

리위안

- 새로운 기술을 통한 지역사회 참여, 음악 교육 및 문화 보존의 변혁 -

Liyuan: Transforming Community Engagement, Music Education and Cultural Preservation through New Technology

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Abstract This study investigates the role of technology, particularly Douyin, in transforming music education and traditional cultural practices, focusing on Liyuan Opera in China. Amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this research examines how digital platforms facilitate the preservation and evolution of this cultural heritage. It further explores the implications of these technologies for music education, particularly in enhancing learning experiences and teaching methodologies associated with traditional arts. Employing a mix of documentation analysis, interviews, and surveys among inheritors, performers, musicians, and digital audiences, the study reveals that the shift to digital media has enabled Liyuan Opera to break free from traditional spatial-temporal constraints, leading to innovative forms of educational engagement and cultural dissemination. The findings highlight the impact of digital transformation on traditional cultural practices, demonstrating that technology can bridge the gap between historical heritage and contemporary educational contexts. This transition not only diversifies communication channels but also rejuvenates community interest and participation in traditional culture, ensuring its continuity in a digital age. By exploring the dynamic interplay between technology and traditional cultural practices, this paper contributes to the broader discourse on leveraging technology to enhance music education, foster community ties, and promote cultural accessibility and equity.

Key words: audience perspectives, cultural anthropology, Douyin, innovative music education, new media

초록 이 연구는 기술, 특히 Douyin이 중국 리위안 오페라에서 음악 교육과 전통 문화 관행을 어떻게 변화시키는지를 조사하는 것을 목적으로 한다. COVID-19 팬데믹 기간동안 디지털 플랫폼이 문화유산의 보존과 발전에 어떻게 기여하는지를 살펴보았다. 또한 이러한 기술이 음악 교육에 미치는 영향, 특히 전통 예술과 관련된 학습 경험과 교육 방법론을 향상시키는 방식을 탐구하였다. 문헌 분석, 인터뷰, 설문조사를 통해 전수자, 공연자, 음악가, 디지털 관객을 대상으로 한 연구 결과, 디지털 미디어로의 전환이 리위안 오페라를 전통적인 사공간의 제약에서 벗어나게 하여 혁신적인 교육 참여와 문화 확산의 형태를 가능하게 했음을 밝혔다. 이 연구는 디지털 전환이 전통 문화 관행에 미치는 영향을 강조하며, 기술이 역사적 유산과 현대 교육 맥락 간의 격차를 메울 수 있음을 보여준다. 이러한 전환은 소통 채널을 다양화할 뿐만 아니라, 전통 문화에 대한 지역사회의 관심과 참여를 새롭게 활성화하여 디지털 시대에서도 그 지속성을 유지하도록 한다. 이 논문은 기술과 전통 문화 관행 간의 역동적인 상호작용을 탐구함으로써, 음악 교육을 강화하고, 지역사회의 유대감을 증진하며, 문화 접근성과 형평성을 촉진하기 위해 기술을 활용하는 것에 대한 폭넓은 논의에 기여한다.

주제어: 청중 관점, 문화 인류학, 더우인, 혁신적 음악 교육, 뉴 미디어

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I . Introduction

Chinese opera integrates an array of traditional arts, rich historical traditions, distinct vocal systems, outstanding performance skills, and a vast repertoire of plays characterized by unique regional attributes (Siu and Lovrick, 2013). This expressive art form is especially important due to its connection with diverse ethnic groups and geographical regions throughout China. This research focuses on the implications of integrating new media platforms like Douyin into the music education of traditional music, exploring how these technologies enhance teaching methodologies, learning experiences, and the preservation of traditional arts. The particular case study is Liyuan Opera. This art form originated during the Tang and Five Dynasties in the Quanzhou area of Southern Fujian, evolving and thriving through the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties. Liyuan Opera holds immense cultural value and is integral to Fujian Quanzhou's historical and cultural heritage, as well as China's broader opera culture (Wang, 2017). In 2006, the State Council honored Liyuan Opera as part of China's national intangible cultural heritage in an effort to fortify national unity and enhance international standing (Tan, 2018).

However, the rich cultural and ecological environment of Southern Fujian, which once nurtured the development of Liyuan Opera, has undergone significant changes due to the proliferation of new media and rapid technological advancements in the 21st century (Ang, 2021). These advancements have opened new avenues for music education, offering unique opportunities to integrate traditional operatic forms into contemporary educational settings through digital platforms. In the context of this research, new media is defined as digital, interactive, and networked information and communication technologies that have emerged since the later part of the 20th century. This includes, but is not limited to, social media platforms like Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok), WeChat, and other digital platforms used for information dissemination, communication, and engagement. These forms of media are characterized by their high degree of interactivity, user participation, and dynamic content, often being user-generated or modified in real time. The shift from traditional society to a more modern, digitally-connected one has led to a diminished prominence of opera in civic culture, with younger audiences having limited exposure and understanding of this traditional art form. Compounded by the adversities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Liyuan Opera practitioners have been compelled to explore innovative methods to preserve, inherit, and promote the art form, utilizing these new media platforms and advanced technology as a means to educate younger audiences and transcend cultural boundaries.

This research seeks to provide insight into the transformative role of ‘new media’ as the central focus. With its large user base and substantial potential for mass communication, Douyin presents an ideal stage for Liyuan Opera to experiment with novel performance formats and more readily integrate with other sectors to navigate the new network economy market and educate younger audiences. The core objectives of this investigation are to study the evolution of Liyuan Opera in the context of China's new media landscape, and to analyze Chinese perspectives on the opera's transition to the Douyin platform, with consideration for its potential to broaden the audience base and enable education of a new demographic. The central research question guiding this study is: How does the integration of new media platforms like Douyin impact the educational dissemination and cultural preservation of Liyuan Opera in contemporary China?

II. Literature Review

1. New Media and Music Education

The integration of new media in music education has revolutionized teaching methodologies and learning experiences. Studies have shown that digital platforms can provide innovative solutions for educational outreach in traditional arts (Redhead, 2024). For instance, the use of new media in Nanyin musical theatre has enhanced publicity, collaboration, and fundraising efforts, highlighting the potential for similar applications in Liyuan Opera education (Tsai, Wu & Din, 2016).

Against the backdrop of rapid technological and cultural developments involving new media in China, research by Yu (2021) examined music education in primary and secondary schools, focusing on new media and popular music. This study demonstrated that employing new media to teach popular music enhances the overall audio-visual experience for both learners and educators. It also has positive influences on learning, teaching, and sharing popular music. Moreover, the use of new media has been proven to encourage independent learning and trigger changes in aesthetic appreciation towards music (Lei, Chiu, Lung & Chan, 2021). These findings emphasize the importance of teaching tools, interaction, and independent learning skills in the acquisition of knowledge by primary and secondary pupils.

Shifting social situations and cultural artefacts enabled by technological developments have made music ubiquitous in modern society, where live and recorded music can be heard regularly

in the course of everyday activities (North, Hargreaves & Hargreaves, 2004). Societal and technological progress has also created numerous new ways for people to create, perform, and be actively involved with music (Partti & Karlsen, 2010). For example, teenagers today engage with music through activities like creating ringtones, composing music with digital tools, playing music video games, and performing in virtual worlds (Arnesen & Espeland, 2008; Mellor 2008; Tanaka 2004; Wingstedt 2008). These activities highlight the multitude of opportunities for musical engagement provided by twenty-first-century new media.

From an educational perspective, this extensive engagement with music through new media raises important questions about identity formation, learning processes, and the role of music in everyday life. Deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing one's identity (Cook, 1998). Research has shown that music can be used for mood regulation, self-care, communication, and empowerment (Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005; Ruud, 2008). These connections between identity and music have thus become a frequent topic in music education theory (Reimer, 2022).

Recognizing that people nowadays learn music from a variety of sources, including the media, the Internet, and personal recording equipment (Bauer, 2020), it is crucial to explore the different modes of transmission inherent in informal contexts. Scholars like Hess (2020) argue that the continuum between formal and informal learning needs to be explored to understand the multidimensionality of music learning. Modern technology has dramatically increased our options for making, sharing, and learning music, making it possible for almost anyone to compose, arrange, record, and distribute music (Camlin & Lisboa, 2021). Applying these insights to Liyuan Opera, digital platforms like Douyin can offer enhanced audio-visual experiences, foster independent learning, and shift aesthetic appreciation towards traditional music forms. This approach can bridge the gap between traditional and contemporary educational contexts, making traditional arts more accessible and engaging for younger audiences. By leveraging new media, educators can create a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment that aligns with the ways students naturally engage with music.

2. Impact of New Media on the Development of Liyuan Opera

The meteoric rise and global adoption of new media, particularly within the expansive digital landscape of China, has provided a fertile ground for traditional art forms such as Liyuan Opera to reach an expanded audience and interact in a dynamic educational environment, as embodied

in the popularity of platforms like Douyin (Ang, 2021; Yu, 2020; Wei, 2022). The advent of new media and its impact on traditional performing arts has led to a significant transformation in how these cultural practices are disseminated, engaged with and incorporated into educational programs (Tsai, Wu & Din, 2016). As demonstrated in the context of Nanyin musical theatre, new media platforms offer innovative solutions to issues of publicity, collaboration, and fundraising, as well as enhancing transmission, sharing, communication, and educational outreach within the art form. In a similar vein, Huadeng opera's declining popularity was proposed to be mitigated through digital communication platforms, most notably WeChat, emphasizing the potential role of modern technology in preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage and educating new generations (Zheng, 2018).

However, while new media has provided novel opportunities, it has also introduced new complexities. Xie's (2022) big data analysis of the dissemination of opera in the internet self-media environment underscores this shift, demonstrating how even traditional cultural TV programs are subject to the survival of the fittest in the era of big data. A focus on the Liyuan Opera in particular showed significant viewing figures and an interesting demographic shift, with a majority of audiences having a high school or technical secondary school education. This use of big data to understand and navigate the new media landscape is critical for the sustained relevance of traditional performing arts and their educational content. The intersection of new media and Liyuan Opera also introduces challenges relating to talent acquisition, audience engagement, and the modernization of communication technology, as noted in the case of Huagu Opera Troupes (Guo & Prompanyo, 2022). Despite these challenges, however, innovative solutions continue to emerge. By understanding the power of targeted market research, creative activity planning, digital network utilization, and a strategic focus on potential consumers, the effective integration of traditional performing arts and new media technologies can be actualized, enabling more engaging and accessible educational experiences and allowing for the sustained and meaningful presence of Liyuan Opera in the digital age.

3. Cultural Anthropology, Performance Theory and the New Age of Liyuan Opera

Lofen's (2019) theory of cultural diffusion allows for examination of how Liyuan Opera has adapted to the new media environment and maintained its cultural identity in a new digital age (Yan & Chonpairot, 2021). The theory recognizes that performing art forms are not static entities

but evolve and change with a variety of factors, including temporal context, geographical location, audience composition, and artist involvement. In the case of Liyuan Opera, the impact of new media platforms has opened up opportunities for the art form to reach a broader demographic and engage with new forms of expression (Xie, 2017). The application of cultural diffusion theory therefore sheds light on how Liyuan Opera, by leveraging digital platforms to distribute its performances, has transcended geographical boundaries, educating and raising awareness among diverse audiences that might otherwise have remained unaware of this traditional art form (Chen, Zhao & Wang, 2022).

The emergence of online platforms like Douyin has challenged the conventional notion of Liyuan Opera as a time-bound event, expanding its reach and enabling new forms of audience engagement (Chakraborty, 2020; Guo & Prompanyo, 2022). The application of performance theory to the study of Liyuan Opera in the new media environment underscores how the inherent qualities of the art form are reshaped and reimaged in this digital landscape (Jiancun & Yongwen, 2011; Schechner, 2004; Wildfeuer, 2016). Digital platforms alter the nature of key elements of performance theory; the performer, for instance, must now navigate a non-physical stage, grappling with the digital medium's simultaneous broadening of reach and loss of immediate feedback (Crews & Papagiannouli, 2019; Talaboev, Akbarov & Haydarov, 2020; Wardhana, Permana & Puspitasari, 2022). The audience, no longer bound by geographical or temporal constraints, has transformed into a globally distributed, asynchronous body, altering the dynamics of engagement and feedback that shape the performance (Arango-Forero & Roncallo-Dow, 2013; Walmsley, 2019). Yet, this expanded access to the opera allows a more diverse audience base, driving cultural exchange and promoting broader appreciation of the art form in education (Yende & Buthelezi, 2022). The societal context, too, is changed; digital platforms promote a global culture, which can influence both performance and reception of the opera, prompting a redefinition of traditional elements to resonate with the broader audience (Baía Reis & Ashmore, 2022). This might involve innovative staging, editing, or digital enhancements, which add a new dimension to the performance without sacrificing its intrinsic essence (Yuliati et al., 2023). Online platforms also allow for increased archival and accessibility of performances, challenging the traditional conception of opera as a transient, ephemeral event. Interestingly, the digital space also introduces a unique element of interactivity, as audience members can now engage with the performance and performers through likes, shares, and comments. This new level of interaction may significantly influence the evolution of the opera, possibly spurring more experimental iterations to cater to the interactive audience. Yet the ultimate goal must be engagement (Ford &

Mandviwalla, 2020). Chinese opera must therefore strike an intricate balance between maintaining authenticity and embracing digital transformation, all while navigating a rapidly evolving societal and cultural context.

4. Current Research on Liyuan Opera in the New Media Environment

The study and preservation of Liyuan Opera in the digital age have received comparatively limited attention (Zheng & Ma, 2016; Zheng, 2018). Existing academic discourse predominantly emphasizes the historical aspects and programs of Liyuan Opera, often neglecting to explore its transformations and changing performance methodologies under the influence of new media. This overlooks crucial issues surfacing in the contemporary landscape, such as intellectual property rights (Erie, 2012; Tingyan, 2018), the eroding traditional skill set (Wang & Li, 2021), and waning popularity of the form (Chia, 2019). Furthermore, current research has begun to elucidate how digital media can be harnessed to safeguard other facets of Chinese art, such as costume design (Liu, Gao, Zhang & Zhu, 2022), traditional music (Jing & Changefei, 2021), and sculpture (Lu & Zheng, 2021). This underlines the necessity of similar investigations within the realm of Liyuan Opera, where the impact of new media remains an underexplored territory. As society transitions further into the digital age, understanding the ways in which traditional art forms negotiate their existence within this new landscape becomes increasingly important. Consequently, the current study seeks to bridge a gap in the scholarly literature and pave the way for nuanced understandings of the dynamics between Liyuan Opera and new media.

III. Method

This research investigates the transformation of Liyuan Opera from traditional stage performance to the contemporary Chinese platform, Douyin. Spanning June 2022 to March 2023, the study focused on Quanzhou, Fujian and ByteDance Company, employing a qualitative research methodology in two parts: documentary analysis and field research. The study began with a comprehensive literature review to discern prevalent themes and trends in current research pertaining to the impact of new media on the development of Liyuan Opera and the cultural anthropology of Liyuan Opera within the new media environment. The literature review was conducted employing a quantitative bibliographic approach with criteria based on the subject

matter of the publications. Keywords such as ‘Liyuan Opera’, ‘new media’, ‘cultural anthropology’, ‘Douyin’, and ‘Chinese traditional performing arts’ guided the selection of relevant texts. The researchers also sought to illuminate the interplay between Liyuan Opera and new media technologies, tracing the evolution from the early inception to the latest breakthroughs. It is essential to note that the researchers endeavored to comprehensively map the scholarly discourse that intersects the two thematic foci, thereby consolidating the foundational underpinnings for our subsequent research inquiry into the transformative journey of Liyuan Opera in the new media milieu.

The research population for field research was divided into three categories: key, casual, and general informants. Key informants were two scholars specializing in Liyuan Opera, the head of Liyuan Classical Theatre, and an officer from the Cultural Bureau of Quanzhou City. Casual informants were ten professional Liyuan Opera artists and five Douyin producers, while general informants were purposively selected from a diverse audience base of 40 individuals. In the field, the researchers devised questionnaires to capture the perspectives of a broad demographic and glean insights into individual experiences, attitudes, and perceptions about the transformation of Liyuan Opera onto new media platforms. Questionnaires were administered to a diverse audience base of 40 individuals, including casual opera-goers and regular fans. To supplement this information, in-depth interviews were conducted with the two key informants, who offered a nuanced, personal understanding of the topic, enriching the data set with experiential anecdotes and expert opinions. Finally, direct observations made by the researchers were used to supplement the primary data collection. These were conducted at live performances, Douyin live streams, and at artists' rehearsals, providing a first-hand account of the real-world application and reception of Liyuan Opera on new media platforms.

The data collected through these methods was then triangulated for validation, ensuring accuracy and comprehensiveness of the gathered information by cross-checking the information and findings obtained from each data collection method. Post data collection, the researchers utilized typological analysis and analytic induction for data processing and analysis. For typological analysis, the data was organized into predefined categories according to the aims of the investigation, thereby facilitating the identification of patterns and themes. Analytic induction then facilitated a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the data, informing the final conclusions of the investigation. Statistical analysis of the questionnaire data was performed using SPSS (Statistical Product Service Solutions). The results are presented below as a descriptive analysis.

IV. Results

The evolution of Chinese opera is a complex process spanning several dynastic periods, including the Qin, Han, Sui, Tang, and the Five Dynasties. During this time, the nascent art form witnessed the genesis of military dramas, lyrical songs, dances, and comedic performances, marking the foundational stage of Chinese opera (Hsiao-t'i, 2019). It is generally agreed that the advent of Zaju during the Song Dynasty signifies the formal inception of Chinese opera (Jieqiu, 1996; Xu & Sun, 2022). From this point forward, the art form's transformation was a gradual progression from simplicity to complexity, and from modest beginnings to grandiose performances. The developmental trajectory of Chinese opera can be divided into two primary phases: pre- and post-Song and Yuan Dynasties. The initial phase, often referred to as the ancient drama stage, was predominantly characterized by comedic performances, songs, and dances. The subsequent phase, known as real drama or opera, witnessed a shift in focus to singing, representing the maturation of Chinese opera. This later stage encapsulates the Southern Opera of the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the Zaju of the Yuan Dynasty, and the Legend of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Lei, 2016). Liyuan Opera has retained many attributes of its historical counterpart, emerging as one of the most emblematic operas in Quanzhou. This cultural significance was affirmed on May 20, 2006, when it was added to the entries on China's inaugural national intangible cultural heritage list. Its recognition as a national intangible cultural heritage underscores its enduring cultural importance and value.

1. Educational Development of Liyuan Opera

The evolution of Liyuan Opera prior to 1950 is deeply rooted in the rich cultural heritage of Quanzhou and its lively folk activities. The city's blend of folk beliefs, combined with the intricate and multifaceted Minnan culture, have birthed an array of artistic forms that inform the nuances of Liyuan Opera. The opera's musicality and vocal techniques have been particularly shaped by Nanyin, a form of music traditionally accompanying song and dance. The emergence of Liyuan Opera during the Ming and Qing dynasties relied upon the talents of a professional ensemble, whose livelihood was inextricably tied to the art they performed. This relationship meant that the art's survival and evolution depended heavily on the economic climate, which also influenced the educational transmission of the art form. Known as a tent opera, Liyuan Opera necessitated the troupe's constant relocation in response to various festival performances,

hence leading to a dynamic, highly mobile performance domain. To support this transient lifestyle, the stage, often referred to as a 'shed', was designed for easy disassembly and swift reassembly.

The dominance of Liyuan Opera was challenged during the late Qing Dynasty by foreign troupes entering Quanzhou. Local Gaojia Opera and Taiwanese Gezi Opera posed considerable threats, with the former appealing to a wide range of festival organizers due to its dynamism and versatility, and the latter winning over the southern Fujian populace with its colloquial language and folk melodies. The economic downturn during the Sino-Japanese War further led to sharp decline in the influence and prevalence of the art. While the war's end in 1945 brought about a reorganization of the Liyuan Opera Troupe and a small resurgence of Gezi Opera performances, the decline of Liyuan Opera was inescapable. By 1949, the troupe had shrunk considerably, with major ensembles disbanding, marking a significant turning point in the opera's history.

In 1953, the Fujian Minnan Opera Experimental Troupe was established, later rebranded as the Fujian Liyuan Opera Experimental Troupe. Government policies significantly influenced the troupe's sustainability and growth, with the troupe receiving numerous national opera awards and conducting performances overseas, thereby enhancing Liyuan Opera's recognition and artistic stature. The organizational structure underwent a transformation from private to state-owned, expanding its educational outreach to include professional theaters and schools. These theater performances primarily catered to urban spectators, emphasizing the sophistication and elegance of Liyuan Opera. Rural performances were maintained but primarily served folk festival activities, featuring straightforward and spirited plays to engage rural audiences. In response to the evolving milieu, the troupe implemented a small theater performance mode, delivering profound and nuanced performances to its core audience while also appealing to a broader viewership. Additionally, the troupe adopted an immersive performance style that amalgamated theater and roadshow elements, reflecting the troupe's modernization and market-oriented transformation. Throughout its history, the performers' capacity to adapt to changing times has enabled its survival and ensured its continuous educational relevance.

2. Liyuan Opera and Traditional Media in Education

In 1954, the Liyuan Opera piece *Chen San Wu Niang* triumphed at the East China Opera Show in Shanghai, leading to the release of a film adaptation by the same name in 1957. The film merged the artistry of opera and cinema, bringing Liyuan Opera's unique qualities and aesthetics to the silver screen (Taylor, 2018). This cinematic creation was a collaborative effort

involving both seasoned and emerging artists, directors, and actors from the Liyuan Opera Troupe, with a focus on highlighting the distinct features and aesthetics of Liyuan Opera. These efforts also contributed to the educational dissemination of the art form, reaching wider audiences through film. In 1961, the Fujian Liyuan Opera Actors Training Class assembled a youth performance team to participate in the production of the opera art film *Rouge*. This marked a transitional moment as the performance platform truly shifted from stage to screen, extending the reach of Liyuan Opera in a relatively comprehensive format (Lim, 2010).

Presently, traditional media channels such as television and online video platforms persistently feature Liyuan Opera. For instance, Quanzhou TV station maintains a dedicated drama segment named *Zacuo Stage*, which has daily broadcasts of local Quanzhou operas, including Liyuan Opera. Online video platforms offer an intuitive, convenient, and interactive medium for opera dissemination, enabling audiences to select their preferred repertoire and viewing schedule. Moreover, the internet's open and interactive nature permits audiences to become engaged participants in the propagation of opera culture, providing feedback on stage performances through comments and evaluations. These platforms serve as valuable educational tools, allowing for broader dissemination and interaction. By utilizing film, television, and online video platforms as media for disseminating Liyuan Opera, the audience base for this art form has expanded. Its influence has consequently grown through both interpersonal exchanges and virtual communication.

3. Immersive Performances for New Media and Educational Outreach

With the swift advancement and widespread adoption of the Internet, traditional media has rapidly digitized, extending its reach globally. In 1994, China officially connected to the Internet. During the early stages of adoption, the 1.0 stage, few households owned computers and Internet cafes spread throughout the country. This stage also saw the genesis of many prominent entrepreneurs and Internet conglomerates, such as Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent. In the explosive growth phase from 2001 to 2008, the widespread availability of low bandwidth networks and personal computers allowed the Internet to gradually permeate ordinary people's lives. Social tools and e-commerce subtly transformed people's habits. Platforms like QQ, Renren, Baidu Post Bar, Tianya Forum, and blogs became teeming hubs for young people, with the online world evolving into a vibrant secondary space.

Between 2009 and 2014, the number of mobile Internet users exceeded that of PC users for the first time (Zhou, Gui, Kato, Ohashi & Hjorth, 2017). This was also the year Zhang Yiming

founded ByteDance, a technology company specializing in video-sharing social networking services and apps. The surge in smartphone usage shifted Internet usage from a fixed PC scenario to a mobile paradigm, accessible anytime, anywhere. Mobile Internet gradually overtook traditional Internet in terms of volume, marking China's official transition to the Internet 2.0 stage (Brennan, 2020; Yeo, 2022). In the new media stage from 2015 to 2023, China introduced the concept of Internet Plus, aiming to integrate traditional industries through Internet technology innovation. This strategy spawned new business models and revenue growth opportunities for traditional industries. Self-media, online celebrity influencers, video bloggers, and more, began to dominate the digital landscape, extending towards knowledge monetization, live-stream shopping and fan economy. In 2016, the Douyin platform was officially launched, igniting fierce competition among new media short video platforms, leading to unprecedented growth in the new media industry. These advancements have significantly impacted educational practices, enabling new forms of teaching and learning through digital platforms. The integration of Liyuan Opera into these new media platforms provides opportunities for innovative educational outreach and engagement, ensuring the preservation and continuation of this cultural heritage in contemporary society.

4. Liyuan Opera, Education and Douyin

Douyin, a product of ByteDance, is a Chinese short video social app with a focus on music creativity. Launched on September 20, 2016, Douyin began as a short video community platform targeting younger audiences. However, its engaging short video content quickly drew a vast user base, growing continually to a staggering 800 million users by 2022 (Fan & Hemans, 2022). Douyin champions high-quality content creators across various sectors, offering a free application for platform settlement. Each industry can boost its popularity through Douyin's influential platform. The platform provides a level playing field, where anyone can gain popularity provided their content is of high quality and appeals to the public. Users can comment, share, save, and like, leveraging relational communication to garner more traffic.

The platform simplifies short video production, enabling users to shoot and create their own short videos using just a mobile phone. Douyin's video editing software, "Jian Ying," allows for video personalization through video speed adjustments, background music addition, among other features, catering to the daily shooting needs of Liyuan Opera videos. With its vast user base, Douyin therefore offers unparalleled flexibility in communication, making it an ideal tool for educational purposes. Its robust algorithm ensures that videos can rapidly spread from

individuals to groups, often with explosive propagation speed. The platform features a variety of content forms, encompassing food, travel, auto technology, games, entertainment, stars, sports, cultural education, fashion, talent, finance, animals and plants, and public welfare.

The 21st century has clearly brought dramatic changes in media forms, and Liyuan Opera leverages new performance forms in conjunction with new media under new leadership. Douyin is one such platform, and the Liyuan Opera troupes promote their art through recorded street performances and online content. For instance, the Bole Theater, an innovative incubation platform, was officially introduced in Quanzhou in June 2018. Its first performance was the creative Liyuan Opera Lumengzheng - Crossing the Bridge and Entering the Kiln by Zeng Jingping and Lin Cangxiao. This immersive performance mode was later staged in various Quanzhou scenic spots, recorded and published on Douyin, enhancing Liyuan Opera's media impact and educational outreach. The troupe also established the Wang Renjie and Zeng Jingping Drama Studio, the official Douyin accounts of Bole Theater and Still Good to Hear, featuring Liyuan Opera music. These platforms help new generations of Liyuan Opera performers upload their rehearsal scenes and flash clips, thus further expanding Liyuan Opera's online presence and educational impact.

5. Chinese Perspectives on Liyuan Opera Education through Douyin

Traditional methods of protecting and promoting Liyuan Opera, such as professional performances, static displays, and television broadcasts, have been dedicated to disseminating its artistic core. Characterized by its unique place in the Chinese opera system, Liyuan Opera employs the Quanzhou dialect as the standard tone, Nanyin as the musical form, and Kemu and Kebu as the main dance standards. Since its inception, Liyuan Opera has held strong ties to folk belief activities, serving as a unifying force to propagate local cultural concepts and beliefs. However, the emergence of multiculturalism and shifts in lifestyle and entertainment preferences have seen traditional opera's popularity, particularly among young people, wane. The Fujian Liyuan Opera Experimental Troupe, in response, turned to the Douyin platform, a mobile short video platform, to promote and disseminate Liyuan Opera. By releasing bite-sized performance videos and rehearsal clips, the troupe has expanded Liyuan Opera's reach, attracting a younger demographic and enhancing educational outreach.

While Douyin has broadened Liyuan Opera's audience, it also sparked concerns about the limitations of short video duration and the potential loss of traditional performance nuances. As

Wu Xiaowei, the deputy head of Fujian Liyuan Opera Experimental Troupe explained in an interview “online immersive performances have a basic script, but by the time of performance, the script is zero, and the performance is adjusted according to the response of the audience,” (personal communication, 2022). Clearly this risks altering the traditional features of the artform, however, as Xiaowei explained, “this is the charm of immersive performance.” Many viewers appreciate the convenience of enjoying Liyuan Opera performances anytime, anywhere, and especially when it is catered to their personal tastes. The short nature of online clips is also viewed as an advantage:

The most attractive content of Liyuan Opera can be conveyed to the audience in a short time through Douyin platform short videos, so that more people know Liyuan Opera and are willing to go to the theater to watch it, which plays a great role in promoting the development of Liyuan Opera. In particular, it plays an extremely important role in promoting the expansion of the audience group of Liyuan Opera, making more young audiences understand Liyuan Opera. (Zeng Jingping, Liyuan Performer, personal communication, 2022)

These sentiments were echoed by Huang Yufeng, another performer, who stated that “the Liyuan Opera on Douyin platform can attract new audiences, spread more widely and target more broad groups. It can bring more audiences to Liyuan Opera and help the inheritance and development of Liyuan Opera,” (personal communication, 2022). The researchers’ survey of audience members found that most respondents, particularly young individuals, endorse the promotion of Liyuan Opera via Douyin. This indicates that Douyin serves not only as a promotional tool but also as an educational platform, increasing awareness and understanding of Liyuan Opera among younger generations.

However, seasoned practitioners and long-time fans still argue that live theater performances offer a more immersive experience. Huang Yufeng also conceded that most of the Liyuan Opera on the Douyin platform is performance clips, or simplified action clips. In her opinion, this makes the Liyuan Opera too fragmented, and means the classic performance techniques of Liyuan Opera cannot be shown in detail.

Despite these concerns, the educational potential of Douyin in making Liyuan Opera accessible to a broader audience and fostering a deeper appreciation of this traditional art form remains significant. Douyin's role in safeguarding and promoting Liyuan Opera is undeniably positive and impactful. It plays a very positive role in the dissemination and promotion of Liyuan Opera,

and can attract a large number of young audiences to learn about Liyuan Opera, which not only greatly promotes the development of Liyuan Opera, “but also plays a positive role in the cultural prosperity and promotion of Quanzhou. Because Douyin platform’s audience is nationwide, Liyuan Opera culture, and Quanzhou culture is more widely spread,” (Fu Shuming, performer, personal communication, 2022).

The researchers conducted a questionnaire survey on audiences of different occupations and age groups, including 20 audience members aged 18-40 and 20 audience members aged 41-65. Following analysis and summary, the following results were obtained.

- 1) Most of the audience members, especially young Chinese people, agreed with the spread of Liyuan Opera on the Douyin platform. The questionnaire results showed that 92% of the young audience and 55% of the middle-aged and elderly respondents believe that the Liyuan Opera in Douyin platform is conducive to the spread and education of Liyuan Opera. It can be seen that most respondents agree with the way Liyuan Opera is spread in Douyin platform.
- 2) Most audience members believe that Douyin platform is helpful to the promotion and protection of Liyuan Opera through its educational potential. According to the questionnaire results, most people believe that Liyuan Opera on the Douyin platform plays a positive role in promoting Liyuan Opera to young audiences. It is believed that this will help mobilize the enthusiasm of young people to understand and disseminate Liyuan Opera, and help the public, especially young audiences, enhance their sense of identity with Liyuan Opera.
- 3) Practitioners and older fans of Liyuan Opera believe that watching Liyuan Opera in the theater is more exciting. 72% of middle-aged and elderly audiences believe that traditional Liyuan opera performances are more attractive. They believe that the sense of presence that theatrical performances bring to the audience and actors cannot be achieved by any other means of communication. Therefore, to fully display and experience the classic Liyuan opera, it is still necessary to go to the theater and experience it personally.

V. Discussion & Conclusion

1. Conclusion

This study shows that traditional Liyuan Opera disseminated through stage performances has remained largely unchanged. However, the 21st century, marked by COVID-19 and new media, has seen its performance form evolve significantly. Liyuan Opera now combines stage and street roadshows and has integrated new media platforms, such as Douyin. The fusion of Liyuan Opera and new media carries substantial social and cultural implications, shaping the future trajectory of cultural development and technological advancement. The study underscores the necessity of adapting Liyuan Opera's dissemination methods to align with new media characteristics. The burgeoning popularity of short, fragmented videos calls for a distribution approach that resonates with modern audiences.

Furthermore, the study identifies patterns of mutual integration, borrowing, and promotion between traditional and new media, which carry historical inevitability, contemporary urgency, and objective regularity. Nevertheless, these patterns' application raises several issues warranting further exploration and research. The majority of research respondents, especially the younger generation, support Liyuan Opera's promotion on Douyin. While some practitioners and long-time fans advocate for traditional theater experiences, Douyin has proven instrumental in promoting and preserving the art form, particularly for younger audiences. The convergence of Liyuan Opera and new media has revolutionized the art form's communication methods and development models. The deep integration between Liyuan Opera and Douyin has emerged as a crucial strategy to safeguard cultural heritage, enhance the cultural industry, and elevate the added value of cultural arts. In answer to the central research question, the integration of new media platforms like Douyin significantly impacts the educational dissemination and cultural preservation of Liyuan Opera by expanding its reach, engaging younger audiences, and promoting interactive and innovative forms of cultural education.

2. The Impact of Douyin on Liyuan Opera: Educational Analysis

The integration of new media in music education has revolutionized teaching methodologies and learning experiences, providing innovative solutions for educational outreach in traditional arts (Redhead, 2024). This study's results align with these findings, demonstrating that Douyin,

a popular digital platform, can significantly enhance the educational dissemination of Liyuan Opera. The use of Douyin has facilitated the opera's transition into the digital age, enabling it to reach broader and younger audiences, thus ensuring its preservation and continued relevance.

The integration of Douyin in teaching Liyuan Opera offers an enriched audio-visual experience for both learners and educators. Similar to Yu's (2021) findings on popular music education, the platform's capabilities allow for high-quality video production that captures the intricate details of Liyuan Opera performances. This not only enhances the learning experience by providing clear and engaging visual and auditory content but also helps in preserving the nuances of traditional performance techniques. Douyin promotes independent learning by allowing users to access, explore, and interact with Liyuan Opera content at their own pace. The platform's user-friendly interface and interactive features, such as commenting, sharing, and liking, encourage active participation and self-directed learning. This aligns with Lei et al.'s (2021) assertion that new media encourages independent learning and changes in aesthetic appreciation. Through Douyin, students can delve into the cultural and artistic aspects of Liyuan Opera, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of this traditional art form.

The use of Douyin in Liyuan Opera education bridges the gap between traditional and contemporary educational contexts. As Parti and Karlsen (2010) highlight, technological advancements have created numerous new ways for people to engage with music. By leveraging Douyin, educators can integrate traditional opera into the digital environments that students are accustomed to, making it more accessible and engaging. This approach helps to preserve the cultural heritage of Liyuan Opera while adapting it to modern educational practices. Deciding what music to engage with is a significant part of forming one's identity (Cook, 1998). Through Douyin, young audiences can explore and connect with Liyuan Opera, integrating it into their cultural and personal identities. This connection fosters a sense of cultural appreciation and continuity, as noted by Batt-Rawden and DeNora (2005) and Ruud (2008). The platform's widespread use and interactive nature make it an effective tool for promoting cultural heritage and empowering younger generations to take an active role in its preservation.

Recognizing that people learn music from a variety of sources, including informal contexts (Bauer, 2020), Douyin provides a multidimensional learning environment. The platform allows for the composition, arrangement, and distribution of Liyuan Opera content, making it possible for almost anyone to engage with and learn about this art form (Camlin & Lisboa, 2021). This democratization of learning resources aligns with Hess's (2020) call for exploring the continuum between formal and informal learning. Douyin thus supports a holistic educational approach,

integrating traditional music forms into the everyday digital lives of students.

3. The Impact of Douyin on Liyuan Opera: Cultural Analysis

The concept of cultural diffusion, a fundamental cornerstone of cultural geography, offers a lens through which the dissemination of Liyuan Opera can be examined over various regions and epochs. The propagation of Liyuan Opera has transcended distinct eras of communication - shifting from oral transmission during the agricultural period, through radio and television broadcasts in the era of electronic media, and now immersing into the realm of new media. While the medium of communication and its external form have undergone transformation due to the influences of new media and COVID-19, the cultural connotations of Liyuan Opera have remained consistent. The deployment of the Douyin platform for the dissemination and promotion of Liyuan Opera bears pragmatic significance and has rendered substantial results. These findings furnish valuable insights for the future preservation and propagation of not just Liyuan Opera, but other operatic forms as well.

The symbolic reality portrayed by modern media notably influences individuals' perception and comprehension of the real world (Gerbner, 1998). The media's inherent tendencies often engender a significant divergence between the 'subjective reality' constructed in people's minds and objective reality. Upon analyzing Liyuan Opera's performance form and content, and conducting surveys among varied audience demographics, it was found that the depiction of Liyuan Opera on the Douyin platform could effectively guide the audience, fostering an unconscious acceptance of the art form. Through Douyin, Liyuan Opera has broadened its reach and has impacted a wider array of groups.

The results of the study bring to light how the traditional Liyuan Opera has adapted and survived in the new media landscape, offering critical insights into the themes presented in the literature review. A key discussion point is the novel role of new media platforms, particularly Douyin, in the propagation and educational dissemination of the art form, consistent with Lofen's (2019) cultural diffusion theory. The ability of Douyin to expand Liyuan Opera's reach, targeting younger demographics through bite-sized performance videos and rehearsal clips, proves to be an effective educational strategy in an era of shifting entertainment preferences and the advent of multiculturalism (Xie, 2017; Chen, Zhao & Wang, 2022).

This novel digital framework, however, prompts the re-evaluation of key elements of performance theory, including the performer-audience dynamics and the societal context (Jiancun &

Yongwen, 2011; Schechner, 2004; Wildfeuer, 2016). Traditional performance nuances risk being lost due to the short video duration, and the digital medium inevitably alters the performance process with online immersive performances adjusting according to audience responses (Crews & Papagiannouli, 2019; Talaboev, Akbarov & Haydarov, 2020; Wardhana, Permana & Puspitasari, 2022). Yet, this fresh interaction model is acknowledged as part of the charm of immersive performances. The interactivity facilitated by new media platforms provides a dynamic, responsive framework that may potentially spur further evolution in the art form (Yende & Buthelezi, 2022; Baía Reis & Ashmore, 2022).

While online platforms, such as Douyin, offer greater accessibility and a more expansive reach, audience members in this study highlighted the distinct experience of live performances that is missed by the online clips (Ford & Mandviwalla, 2020). This sentiment resonates with Schechner's (2004) assertion on the ephemeral and transient nature of performances, raising questions about the efficacy of digital performances in truly encapsulating the essence of Liyuan Opera. In summary, the adoption of new media platforms represents a major step in Liyuan Opera's evolution and is largely accepted and appreciated by a new generation of audiences, validating Lofen's (2019) theory of cultural diffusion. Yet, the balance between authenticity and digital transformation is a delicate one to strike, echoing the concerns raised by Schechner (2004). The potential of new media platforms in educating a wider audience is significant, however, they must be utilized in such a way that continues to respect, uphold, and present the unique cultural essence of Liyuan Opera.

4. Recommendations and Limitations

The researchers propose further study of Liyuan Opera's adaptations to new media and its cultural value in contemporary society. The researchers recognize that this initial study focuses on a specific region (Quanzhou, Fujian) and a specific platform (Douyin), which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the survey sample size is small and has a limited scope, reducing the validity and reliability of the research results. Additional data is needed to gain a more thorough understanding of audience perception of Liyuan Opera on new media channels. Moreover, a comparative study of different media channels and different traditional music would also be welcome to understand how the audience perception varies based on differences in output. In practical terms, it is recommended that practitioners enhance their understanding of new media's impact while preserving the art form's distinct qualities. These

practitioners are encouraged to maintain a balance between tradition and innovation, using publicity, education, and media platforms to increase public awareness and engagement in the art's preservation. Video creators should further aim to preserve the essence of Liyuan Opera while producing high-quality, original content that captivates audiences and facilitates widespread dissemination. Fresh ideas should be continually introduced to maintain viewer interest. Finally, efforts should be made to move beyond mere entertainment and homogeneity in Liyuan Opera videos, aiming to boost the art form's popularity while preserving and innovating Quanzhou's rich traditional culture.

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