
Stage 3: Performance	Stage presence, audience engagement	Live rehearsals, critique sessions, public showcases	Professional performance readiness
Stage 4: Reflection	Self-evaluation and innovation	Group discussion, reflective journals, peer feedback	Development of personal artistic identity

Through this sequence, Cui Zhixia transforms traditional oral instruction into a systematized and replicable pedagogical process. The structured design not only improves technical competence but also promotes critical reflection, an aspect rarely emphasized in older apprenticeship models.

Observation of her classes (Figure 2) revealed that each session begins with a thirty-minute warm-up routine emphasizing controlled breathing and posture alignment, followed by rhythm synchronization using the "simple board," a percussive instrument central to Zhuizi performance. Students are trained to perform under both relaxed and performance-like conditions, enhancing endurance and confidence.



**Figure 2.** Cui Zhixia teaching in a college classroom. Source: The researcher, from fieldwork (2025).

Education functions not only as technical training but also as moral cultivation. Several learners reflected that through disciplined practice, they gained patience, perseverance, and respect for traditional values central to Chinese performing arts pedagogy. One student commented, “Teacher Cui always tells us that our bodies are instruments, and only when we discipline ourselves can the music be alive.”

Thus, structured education transforms performance learning into holistic character formation, combining artistry, cultural ethics, and self-regulation.

### Intergenerational learning

The second major finding emphasizes the intergenerational nature of learning within the Zhuizi community. Cui Zhixia’s educational activities unite elderly practitioners, middle-aged performers, and young learners in collaborative workshops and public performances. These exchanges foster mutual learning and cultural continuity across age groups.



**Figure 3.** Cui Zhixia enters the community to cultivate grassroots inheritors. Source: The researcher, from fieldwork (2024).

Field observations revealed that these activities often take place in both formal institutions (such as cultural centers and colleges) and informal community spaces (like village halls and neighborhood theaters). Elderly performers

serve as cultural narrators, recounting stories and experiences that contextualize Zhuizi’s moral themes and historical roots. Meanwhile, young learners bring enthusiasm, digital literacy, and creativity to reinterpret these stories for new audiences.

This bidirectional relationship supports intergenerational reciprocity: younger students inherit knowledge while offering new insights into interpretation and dissemination. One informant noted, “When the young people sing, the old masters smile, they say the art has a future again.”

Cui Zhixia’s pedagogy promotes collaborative learning by blending demonstration and participation. In joint rehearsals, experienced performers mentor younger learners in stage positioning, timing, and tonal modulation, while younger participants assist elders with modern media technology and event organization. Table 4 summarizes these forms of intergenerational collaboration in a more concise format.

This model of intergenerational learning ensures that education remains rooted in community and social interaction. It turns the act of performing into a collective cultural practice rather than an isolated technical exercise.

A particularly significant component of Cui Zhixia’s educational outreach is her Youth Enlightenment Program, which introduces Zhuizi opera to students in primary and secondary schools. This initiative connects heritage education to national curricula on arts and music. Figure 4 depicts one such classroom session where young learners engage with Zhuizi singing and rhythmic exercises.



**Figure 4.** Cui Zhixia’s Youth Enlightenment students in class. Source: The researcher, from fieldwork (2024).

**Table 4.** Forms of intergenerational learning in Zhuizi transmission.

Activity type	Participants	Educational function	Observed outcome
Community workshops	Elders, adults, and youth	Storytelling and performance simulation	Reinforcement of historical and cultural context
Joint rehearsals	Teachers and students	Collaborative interpretation and improvisation	Enhanced creative flexibility
Public performances	Mixed-age groups	Audience engagement and confidence-building	Strengthened cultural identity and community pride
Family-based sessions	Parents and children	Informal reinforcement of skills	Continuity of learning within the household

Students frequently reported that interactive teaching methods made Zhuizi more relatable. One remarked, “I used to think old songs were boring, but when Teacher Cui told stories, I understood why my grandparents loved them.” These findings demonstrate that intergenerational learning ensures cultural continuity by embedding Zhuizi in community life and classroom engagement.

**Educational innovation**

The third theme concerns the innovative integration of digital technology into Zhuizi education. Recognizing the decline of live audiences, Cui Zhixia employs modern communication tools to make Zhuizi accessible beyond its geographic origin. She uses Douyin (TikTok China) and other video-sharing platforms to livestream performances,

upload tutorials, and share short educational clips.



**Figure 5.** Cui Zhixia's official account on the Douyin platform. Source: Cui Zhixia's official Douyin.

**Table 5.** Examples of digital pedagogical innovations.

Digital tool	Educational purpose	Impact on learning
Douyin livestream	Real-time performance and Q&A with audience	Interactive and accessible cultural education
Short video tutorials	Vocal and rhythm practice	Reinforcement of self-paced learning
Recorded classroom footage	Documentation of traditional teaching	Archival preservation for research and study
WeChat groups	Student collaboration and feedback sharing	Continuous learning community beyond classroom

These online resources act as virtual classrooms, enabling learners to review techniques independently. Younger learners especially value the flexibility. One informant said, “If I miss class, I watch her videos to practice at home.”

Digital integration has expanded Zhuizi’s visibility and created a global audience, with viewers from different provinces and overseas Chinese communities following Cui Zhixia’s performances. Her online content has accumulated more than two million views, demonstrating how education can intersect with media culture to sustain traditional arts.

Cui Zhixia’s digital teaching approach also demonstrates pedagogical adaptability. She integrates audio-visual media, subtitles, and modern storytelling techniques to align with contemporary learning habits. Lesson materials often include animated captions and visual cues to highlight rhythm and tone changes, as shown in Table 5.

This combination of technology and traditional performance redefines Zhuizi education as interactive, visual, and participatory. It enhances cultural literacy while allowing education to transcend physical limitations.

Educational innovation also extends to creative performance techniques. Cui Zhixia often reinterprets classic Zhuizi scripts with contemporary themes such as environmental awareness, community ethics, and family values. These thematic adaptations resonate with modern audiences while preserving Zhuizi’s linguistic and melodic

integrity.

In interviews, students expressed admiration for this approach. One commented, “When Teacher Cui sings about modern life, it still feels ancient but also real. It helps us understand that tradition is alive.” Thus, innovation within educational practice is not about replacing the old but recontextualizing it to ensure relevance and continuity.

**Cultural sustainability**

The final theme demonstrates how education ensures the long-term sustainability of Northern Henan Zhuizi. Education functions as both a protective mechanism for artistic heritage and a catalyst for cultural adaptation. By embedding Zhuizi in schools, community workshops, and digital networks, Cui Zhixia transforms a regional folk art into an inclusive cultural platform accessible to multiple generations.

Informants described education as the “lifeline” of Zhuizi. One noted, “Without teaching, it would only survive in museums. Now it lives in classrooms and online.” This statement captures the broader social significance of educational outreach in preventing cultural extinction.

Educational sustainability also depends on institutional and governmental support. Cui Zhixia collaborates with local cultural bureaus and educational departments to

develop training curricula and teacher development programs. These partnerships ensure that Zhuizi instruction aligns with national standards for arts education and heritage protection.

Community cultural officers confirmed that Zhuizi is now recognized as a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage, and its inclusion in schools is supported by educational grants and teacher exchange programs. This collaboration between artists, schools, and government agencies represents a model of integrated cultural

governance.

Beyond institutional support, sustainability emerges through the formation of learning communities that continue the Zhuizi practice independently. Many of Cui Zhixia's former students now serve as local instructors, extending her teaching network across Henan Province. These secondary instructors organize small workshops and performances, effectively multiplying the impact of her educational model, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Outcomes of educational sustainability efforts.

<b>Educational initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sustainability impact</b>
School integration	Incorporating Zhuizi into music curriculum	Long-term inclusion in arts education
Community clubs	Establishing student-led performance groups	Continuity of practice and peer learning
Teacher training	Mentoring local educators	Expansion of transmission networks
Online learning platforms	Digital archives and interactive classes	Global accessibility and preservation of content

Through these efforts, education functions as a self-renewing ecosystem, continually producing new learners and practitioners who sustain the art both locally and globally. Cui Zhixia's case illustrates that sustainability is not achieved by rigid preservation but by dynamic adaptation. Her model demonstrates that heritage education must evolve in dialogue with changing cultural, social, and technological contexts. Education thus becomes the instrument through which tradition remains both stable and fluid, anchored in history yet open to transformation.

Overall, the four themes demonstrate that the transmission of Northern Henan Zhuizi is strengthened when traditional practices are supported by structured pedagogy, cross-generational participation, digital innovation, and institutional partnerships. Together, these elements form an integrated educational ecosystem that revitalizes the art, expands its audience, and ensures its long-term sustainability.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reinforce the theoretical proposition that education serves as the central mechanism for the preservation and revitalization of intangible cultural heritage, particularly traditional performing arts such as Northern Henan Zhuizi Chinese Opera. As highlighted in the introduction, Zhuizi embodies the moral, linguistic, and emotional fabric of Henan society. Yet, its survival faces challenges due to modernization, urbanization, and declining youth participation (Pu et al., 2023; Zonggui, 2015). The results of this study are consistent with the view that formal and informal education

can transform fragile oral traditions into sustainable cultural practices (Brown, 2018; Zhao, 2025). Through the case of Cui Zhixia, education emerges not merely as a medium of technical instruction but as a dynamic process of moral, aesthetic, and cultural cultivation that aligns with Confucian educational philosophy emphasizing self-discipline and moral virtue (Huang et al., 2025). This observation echoes findings from broader global contexts, where community-centered educational interventions similarly support cultural resilience, such as in Uganda and Croatia, demonstrating that the educational preservation of heritage is a cross-cultural phenomenon rather than uniquely Chinese (Mitana et al., 2018; Žnidaršič, 2020).

The structured educational system developed by Cui Zhixia demonstrates consistency with existing pedagogical frameworks of arts education. Her curriculum, divided into foundation, expression, performance, and reflection stages, parallels modern educational design that encourages progressive skill acquisition and self-evaluation (Campbell, 2017). This systematic structure also validates Blaug's (2019) economic perspective that institutionalized education enhances the efficiency and accessibility of art learning. By transforming the traditional master-apprentice model into a replicable framework, Cui's pedagogy bridges the gap between traditional authenticity and modern educational standards. The intergenerational learning model observed in her workshops further supports Žnidaršič's (2020) assertion that arts and cultural education strengthen community cohesion. Comparable intergenerational impacts have been identified in studies from Uganda and Pakistan, where collaborative learning enriches cultural participation and strengthens social ties (Iftikhar et al., 2023; Mitana et al., 2018). These parallels highlight that the processes

shaping the transmission of Zhuizi resonate with global patterns of cultural education.

Educational innovation through digital platforms, another major finding of this study, aligns with contemporary research on digital heritage preservation. Burnett et al. (2017) and Song and Thotham (2024) observed that digital media enable traditional music to transcend geographical limitations and reach global audiences. Cui Zhixia's use of Douyin and online tutorials demonstrates how social media can function as a modern "virtual classroom," sustaining folk traditions within digital culture. This finding is consistent with Wu's (2023) concept of "cultural confluence," wherein traditional and modern elements coexist within blended cultural spaces. However, it also reveals a potential inconsistency with traditionalist perspectives that caution against the commercialization of cultural arts (, 2020). While digital dissemination broadens access, it risks oversimplifying complex performance techniques. Nevertheless, as seen in other international contexts within the literature, for example, multimedia use in Croatian cultural education (Žnidaršič, 2020), digitized arts instruction can still uphold cultural integrity when integrated with structured, context-rich pedagogical practices.

Cultural sustainability, the final theme, confirms that educational institutions and government partnerships are crucial for the longevity of folk traditions. The collaboration between Cui Zhixia and local cultural bureaus exemplifies Zhao's (2025) theory of university-community integration for heritage innovation. Teacher training programs and student-led ensembles illustrate how education fosters self-sustaining cultural ecosystems. Moreover, this supports Ren and Thotham's (2023) argument that embedding traditional arts in school curricula ensures generational continuity and social engagement. Comparable insights from broader educational research, such as Uluöz's (2020) study of adaptive learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrate that flexible, community-responsive approaches strengthen educational resilience, mirroring the adaptive strategies needed for Zhuizi's long-term sustainability. As societies evolve, sustainable transmission requires balancing historical authenticity with contemporary cultural relevance (Huang et al., 2024).

## Conclusion

This study establishes that education functions as both a preservative and a transformative force in the transmission of Northern Henan Zhuizi Chinese Opera. It ensures technical mastery, nurtures moral and cultural literacy, and integrates heritage into modern life through innovation and institutional support. The findings are consistent with prior theories on cultural pedagogy and heritage education, demonstrating that Zhuizi's survival depends on its ability to evolve within educational and digital frameworks. Future

research should expand comparative analyses across regional operatic traditions, investigate the long-term impacts of digital pedagogy on cultural authenticity, and explore cross-cultural models of heritage transmission within the broader context of globalization and arts education.

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